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Mr Chris Wilson
Headteacher
North Clifton Primary School
Church Lane
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Dear Mr Wilson

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of North Clifton Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 14 March 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, and the pupils who met with me during my visit.

Since the last inspection, the previous headteacher retired last December, and you took over as headteacher in January, 2012. The school now works closely with other local schools, the Tuxford Family Collaboration (TFC), in order mainly to share provision and moderate pupils' work.

As a result of the inspection on 16 March 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics has been variable since the last inspection. This is partly because the data for each year group is for very small cohorts and can be skewed when each pupil counts as at least 15%. The previous inspection identified mathematics as being the main area of concern. Although attainment by the end of Year 6 improved only slightly in 2010, in 2011 all pupils reached the national average and nearly half attained higher than the national average. There is no significant variation in the attainment of different groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Pupils made better progress because of the effective implementation of the school's action

January 2012



plan for mathematics. This is still continuing, and there has been some good progress in introducing more challenging mental mathematics work for pupils in all classes and providing more opportunities for problem solving in everyday activities. In 2011, by the end of Year 2, all pupils also attained the national average in mathematics. However, none reached a higher than average level, which was a similar picture to attainment in reading and writing. Assessment data and observation of pupils in the current Year 1/2 class suggest that the trend is moving upwards and some pupils should be reaching the higher levels in mathematics in the next two years. Importantly, all pupils spoken to said that they now like mathematics, unlike two years ago. They say that teachers 'make it more fun' and they like mental games such as 'doubling cricket' and 'shooting tables'.

The quality of teaching

Teachers have a range of assessment data which they use to satisfactory effect to set targets and learning challenges for pupils. However, a recent evaluation by the leadership has led to the introduction by the headteacher of a new strategy for assessment. This provides detailed personalised data on every pupil at any moment in time. It can be shared with parents and carers electronically but is in the early stages of development so its impact on teachers' planning is limited at present. Teachers manage pupils well and make every effort to give them enjoyable and challenging learning experiences. This was observed in a good lesson with the Year 5/6 class, when pupils enthusiastically and successfully constructed and used a basic mathematical instrument for measuring the heights of buildings and trees. However, some teaching still does not enable more-able pupils to move on to extension activities quickly enough. Pupils are aware of targets for learning but these are too generalised and are not specific to each individual.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils in lessons work happily and effectively together, often in pairs or small groups. This is especially helpful to younger pupils in the mixed-age classes throughout the school. Pupils respect each other and adults, and talk confidently about their learning. They also behave well outside in the school's extensive grounds, and show good safety awareness when playing on outdoor equipment. They express no concerns about any kind of bullying and do not report any bad behaviour in school.

The quality of leadership and management of the school

The recently appointed headteacher has made a promising start to leading school improvement. He has continued to implement plans for the improvement of attainment in mathematics, and is acting as an effective teaching role model for the subject. Whilst still using the school's assessment and tracking data for progress, he

is introducing more strategies for the development of individual learning programmes for every pupil. Staff have a clear understanding of what is expected of them with regard to the progress and personal development of pupils. Monitoring of teaching has taken place at regular intervals since the last inspection. This has identified steps for improvement of teaching practice, but it is not clear how quickly these suggestions are followed up or how they are related to the professional development needs of staff and the school. Due to his teaching commitments, the headteacher has had little opportunity since January to monitor teaching and provision in the school, other than by informal learning walks. The school leadership realises that this still needs further development and a greater sharing of responsibilities.

The local authority has been helpful in supporting and advising the school on improvement planning. The governing body continues to offer strong support and challenge to the school leadership and, with a determined and ambitious headteacher, demonstrates the school's capacity for further improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Rodney Braithwaite
Additional inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2010

- Raise standards in mathematics by:
 - extending the opportunities for pupils to use and apply what they know in a range of problem-solving activities
 - improving the pupils' mental mathematics skills.
- Make full and effective use of accurate assessment information to set challenging tasks that meet the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities, especially the more-able.
- Extend the monitoring of teaching and other provision, and ensure activities are rigorously evaluated to identify the next steps for improvement.