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Mr Mark North
Richard Bonington Primary and Nursery School
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Dear Mr North

Short inspection of Richard Bonington Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 17 January 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

The school has undergone significant staff changes since the last inspection, including a change of headteacher. Pupil outcomes dipped in 2016 in a way that is not typical for this school, which previously had a strong record of high achievement. However, you have responded to all of these issues with speed and determination. You made some very astute appointments within a short space of time. Your current leadership team is an energetic driving force for improvement, under your highly focused and reflective leadership.

Your relatively new leadership team knows the school very well and your self-evaluation summary is concise and easy to understand. You have correctly identified the school's key strengths and areas for improvement. These areas for improvement are covered very coherently through all of the school's action and improvement plans and, as a result of these concerted efforts, standards are improving rapidly.

Your vision, 'together we will make a difference to the lives of our children', can be seen in action in all parts of the school. Pupils and parents alike speak very warmly, in glowing terms, about the quality of care they receive through the school's strong pastoral support systems. A parent described this support as, simply, 'amazing'. During a discussion with pupils, they readily offered examples of how staff had

shown kindness to them in times of need such as bereavement or being new to the school, saying, 'They welcomed me very kindly' and 'I like it here, you can trust everyone.' Pupils say they enjoy school, recognise that they are taught well and, as a result, they are rightly proud of their school.

At the previous inspection, the school was asked to improve teaching, make sure that tasks were demanding enough for all abilities and make lessons more interesting for pupils. During our tour of the school, I saw plenty of evidence to confirm that you have addressed these issues. The work in pupils' books shows that their written work is of a consistently high quality across all year groups and for both boys and girls. The work is very well presented and denotes pupils' pride in their personal progress; this applies equally to the work of disadvantaged pupils. Pupils spoke freely about their interesting lessons. For example, many described with enthusiasm a 'Business Apprentice' project they were following. Others said they liked it when a teacher helps them to 'visualise something' so that they understand it better.

The samples of pupils' work on display around the school are particularly impressive. Displays reflect a wide range of interesting subjects and topics such as 'The Rainforest', 'The Great Fire of London', science and religious education themes. You have established a bright, attractive, orderly and well-resourced school environment.

As we visited several classes I observed many examples of pupils working with enjoyment and calm determination. In the Nursery and Reception classes, children were happily engaged in a wide range of activities and I observed adults skilfully supporting children's language development through thoughtful conversation and games. In Year 2, pupils were rising to the challenge of using prepositions in their writing and I observed several boys choosing ambitious vocabulary to bring life and colour to their work. For example, they wrote about 'motionless high trees' and branches 'wafting and dangling above my head'. In a Year 6 intervention group for disadvantaged pupils, I was impressed by the tenacity shown by pupils and by their willingness to talk with enthusiasm about how they have improved their work.

The school provides effective challenge and support for the most and least able pupils. However, there is still scope for increasing the level of challenge for middle-attaining pupils so that they too can make accelerated progress in writing and mathematics.

The school has correctly identified the need to improve its outdoor provision for children in the early years. Currently, the area is not being fully utilised to support children's physical and coordination skills.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is a strength of the school. You have made sure that very rigorous procedures are in place. All policies are fully compliant with regulations: the single central record is managed scrupulously; training for staff and governors is up to

date and carefully documented; child protection records are thorough and all concerns are followed through. It is abundantly clear, from talking to a range of staff, that safeguarding is regarded as being of the utmost importance to the school.

In my discussions with pupils, they stated emphatically that they feel safe at school. They could describe how they had been taught about a wide range of issues such as internet safety and all forms of bullying. They spoke with confidence about the ability of staff to keep them safe and deal swiftly with any issues that may arise.

During our tour of the school, I observed a number of examples where staff were providing an exceptional level of care for pupils, including those who are more vulnerable on account of their special educational needs and/or disabilities. This culture of care and vigilance is clearly an integral part of the day-to-day life of the school.

Inspection findings

- In 2016, there was a sharp dip in standards at the end of key stage 1 and in progress at the end of key stage 2. These outcomes were not typical for the school. You and other leaders meticulously analysed the reasons for this dip and have responded swiftly to tackle the issues in writing and mathematics, both by making some astute appointments and by harnessing the expertise of the relatively new leadership team. You also arranged for the skilled and experienced deputy headteacher to be released from class teaching in favour of a more strategic role. The evidence I gathered during the inspection confirms a strongly improving picture. Pupils are now on track to make good progress from their starting points.
- You have now established a thorough system for tracking pupils' progress at key points throughout the year. As a result, you are able to monitor the progress of all groups of pupils very carefully, including disadvantaged pupils. The experienced leader responsible for the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities keeps a very close eye on the progress of pupils and their individual barriers to learning. I was particularly interested to hear about the support offered to parents in this regard through coffee mornings and also through the establishment of a weekly on-site 'parents for parents' self-help group.
- Governors provide effective support for the school and are particularly mindful to recruit new members of the board who have pertinent skills and expertise. Governors were able to speak with confidence about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They gave many examples of ways in which they work to support school improvement.
- The minutes of their meetings clearly demonstrate that governors do not shy away from challenging senior leaders and holding them to account for the school's performance. They take their statutory duties very seriously, both with regard to safeguarding and also in the way they monitor the spending of the pupil premium grant.
- The experienced deputy headteacher provides very effective leadership of the

school's provision for disadvantaged pupils. The published pupil premium strategy, which outlines how the pupil premium grant is spent and its impact on pupils' progress, is a very precise and informative document. The deputy headteacher has made sure that all of the provision stems from an analysis of each pupil's individual barriers to learning. As a result, the provision is effective and disadvantaged pupils are well supported and make good progress from their starting points.

- The school's newly launched website complies with statutory requirements in all but a few minor aspects. You are aware that these omissions need to be rectified straight away.
- The local authority provides the school with effective support commensurate to need. The school is currently judged to require a 'light touch' level of support.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the outdoor provision for pupils in the early years is improved so that it is fully utilised to support children's physical and coordination skills
- the level of challenge for middle-attaining pupils is increased in line with other ability groups, so that they too can make more rapid progress in writing and mathematics.

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. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christine Watkins
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the wider leadership team. I met with a group of pupils, the vice-chair and a small group of governors and I held a telephone conversation with the local authority representative. I listened to pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' written work. We conducted a tour of the school together and visited many lessons and activities. I observed pupils' behaviour around school, in lessons and in the dining hall.

I met a number of parents informally at the beginning of the school day and considered the views of parents expressed in 41 responses posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I evaluated a wide range of documents, including minutes of governors' meetings and safeguarding documentation.