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17 October 2008

Mrs L Cripps  
The Headteacher  
Swainswick C of E Primary School  
Innox Lane  
Upper Swainswick  
Bath  
BA1 8DB

Dear Mrs Cripps

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 16 October 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to all of the staff and pupils. Everyone was very welcoming and thoughtful towards me.

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 September 2007, the school was asked to improve the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage and implement consistent ways to help pupils understand what they need to do to move on to the next step of their learning.

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

Within a month of the inspection, Class 1, which includes both the Foundation Stage and Year 1 pupils, was moved to a bigger classroom with easier access to an outdoor play area. This was an improvement, but the space is still not ideal as the outdoor area is bereft of any opportunities to play with water or sand, or suitable large play equipment. There is a separate area for play on bicycles and scooters which means that this can only be a specific session and not the result of any free flow of indoor and outdoor activity. The classroom is small and, whilst there are areas set up for reading, writing and mathematics, the corner set aside for role play is dull and uninviting.

The literacy work seen during the inspection was satisfactory with all the pupils taking part well in the class phase. When the Foundation Stage pupils were taken separately for work matched to their needs they demonstrated good knowledge of the phonics covered that week and the story they had been reading. This took place in the extremely unsatisfactory space of the cloakroom. Planning is improving for the Foundation Stage pupils, based more on the national strategies and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) expectations. The teaching assistants now receive written learning activities in advance of lessons.

Pupils in Years 5 and 6 reported that they know what they have to do to improve their work as the teachers both tell them and explain it in their books. However, they do not know what nationally identified levels they are working at and do not have access to any information that would enable them to place themselves at any point on a learning journey. The staff have had discussed how to be more consistent in informing pupils how to improve and how to enable the pupils to be more responsible for their own learning. Progress on implementing the results of the discussions is too slow if the school is to reach its own target of effective strategies being in place by May 2009.

The school is not tackling quickly enough the minor areas identified by the last inspection and also those additional ones the staff have identified themselves. Provisional National Curriculum test results for 2008 indicate that the school has continued to ensure that pupils reach good standards by the end of Year 6. However, many of the pupils enter the school with above average ability, this therefore represents only satisfactory progress for them, which is less than should be expected.

The site is a difficult one as it is set into a hillside, and is very cramped, but pupils of all ages move around it very sensibly and with great concern shown by the older pupils for the welfare of the younger ones. The pupils are happy and confident and report they 'love coming to school'.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Kara  
Her Majesty's Inspector