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Mrs Elena Print  
Headteacher  
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Hertfordshire  
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Dear Mrs Print

### **Short inspection of Christ Church Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 27 March 2019, 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 2015.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

The ambitious vision for the school begins with you and extends across the school community. Working with parents and carers, leaders, staff and governors, you have secured a sustained rise in academic standards since the previous inspection. For example, in the 2018 tests in key stage 2, 93% of pupils reached or exceeded the expected standards in writing, reading and mathematics. This is 29% above the national average.

Leaders and staff strive for the very best at Christ Church, placing the pupils and their progress at the very heart of all activities. This is a warm, supportive and caring school, where children are encouraged to explore and have fun. Pupils are highly motivated and show curiosity, concentration and imagination. The pupils I spoke to told me that they enjoyed coming to school and 'didn't want to miss a day'. Attendance is well above the national average. Pupils are responsive, kind and caring towards each other.

Pupils enjoy a rich and stimulating curriculum, centred on their interests. Across the school, but particularly in the early years and key stage 1, fun and exploration are

at the core of practice. Teaching is strong. The teaching of phonics is a particular strength. Pupils in Year 1 attain highly in the national phonics screening check. Relationships between staff and pupils are nurturing and supportive. The school provides an exceptional range of stimulating resources and activities. These reflect and value the diversity of the pupils' experiences. There are many clubs for pupils to choose from, including Spanish, dance, computer coding, cricket and football. Visits to places of musical, artistic or scientific interest are a regular feature of the school's life. Parents engage strongly with the school to support their children.

You have addressed the priorities for improvement identified at the previous inspection. For example, you have developed the roles and increased the positive impact of leaders in improving and monitoring their subjects and areas of responsibility.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Procedures and systems for keeping pupils safe, and supporting pupils who require help, are thorough. Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding guidance relating to, for example, safe recruitment and children missing from education. Leaders ensure that training is regular and up to date. Staff are vigilant, and carefully maintain records in relation to checks carried out on adults who work at the school.

The school works well with outside agencies to ensure that all pupils are kept safe. A high level of vigilance by staff means that there is a consistent approach to dealing with any concerns. Children reported that they are listened to and feel safe.

### **Inspection findings**

- We agreed that the first focus of this inspection would evaluate the effectiveness of approaches to improve the school's curriculum. We focused on this because the curriculum was not identified as a strength in the school's own evaluation of its work, although your view is that it is strong. We agreed that this needed to be tested.
- Since the previous inspection, you and your leaders have radically redesigned the curriculum. You have sought to include new ideas and child-centred practices. As a result, the curriculum and teaching approaches are focused on pupils' interests and enriching their understanding of the world. Topics are pursued in depth so that pupils have the opportunity to develop practical skills and knowledge in a wide range of subjects. The curriculum has a core emphasis on progression in reading, writing and mathematics, and these are brought to the fore in pupils' learning.
- As a result of your leadership, the school reflects a rich and wide-ranging curriculum, which is highly effective. For example, in the early years and in key stage 1, there are engaging outdoor areas where children and pupils routinely extend their hands-on learning experiences. They cook, create art with clay and paints, roam, explore and observe. Pupils talked confidently about the work in their books and on display. Across the school, pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They are highly engaged and reach high standards because the

curriculum is strong and based on direct and shared experiences.

- The second area of focus was the accuracy and use of teachers' assessments of pupils' progress. This was to understand how assessment secures the high standards in the nationally reported assessments at the end of key stages 1 and 2. Additionally, you indicated that assessment was an area of weakness at the time of the previous inspection. We agreed that I should evaluate the quality of the actions you have taken to address this. We noted that your written evaluation of the school's work does not reflect the improvements you have made in this important area.
- Since the previous inspection, you and your leaders have introduced new methods and systems to check progress. You have ensured that these systems have evolved alongside the developments in the curriculum. As a result, the school now has a set of assessment systems which is well matched to the curriculum and strongly promotes pupils' progress.
- The measures that you have put in place to improve assessment are effective, and have underpinned the rise in standards over time. Across the school, assessments are accurate and used well to build in challenge for pupils. In the early years, for example, teachers watch and record activities and interactions carefully. They note their observations in high-quality and detailed records of progress. In turn, these records are carefully used to plan challenging activities for each individual child.
- Across the school, performance information is used widely and effectively. For example, teachers use the information to contribute to individual pupil progress meetings, and set high expectations. In this way, the school ensures that all pupils, from their different starting points, make substantial and sustained progress across the curriculum. Regular meetings with other schools are used to check the standard of pupils' work and validate teachers' assessment. Leaders use observations of teachers' practice in lessons and review pupils' work to confirm that assessments are accurate.
- The final area of focus for this inspection was the school's work to improve pupils' writing across the school, but especially in key stage 2. This was identified because external data indicates that pupils did not make as much progress in writing in key stage 2 as in, for example, mathematics.
- You have prioritised improving writing. You and your leaders have high expectations and have put in place a range of teaching approaches which have raised standards. These are based on strengthening teachers' understanding of how to teach writing and creating a curriculum which stimulates pupils to write. Leaders model and advise on good practice, and teachers discuss what works best in their lessons. Assessments are used very effectively to set high targets, which are then met. All of the pupils' books seen across a range of subjects demonstrated substantial progress from their starting points in writing. Almost all pupils are on track to meet the expected standard nationally, and many are working at a greater depth.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's self-evaluation, which was offered for consideration, is precise in its judgements and evaluative comments so that it fully reflects the school's successes.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Roberts  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and middle leaders. I held discussions with two governors, including the chair of governors. I also had a discussion with a local authority education adviser. I observed teaching and learning in a range of lessons. I evaluated pupils' progress by looking at pupils' workbooks and displays. I heard several pupils read, and engaged in wide-ranging conversations with them about their learning and experience at school. I considered recent information about pupils' progress. I considered the views of staff through 14 responses to the staff survey. I considered parents' views through 107 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and held discussions with parents in the playground before school.