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Mrs J Cook  
Watergall Primary School  
Watergall  
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Dear Mrs Cook

### Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 14 May 2010, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also pass on my thanks to the pupils for their help during the inspection and to your Chair of Governors for taking time to meet me to discuss his view of the school's progress since the last inspection.

There has been a change of headteacher since the last inspection: a new headteacher joined the school in January 2010. This followed an interim period of one term when the school was led by a headteacher who was seconded from another primary school within the local authority. The Early Years Foundation Stage teacher at the time of the last inspection has since left the school. The Reception class is now taught by an experienced teacher, who has moved from another class within the school. A new teacher was appointed to teach one of the Year 3/4 classes from April 2010. The headteacher is currently leading and managing the Early Years Foundation Stage. There have also been some changes in membership of the governing body, although the Chair of Governors is the same as at the time of the last inspection. The school continues to experience high levels of pupil mobility and provides support for a significant number of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The school received a one-day Ofsted survey inspection in January 2009 in which the effectiveness of personal, social and health education was judged to be good.

The local authority has provided the school with a range of good support since the last inspection. This has included guidance on establishing improved provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, support for teaching and learning in English and mathematics, and a programme of professional development and mentoring for the newly appointed headteacher.



As a result of the inspection on 2 July 2008, the school was asked to: ensure that pupils make as much progress in other subjects as they do in English and mathematics, by improving the monitoring roles of subject leaders; encourage pupils to be less dependent on adults to guide them so they think and act for themselves; ensure that provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage allows children sufficient freedom to explore, experiment and organise themselves.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time, the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' achievement at the time of the last inspection was satisfactory. It remains so, although outcomes for Year 6 pupils who left the school in 2009 indicate that it is improving. Achievement for this group of pupils was good with almost all (97%) making two levels progress in English from their starting points in Year 2, and a very large majority (86%) doing so in mathematics. Two thirds of the year group managed to reach the expected Level 4 in both English and mathematics; an improvement on the previous two years. Attainment at the end of Year 6 was below average but improved well. Pupils did better in mathematics and science than they did in English, with the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 matching the national figures. Pupils from homes where English was not the first language fared better, particularly in mathematics and science. The school's assessment data show that attainment levels are not expected to be as high in 2010, although pupils in Year 6 are close to achieving their challenging targets.

Learning and progress for children in the Reception class are improving well this year. This is reflected in the latest assessments of children's attainment in early reading, writing and number skills, which show particularly good progress since the start of the spring term. Significant investment has been made in improving the range and quality of play equipment and children have the chance to initiate more learning for themselves. Staff work well together to plan stimulating activities that cover all the areas of development, although those organised for outdoors are not as purposeful. There are good daily routines established and children enjoy having the chance to take responsibility and praise their friends for being helpful. A detailed plan has been drawn up to strengthen links with local pre-school settings and help strengthen transition arrangements.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, a strong focus has been maintained on pupils acquiring key literacy and numeracy skills. This is exemplified in the drive to improve outcomes in writing by introducing a weekly 'big write' opportunity for all pupils. In the last two years, staff have attended professional development sessions, which focused on increasing pupils' learning independence, and discussed how this could be included in their lesson planning. During the monitoring inspection, good examples were observed of teachers' skilful questioning being used to prompt pupils' independent



thinking and to encourage reflection on their learning. In one lesson seen in a Year 3/4 class, pupils were enjoying a mathematical challenge in which they had to use their knowledge of shape and their measuring skills to construct a package for an item of fruit. The planning for this lesson was linked well to other subjects as part of a project on 'food glorious food'. Older pupils have also had the chance to take part in creative homework challenges and undertake individual learning projects. Pupils in Year 6 have shown significant initiative and independence in scoping, planning and introducing a behaviour consequences system this term. Despite these good examples, the school acknowledges that further work is required to spread the effective approaches more widely among staff.

Monitoring by subject leaders is more systematic than it was at the time of the last inspection, although it remains more effective in some key subjects than others. Senior leaders have raised expectations for sharing leadership and management responsibility among staff and a timetable for monitoring and evaluating all subjects has been drawn up. This, together with the strong drive and ambition of the new headteacher and senior leadership team, has boosted the school's capacity for sustained improvement. The introduction of skills progression assessment records has given curriculum leaders the chance to collect attainment and progress information in all subjects. In some cases, these have yet to be analysed to evaluate rates of progress and identify any underachievement. Detailed subject plans set out the actions to be taken to bring about improvements but some plans do not show clearly enough the impact the changes will have on outcomes for pupils. Currently, there are limited opportunities for curriculum leaders to undertake lesson observations, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to enable them to gain a sharper perspective on the quality of teaching, learning and progress in all year groups.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rob McKeown  
Her Majesty's Inspector

