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Ms N Jassat  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Jassat

### **Subject inspection of Charnwood Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 24 February 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. The findings do not change the overall effectiveness judgement of outstanding from the last section 5 inspection.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for a no formal designation inspection of schools. The inspection was carried out to enable Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to better understand the quality of education in specific subjects provided by outstanding primary schools.

### **Main findings**

Pupils at the school are very enthusiastic about geography. They have a strong desire to find out more about the world they inhabit. As one pupil put it, 'I enjoy learning in geography because I like being surprised when I find out more knowledge about the world.'

Geography is currently taught as a discrete subject in blocks of time, alternating with history each half term. Leaders have a clear vision and passion for the subject. They have recently implemented a new and ambitious curriculum for geography. This has been designed to ensure that the full scope of the national curriculum is accessible to all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). With the close support of additional adults, teachers adapt their approach for these pupils and those who require more support. Some pupils take part in the forest school programme, where they learn basic mapping skills and how to create shelter using natural materials, for example.

The subject leader has a good understanding of what is working well and what needs to be done to improve the curriculum further. The curriculum in Reception builds on what children learn in Nursery and enables pupils to be ready for Year 1. Similar links ensure that learning in key stage 2 builds upon what pupils have learned in key stage 1. Staff work collaboratively to plan the curriculum together. Leaders have invested in professional training and planning time to ensure that staff create an imaginative and inspiring curriculum, based on 'big questions' such as 'How are we connected?' and 'Do we live in a dangerous world?' Leaders have utilised the expertise of a member of the governing body in shaping the geography curriculum and ensuring that the new plans help pupils to be ready for key stage 3 by the end of Year 6.

The subject leader, together with class teachers, has made a successful start to delivering the new curriculum and enhancing the quality of pupils' learning in geography across all phases. However, the implementation of the curriculum is at a more advanced stage in some year groups than others. Leaders' plans, together with the quality of work in pupils' books, show that the provision for geography is stronger in key stage 1 and upper key stage 2 than in lower key stage 2. Leaders have acted to ensure greater consistency in all classes. Opportunities for fieldwork are well considered in the early years and key stage 1. There is a strong focus on comparing places and enabling pupils to identify the similarities and differences between them. Planning for in-depth fieldwork at key stage 2 is at a developmental stage.

Children in the early years get off to a very positive start in their understanding of the world around them. Staff plan schemes of learning flexibly, making sure that they take children's interests into account. Vibrant displays stimulate pupils' discovery of the planned themes and capture their experiences from visits to local places. Pupils learn about the similarities and differences between places through the whole-class reading of books, such as 'Lubna and the pebble.' This story helps children to develop empathy at an early age by considering the thoughts and feelings of people involved in migration or as refugees. Learning activities promote children's independent thinking and their willingness to share their thoughts and ideas. Staff make connections with the local area. For example, children learn about 'our street' and identify familiar surroundings such as the local park, library, mosque and fish and chip shop. Continuous play develops children's understanding of local features by encouraging writing of key words about 'our street' on the displayed map and constructing a railway, for example.

Teachers typically have good subject knowledge and they use this enthusiastically. Through their questioning and resources they promote the use of subject-specific terms well. Knowledge-retrieval activities, such as 'simmering starters', are helping pupils to recall and remember knowledge. In Year 6, for example, pupils can confidently recall their understanding of greenfield and brownfield sites. They use this knowledge to evaluate where the best sites might be to build new homes and a supermarket in their local area. Pupils are encouraged to think independently, and

they feel confident to ask challenging questions. Many questioned the need for increased housing and held firm views about the need for more green spaces. They questioned why brownfield sites could not be used for recreation space instead.

Pupils demonstrate good locational knowledge, especially in key stage 2. In the topics that have been planned most effectively, the curriculum successfully develops pupils' understanding of human and physical geography in the context of different places and locations. For example, in Year 5 pupils learn about global trade in their topic 'how are we connected?' Pupils understand the unequal distribution of natural resources across the world. They can discuss the reasons why food products are imported and exported between different countries and they consider the environmental impact of this. Pupils begin to understand why some countries have become more powerful than others. In Year 2, pupils can confidently explain the difference between human and physical features. They use this knowledge to describe the similarities and differences between Leicester and a small region in Madagascar. These units of learning are successful because teachers have precisely identified the knowledge they want pupils to acquire and remember.

The quality of pupils' written work does not always reflect the quality of pupils' spoken knowledge and understanding in geography. For example, there are limited opportunities for pupils to demonstrate the depth of their understanding through writing tasks. Sometimes the assessment of pupils' understanding in geography is not well thought out. In Year 4, for example, pupils' learning about floods in the United Kingdom and Florida does not secure or deepen their understanding of the causes and consequences of them.

Leaders have ensured that the formal curriculum for geography is complemented by enrichment experiences. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 participate in reciprocal visits to a school in rural Lincolnshire to help them understand the similarities and differences between rural and urban places in the United Kingdom. Pupils in Year 5 perform songs and poetry using a variety of instruments as part of a multi-cultural music project with the Leicestershire Music Education Hub. All classes showcased their research projects on different countries to parents as part of the school's 'geography day', reflecting their understanding of different cultures. Together, these experiences support pupils' learning in geography and contribute to their understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural themes.

Leaders and class teachers recognise that the new curriculum plans are in the first year of implementation and, therefore, it is too soon to assess their impact. The numerous displays around the school site and in each classroom reflect the importance that is placed on this subject. You are keen that provision for geography strengthens further as the implementation of the school's new curriculum continues to evolve. This includes improving the purposeful use of fieldwork at key stage 2, building on the strengths in the early years and key stage 1. The enthusiasm of staff and pupils for caring for the environment is also strongly evident in their commitment to a wide variety of environmental projects, including the Leicester

'litter less' campaign, monitoring energy usage and recycling projects. The ethos of the school is positive, and the activities collectively promote the school's values and motto 'Empathy, respect and together'.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection I met with you, the deputy headteacher and the subject leader for geography. I evaluated the curriculum plans for geography. Together with the subject leader and deputy headteacher, I visited lessons in the Reception class and in Years 2, 5 and 6. I looked at a selection of pupils' books from the lessons visited with senior leaders. I also looked at a small sample of pupils' work from other year groups. I met with the class teachers from the lessons I had visited and the leader for the Reception class. I spoke with three groups of pupils from Years 2, 5 and 6. I also spoke with pupils informally during lessons. I also met with the coordinator for the school's environmental sustainability projects.

## **Context**

Charnwood Primary School is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. There are currently 447 pupils on roll. The school is fully staffed. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Stevens  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**