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Mr Lee Christopher
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Dear Mr Christopher

Short inspection of North Clifton Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 March 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in May 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and the governing body have set a clear direction for the school to ensure that it continues to prosper. You, the governors and the pupils say that North Clifton is 'a small school with big ideas' and this is reflected in the day-to-day work of the school.

Your focused and determined leadership sets the tone for the whole school community and your own high expectations are reflected in the work of your team. You have ensured that clear and robust procedures, underpinned by detailed and thorough record-keeping, are well understood by all. As a result, the school runs efficiently and there is a calm, purposeful atmosphere in which you all strive for excellence.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and are full of praise for you and your staff. They acknowledge your commitment and dedication, valuing the 'genuine atmosphere of mutual respect and kindness' and appreciating 'how the children take care of one another'. All parents responding to the online survey would recommend the school to others. You ensure that parents are well informed about their children's progress. For example, at parents' evenings, you provide individual 'progression planners' that show in detail what pupils already know and can do, and what they need to learn next.

Pupils have many opportunities to extend their learning within and beyond the school. For example, they are able to learn to play musical instruments, such as the ukulele, and attend a forest school. Pupils enjoy the various school visits and welcome opportunities to find out about different people and places.

The previous inspection report recommended that the work pupils are given should be sufficiently challenging to enable them to make good progress, and that there should be opportunities to practise their mathematical skills in other subjects. Pupils' work shows that they are routinely challenged in their work and that they are able to apply their mathematical skills in a range of contexts. Pupils make good, and sometimes rapid, progress over time.

You have rightly judged the quality of teaching as good, with some elements that are particularly strong. You have identified aspects that can be improved further to raise standards even more. Your improvement plans are well considered and you are monitoring progress closely to ensure that actions are having the desired impact.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. There are clear procedures for raising concerns and these are followed up thoroughly. Detailed records ensure that the school and other agencies have all the information they need to provide appropriate support. Staff receive regular training, including updates, to ensure that they are familiar with the most recent guidance.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and say that it is a safe place where behaviour is good and bullying is extremely rare. They say teachers are 'kind and helpful' and that they deal with any worries very quickly. All parents who responded to the online questionnaire said their children feel safe at school.

Staff know the pupils very well and are alert to any minor concerns or incidents which may occur. These are followed up quickly so they do not escalate. As a result, there are very few recorded incidents of poor behaviour.

Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Any absences are followed up rigorously.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You and a member of the governing body monitor documentation regularly to ensure that it meets all requirements.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I looked at how teaching supports pupils to achieve well. You ensure that there is a flexible approach to teaching, based on pupils' needs. Pupils are all set end-of-year targets based on their individual starting points. For some pupils, their starting points are low. Where this is the case, some pupils do

not achieve the standards expected for their age. However, detailed assessment information shows that progress is good overall and, for some pupils, it is rapid. Any gaps in achievement are closing as a result of this personalised approach to pupils' learning. The quality of teaching is good overall and there are elements of excellent practice.

- The early years environment is rich, vibrant and well resourced. Activities, both inside and outdoors, are engaging and children clearly enjoy their learning. Children are actively encouraged to be independent and they are proud of their achievements. For example, to help children when they were baking cakes, photographs were provided for each stage of the process. These were then used by the children to check their own progress. One child told me, 'I baked cakes by my own. The pictures tell you what to do.'
- Basic literacy skills are taught effectively. As a result, pupils are confident readers who have good comprehension skills. Pupils enjoy choosing their own reading books and told me about their favourite books and authors.
- Your focus on mathematics is improving pupils' numeracy skills. Pupils' books show that they can apply these skills in problem-solving activities and as part of their learning in other subjects. Pupils are also able to show their understanding of mathematical concepts and told me how the extra challenges they are given in some lessons help them to organise their thinking. A display of pupils' work on fractions demonstrates that they can explain their work and give examples of how fractions can be used.
- Teachers use questioning effectively to promote good-quality discussion, as well as checking pupils' understanding. For example, during a guided reading session, pupils in key stage 2 were encouraged to explore some of their ideas further and this helped them develop a greater understanding of how the author brings characters to life.
- Pupils told me that teachers help them with their learning in a number of ways. They said 'they explain it more, but they don't tell you the answer' and 'they sometimes tell you a method you can use.' Pupils explained how lessons have a main focus for learning and checklists to help them know when they have been successful. They enjoy the challenges they are given and understand that they may find them difficult. One pupil told me, 'making mistakes is the key to success.' They are resilient learners who are able to tackle a range of tasks confidently.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. Pupils are able to deepen their understanding in a range of subjects as a result of carefully planned topics that link different areas of learning. Pupils' work across the curriculum shows that they can apply their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects. Care is taken to develop basic skills in all subjects. This often leads to high-quality outcomes, for example pupils practised a range of skills before producing excellent watercolour paintings.
- In order to improve teaching so that overall it is as strong as the most effective practice in the school, you encourage high expectations at all times. This involves ensuring that all lessons are well paced and challenging, and that work set is at

the right standard for pupils of all ages and abilities.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching improves so that it is outstanding overall and enables all pupils to make consistently rapid progress.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Nottinghamshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jane Salt
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I visited all classes with you in order to observe teaching and learning. I reviewed pupils' books, covering a range of subjects, to consider the standard of work and the progress pupils are making. I talked to pupils at different times of the day and listened to some pupils read.

I held meetings with you throughout the day. I also met with members of staff and governors to discuss the school's work. I reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including policies, safeguarding documents, assessment information and your school improvement plan.

I took into account the 19 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and spoke to some parents informally at the start of the school day. I also took into account the views of the 16 pupils and the eight staff who responded to the online surveys.