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12 February 2013

Mrs Lesley Ironmonger  
Headteacher  
Waterloo Primary School  
Worthington Street  
Ashton-Under-Lyne  
Lancashire  
OL7 9NA

Dear Mrs Ironmonger

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Waterloo Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 11 February 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

#### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the Chair and one other member of the Governing Body and a group of pupils. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority and the headteacher (Local Leader in Education) who is supporting the school. The school's development plan was also evaluated.

#### **Context**

There are no significant changes since the most recent inspection.

## **Main findings**

School leaders have established an effective development plan. This builds on a previous accurate self-evaluation and provides a good basis for further school improvement. It provides clarity in how the school can get to good. There are precise actions, clear timescales and identification of the personnel and resources needed to support sustained improvement. The plan is personalised to identify specific outcomes and success criteria for each phase from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 2, as well as governance. There is a common shared vision for improvement that embraces staff and governors alike.

The school had a sound improvement strategy in place prior to the recent inspection. This was beginning to address weaknesses in teaching and leadership and management. The inspection has provided fresh stimulus and impetus to speed up improvement. Pupils have also noticed some changes; for example colour coded marking and feedback in their books is more specific and more clearly linked to next steps in learning. This also applies to writing in topic books where practice has been inconsistent in the past. There is a coherent approach to staff development which is linked closely to performance management and school priorities. This includes teachers in the early stages of their careers as well as individuals whose teaching requires improvement. Planning grids have been adopted to ensure clear differentiation in, and evaluation of, lessons. Monitoring is more frequent and robust and involves a range of strategies including formal observations, drop-in sessions as well as scrutiny of planning and pupils' work. There is a clearer focus on learning and outcomes for pupils and a greater involvement at all levels, including middle leaders. Effective peer mentoring and support is being provided in partnership with a nearby school which has shared effective practice, provided training and raised expectations. There is now a clear commitment and desire across the school to make changes to improve provision for all pupils. The school is in a good position to ensure more rapid progress is made in the future.

A review and restructuring of governance is currently taking place. Governors are being reminded and made aware of their responsibilities. They are also firmly committed to working in partnership with school leaders to improve teaching and raise standards. Governor job descriptions and responsibilities are being up-dated and clarified and designated areas of responsibility are being allocated. An extensive programme of training is being put in place, with local authority support, focussing on analysis of data and building up the skills and knowledge necessary to ask appropriate and searching questions to hold teachers and school leaders to account. There is a fresh sense of purpose.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- continue to develop effective classroom practice so that attainment is raised and pupils make accelerated progress across all subjects, but especially in writing and mathematics
- ensure that school leaders and staff continue to work with their partner school to share good practice and develop expertise
- ensure that responsibility for improving practice is shared across the school and involves middle leaders on a regular basis
- continue to implement the coherent approach to staff training and development
- ensure that governors receive appropriate training to enable them to fulfil their roles confidently and effectively.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The local authority has maintained a good level of support both prior to, and after, the inspection. It is committed to providing support to build up expertise in lesson observation, moderation of judgements as well as specific training to skill up governors to enable them to question senior leaders and teachers about the quality of lessons. The local authority has also been effective in brokering support from a partner primary school. A school network has also been established to share effective practice. This remains at an early stage of development.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Tameside.

Yours sincerely

Leszek Iwaskow

**Her Majesty's Inspector**