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15 November 2007

Mrs B Martin
The Headteacher
St Catherine's Catholic Primary School, Swindon
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Dear Mrs Martin

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 1 November 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

As a result of the inspection on 11 and 12 October 2006, the school was asked to:

- raise standards and achievement on mathematics across the school
- help teachers to make better use of assessment information and target setting so that all pupils make appropriate progress
- make monitoring and evaluation of teaching more effective to remove the inconsistencies in teaching so that all pupils, and especially boys, achieve as well as they can.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

The school has focused well on improving results in mathematics and has devised a good range of intervention programmes for pupils with different learning needs. The concentration on improving mathematics has become a priority in the school development plan and all teachers have taken responsibility for ensuring the improvements are embedded in good lesson planning and classroom activities which engage all pupils. There is greater consistency in the way teachers enable pupils to make calculations and the school has worked well with parents to ensure they also understand what is expected of pupils. The drive to provide more opportunities for developing numeracy across the curriculum through innovations such as 'puzzle day' is having a positive impact on results. Attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 is now well above local and national averages. The performance of boys has also improved well since the last inspection.

There is now a rich set of assessment information for teachers to use in helping them to monitor individual pupils' progress and to evaluate their own teaching performance. Every teacher has a laptop computer to enable them to record and track data and teachers are getting adept at recording and interpreting assessment data to identify those individuals who require extra help. Pupils know their own targets well and in our discussions they were able to explain very clearly how these targets were arrived at and what they meant for improving their work.

Line managers review assessment and target information on a regular basis with teachers and quickly respond to support them when slippages in pupils' progress are identified. Teachers and teaching assistants have been supported well in terms of training and professional development programmes. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving and becoming more consistently good across the school. Differentiation of activities in lessons is now clear and all teachers and support staff have a better grasp of what to expect of pupils for them to make better progress. Teaching was judged to be good in the two numeracy lessons observed. This improvement has led to a marked rise in national test results at Key Stages 1 and 2 in the core subjects and the general performance of boys has also improved. However, the more able still require further challenge to enable them to achieve as well as they can.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Peter Limm
Her Majesty's Inspector