

23 November 2010

Mr M Nugent  
Headteacher  
Waterville Primary School  
Waterville Road  
Tyne and Wear  
NE29 6SL

Dear Mr Nugent

### **Ofsted 2010–11 best practice survey: school governance**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 4 November 2010 to look at school governance.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our publication about best practice in school governance. The publication will include case studies about individual schools. If Waterville Primary school is included as a case study, you will have an opportunity to comment before publication. Individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the identification of features of best practice included: meetings with the chair and vice-chair of governors, the clerk to the governing body and members of the school council; a tour of the school; and the scrutiny of relevant documents.

### **Features of best practice**

- The school's governing body has benefited from very good guidance and support from the local authority's governor services staff. Well-planned training has been very effective in helping governors to understand their roles and responsibilities and enabled them to provide support and challenge, which has resulted in the raised performance of the school.
- Governors receive detailed and accurate information that allows them to monitor thoroughly the progress in achieving the school's strategic priorities.
- Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and they use this knowledge very well to plan improvement.
- Governors have high expectations and aspirations for the school and the governing body's performance. They are highly successful advocates for the pupils and families who use the school.

- Governors have established excellent relationships between the governing body and the school's senior leaders. They have a good understanding of how to maintain their strategic role, leaving operational management to school leaders. A culture of trust and confidence in senior leaders results in governors receiving comprehensive information about the school.
- Governors place high priority on appointing and retaining excellent teachers. They ensure that teachers have effective support and development so that they enjoy working at the school and are well prepared for promotion.
- The business of the governing body is very well-organised. Committees are aligned closely to the school's strategic priorities and monitor progress against targets effectively. The full governing body meetings are managed effectively to ensure that all governors are able to contribute fully to decision-making processes.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to further develop governance.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

**Vivien Shipley**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**