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Mr Michael Harding
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Harding

Short inspection of Clifton Primary School

Following my visit on 11 May 2017, 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 September 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education since the last inspection. You and your leadership team have managed a period of turbulence well. You have resolved staffing difficulties for younger pupils in school by restructuring the team and appointing new teachers. Your experienced teachers coach and mentor these new members of staff, enabling them to be effective in the classroom. The school has also coped well with an unsettled period of governance. You can now look forward to rejuvenated challenge from the governing body in the next stage of the school's improvement.

You and your leadership team have placed great emphasis on pupils' well-being. You have also developed activities to encourage pupils to think for themselves. This has had a positive effect on pupils' confidence and in their speaking, listening and writing skills. Pupils can express their views and opinions confidently and want to share them.

The school community prides itself on and rewards pupils' good behaviour. Pupils behave well throughout the school day. They focus on their learning in class and play together well in the playground. They are polite and friendly and welcome new pupils and visitors into school. You have received many letters praising pupils' excellent behaviour when they take part in activities out of school.

Since the previous inspection, you have taken effective action to address the areas for improvement recommended by the lead inspector. You have improved teaching so teachers keep the introduction to lessons concise, to allow pupils maximum time for practising skills. You have also appointed a new leader to oversee the teaching and learning of phonics and reading. Training for staff has enabled them to teach phonics more effectively and current pupils are progressing well with their phonics. However, the disruption to teaching in key stage 1 last year meant that the impact of these actions was not evident in pupils' outcomes in phonics in 2016.

The previous inspector also asked leaders to sharpen their evaluation of pupil performance information so that they could have a stronger impact on all aspects of pupils' achievement. Now, school improvement documents show detailed analysis of pupils' progress and attainment. You use this information well to plan and develop teaching in school. You evaluate your actions to ensure that these have the desired impact on improving outcomes for learners. This is a strength of the school and enabled you to identify the next steps for the school. The good outcomes and strong progress that most pupils made at the end of key stage 2 last year were not replicated in key stage 1. In addition, attendance for vulnerable groups of pupils remains below national expectations. This is an ongoing priority.

Most parents who responded to Parent View, and those to whom I spoke, said that their children are making good progress and that the school keeps parents informed about their children's progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed. Leaders organise training each term to keep new and experienced staff up to date. Training for an additional member of staff ensures that a safeguarding leader always accompanies pupils on residential trips.

In school, leaders and staff meet regularly to ensure that vulnerable pupils are kept safe. Leaders and staff liaise with parents and professionals from other agencies, seeking advice when necessary. This ongoing vigilance ensures that pupils' safety is central to the school's business. The pupils I spoke to all said that they felt safe in school and that there is little bullying. On the rare occasions when bullying occurs, teachers resolve it quickly.

Inspection findings

- In 2016, pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 met and exceeded national standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils of middle ability and those that who find learning difficult made strong progress in all subjects. Writing was a strength. However, the most able pupils did not achieve as well as they could in reading and mathematics. You have wasted no time in addressing this issue. You reorganised classes to address more effectively the needs of all pupils. You ensured that teachers use assessment information well to plan the next learning steps for pupils. Additional training has resulted in teachers being able to

challenge the most able pupils more effectively. This group of pupils are now making good progress to reach greater depth in their learning.

- A key line of enquiry for this inspection was to consider the children who did not achieve a good level of development when they left the early years and how they would catch up in Year 1. You had already identified this as a priority for the school. Weaker outcomes in 2016 reflected the turnover of teachers and lack of stability in this area of school. You have resolved this issue and the school is now moving forwards because a stable team is in place. There is a new early years leader, who is undertaking training to support her in her new role. Children now have more opportunities to write. You have employed a speech and language therapist and trained a teaching assistant to support the development of children's language. Pupils' work books and progress information show that current pupils are making strong progress in Year 1 in reading and have caught up with their learning. In writing and mathematics, however, we discussed how pupils' progress should be more rapid to ensure that more pupils reach age-related expectations.
- Leaders monitor pupils' attendance diligently. Figures show that overall attendance is broadly in line with the national average. However, despite your best efforts, a small number of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not attend school as regularly as they should. Governors and leaders agree that attendance remains an area of development for the school and that there is still work to be done to ensure that any barriers to regular attendance are removed.
- The development of a curriculum to meet the needs of your pupils is a strength of the school. Pupils can access a wide range of activities, clubs, experiences and trips. For example, pupils look forward to outdoor learning, they enjoy mountain biking, horse riding, karate, music and fitness. You and your staff have high aspirations for all pupils. The recent careers week enabled girls to see the possibility of working in non-traditional roles. For example, one girl was amazed that women could be pilots.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching and learning in key stage 1 continues to develop so that pupils make more rapid progress in writing and mathematics
- strategies to improve attendance have a greater impact on disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

Yours sincerely

Jean Robinson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and the business manager. I met with the chair of governors and another member of the governing body. I had a discussion with a representative from the local authority. I considered the 18 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, as well as 17 written comments, and spoke to parents at the start of the school day. I toured the school with you, observing teaching and learning, and scrutinised pupils' work in their books. I spoke to pupils informally, both in lessons and around school at lunchtime. I examined a wide range of school documentation relating to school improvement planning, self-evaluation, attendance, pupils' outcomes and safeguarding.