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Mrs H Pickin  
The Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Pickin

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF WATERSIDE  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following my visit with Chris Grove, Trish Walker and Barry Wood, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 27 and 28 November 2007, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in June 2006. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report 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.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, and the Director of Education for Stoke-on-Trent.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington  
Additional Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF WATERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection: 27 and 28 November 2007

### Evidence

The inspectors observed the school's work, evaluated pupils' books, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, senior leaders, two groups of pupils, two representatives from the local authority and the vice chair of governors and two other governors.

### Context

There has been a restructuring of the senior leadership team and governors, and new teaching staff since the third monitoring visit.

### Achievement and standards

It is apparent that standards are rising in line with the school's increased targets for Year 6. Evidence from pupils' books and lesson observations confirms the school's opinion that 88% of the current Year 6 class are on track to reach Level 4+ at the end of the school year. Around a quarter of the pupils should attain the higher Level 5. Such attainment suggests that standards are moving closer to the expected level in English and mathematics.

Standards are below the level expected in Year 2, but are rising, as they are in Years 4 and 5 due to the good quality teaching and learning. Good teaching is also giving a lift to standards in the Foundation Stage. Children clearly enter school with low levels of skill and knowledge. As identified in my last letter, there are particular weaknesses in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development when the children start school. These weaknesses are not totally eliminated by the time they move to Year 1, although standards are not as low as they were. Standards are well below average overall.

In the Foundation Stage, Years 2, 4, 5 and 6, pupils' progress is good. However, this leaves a quarter of the school where progress is satisfactory but not yet good enough. Here, work is inconsistently challenging, especially for the more able pupils. In a few lessons in these two years, the progress made by some pupils goes unnoticed because of the nature of supervision where the adults concentrate on the work of particular groups, leaving the others too much to their own devices.

The progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is similar to that of the other pupils. Improvements to provision for these pupils include more precision in planning, detailed tracking of progress, and better quality support in lessons.

The progress of pupils who learn English as an additional language was investigated carefully this time as it was not a focus of attention at the last visit. Evidence from lessons and pupils' work and talking to the pupils themselves shows that their

progress is good in the year groups where the other pupils do well. In these years staff are keenly aware of these pupils' needs and generally provide effective opportunities for learning, with well timed intervention and support.

### Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development shows similar traits to that found at the previous visit. It remains good. Behaviour is usually good, although it is less so in lessons where the expectations, challenge and pace are not good enough. It was observed this time that pupils at play do so amicably, happily, and with very little boisterous behaviour. Attendance levels have risen well and are now average. The improvement here is due to the very good work of the school to build a successful partnership with parents. Most pupils enjoy school and work hard. The strengths of pupils' personal development are due to effective pastoral care and guidance.

### Quality of provision

A key success since the previous visit is the meeting of the school's target of 75% good teaching. This marks good improvement since the first monitoring visit one year ago when the proportion hovered around 45%. Inspectors checked the school evaluation of teaching quality carefully and agree with the school's figures. However, the good quality teaching is clustered in particular years and is not evenly distributed across the school. Continuing staffing difficulties in Years 1 and 3 have limited the school's work to improve teaching quality in those two classes. They were the focus of concern at the previous visit because of the imprecise match of work to pupils' needs, and remain so.

The school has improved the quality of teaching to a good level in Years 2, 4, 5 and 6 since the last visit. Many pupils in these classes were affected by inadequate provision during the first half of last school year, but are rapidly making up lost ground due to teachers' high expectations and the good challenge in the work they are set. All pupils in Years 2, 4 and 6 are all taught particularly well and there is evidence of some outstanding provision in these years where lessons often sparkle. There have been some good appointments made to the teaching staff.

Assessment has moved on. It is now much more rigorous and the information produced is used in compiling the records of pupils' progress. Teacher assessment results in Year 2 are particularly well validated and give a secure platform for measuring progress. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is also reliable. Work is required to improve the use of assessment and target tracking data in making improvements to provision in Years 1 and 3.

The curriculum continues to evolve satisfactorily. The three core subjects and information and communication technology are managed by key members of staff, although other subjects do not have coordinators. The curriculum is basically secure, but monitoring of its quality and impact is inconsistent because of the current arrangements for subject leadership. This is slowing the pace of curriculum development in some subjects.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in June 2006:

- improve the accuracy and use of assessment information to ensure all pupils are suitably challenged and shown how to improve – satisfactory
- develop efficient tracking and target setting procedures in order to rectify shortcomings in pupils' achievement more quickly – satisfactory.

### Leadership and management

Leadership and management continue to improve. Since the previous visit, the school has appointed two permanent teachers with leading responsibility and the existing Year 6 teacher has also taken on this role temporarily. Thus, there are now five senior leaders, four of whom have specific responsibilities for different phases in school. This new leadership team has settled well to its duties and accountability. The members are good role models for other members of staff and are providing firm direction for improvement. As remarked above, such reliable leadership has yet to be established for all subjects although, until recently, the staffing situation mitigated against this development.

Governors continue to broaden their involvement in school. There have been some significant changes to the governing body since the previous visit. The new group of key governors has realistic impressions of the school's effectiveness and are increasingly challenging in their demands of the school. These continuing improvements are due to their monitoring visits and the checks made on planning, marking and the work of senior leaders.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in June 2006:

- strengthen leadership and management at all levels by having a more rigorous approach to the evaluation of teaching and its effectiveness in raising pupils' achievement – good.

### External support

The local authority has continued to reduce its day to day involvement in the school. Since the July visit, the key link person has reduced her visits to a half day per fortnight. This is very different from the pattern one year ago when the official attachment was two days per week, and frequently much greater than this. The reduction in direct support is warranted by the school's general trend of positive improvement. Ongoing support is helpful for the school and the local authority has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness.

### Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that weaknesses are eradicated and that the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 3 is good.
- Ensure assessment and target tracking data is used to ensure work is more closely matched to pupils' needs in Years 1 and 3.
- Ensure there is leadership for all subjects and a clear focus on evaluating and improving the quality of the curriculum.