

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



19 April 2016

Mr Andrew Hook  
Headteacher  
Alexander McLeod Primary School  
Fuchsia Street  
London  
SE2 0QS

Dear Mr. Hook

### **Short inspection of Alexander McLeod Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 March 2016, 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 January 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since becoming the permanent headteacher of the school in April 2014, you have further raised expectations and set out a clear vision of improvement. This has successfully helped to develop a strong team of senior leaders and teachers. You have ensured that staff are focused on improving further the standards of behaviour, progress and attainment. Nearly all the parents I met commented on the availability of yourself, your senior leaders and teachers. They value highly the fact that any concerns reported are dealt with quickly.

Your senior and middle leaders have successfully worked with staff to create a culture where every pupil is seen as a reader and writer. Pupils have a strong sense of self-motivation because they aspire to improve the quality of their work. This is particularly strong in mathematics where pupils are making consistently good progress. They use feedback from staff to make improvements to their mathematical calculations.

You and your staff have successfully involved parents in the life of the school. For example, parents greatly appreciate the opportunity to attend a morning club on the school's book bus. They particularly value the discussions they have about children's books and home learning activities. One parent said, 'This club is fantastic. I can have a coffee and learn more about how to help my child improve their reading.' Many parents also appreciate the fact that there are opportunities for them to learn. You have enabled staff to teach courses for those parents learning English as an additional language. This undoubtedly helps all stakeholders feel they

are part of a learning community, regardless of whether they are a pupil, parent or member of staff.

The previous Ofsted inspection in January 2011 identified writing and teachers' feedback to pupils as key areas for improvement. These have been tackled with vigour and determination. Writing has improved significantly in the past two years. Pupils talk with passion about their writing. They are proud of what they achieve and that they have published their writing in books. For example, Year 6 talked about their upcoming book sale of spy novels they have written. Oral and written feedback has improved, so that pupils are clear how they can improve the quality of their work. This helps some pupils to significantly move on in their learning. For example, in what the school calls 'precision teaching', pupils at risk of underachieving in writing get highly focused feedback and use this to create engaging stories regardless of their starting point. Pupils are proud that the writing they create is highly valued and displayed when it is completed.

You have skilfully enhanced the school's celebration of pupils' achievements: for example, creating an art evening where each pupil's best artwork is framed and displayed for parents. Such events are highly valued by pupils and parents. It has helped pupils develop a sense of belief in their own ability. One said, 'I am an artist because I have had my work displayed in a gallery and I am an author as my writing has been made into a book.' This self-belief alongside a growing appreciation of the world of work prepares pupils well for later life. For example, pupils recently pitched e-safety inventions to adults. The activity helped pupils to develop a better understanding of the world of business alongside staying safe online.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

School leaders, including governors, have created a culture where staff are alert to the dangers that children may face. They have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Senior leaders have trained staff to understand their responsibilities outlined in recent national duties to prevent extremism, radicalisation and female genital mutilation. Pupils feel safe at school. The vast majority of parents agree this is the case.

Leaders are quick to respond when pupils, parents or staff raise concerns. The school works effectively with parents and families where concerns arise. It works well with other agencies including health, social care and the local authority to safeguard children from harm.

Pupils' attendance is systematically checked to ensure that they attend school frequently. When concerns are identified, the school is quick to work with families and individuals to improve attendance. Internal and, where necessary, external support and challenge are given to ensure that any barriers to attending school are overcome.

## Inspection findings

- Leaders at all levels, including governors, have focused on ensuring that teachers provide exciting and interesting learning activities for pupils. A core focus in the curriculum is the development of reading, writing and self-belief. Teachers match learning to the needs and interests of pupils across the school. This ensures that pupils' imaginations are stimulated and their enthusiasm fired.
- Staff have received professional development tailored to their individual needs. However, staff have also had a wide range of feedback from the school's ongoing monitoring of teaching. This has helped to ensure that teaching has developed so that it is consistently good, with pockets of even stronger practice growing.
- A culture of reading for pleasure and finding information in books has been developed throughout the school. Pupils are keen to engage in the very many opportunities to read. They complete regular book reviews and share in assembly their opinions on books they have read.
- Pupils appreciate the opportunities to read on the school's book bus. This former London red bus in the playground is well supervised, allowing pupils to read during morning break and lunchtime.
- Pupils are highly knowledgeable about authors and different kinds of fiction and non-fiction books. They use this knowledge well to select books with an increasing maturity and sophistication.
- Regular guided reading lessons are developing pupils' ability to critically consider books and texts. They are increasingly mature in their thinking about how writers create an impact on a reader. This understanding is helping to improve their writing too.
- Books can be seen everywhere around the school. This is creating a culture where pupils value and appreciate the benefits of books.
- Pupils are making good progress in their reading across the school. However, although some pupils make rapid progress in reading, this is not consistent. Progress is improving as pupils benefit from increased expectations of what they can achieve. However, leaders agree that this is a key area of their work, particularly for pupils in key stage 2, to drive standards higher.
- Children in the early years benefit from a bright and stimulating learning environment throughout the indoor and outdoor classrooms. Learning activities are well matched to the needs and interests of individual children.
- Children typically begin school in the Reception classes with skill levels below those typical for their age. An increasing number of children are starting school with little or no prior experience of speaking English. These children, who are learning English as an additional language, make rapid gains in all areas of their learning. Children across the early years consistently make at least good progress across the different areas of learning.

- Teachers and teaching assistants in the early years make good use of the outdoor environment to develop children's learning. Children are enabled to take risks and learn to keep themselves safe. They learn to play well together respecting one another and learning about the environment around them. For example, one child was fascinated by a snail in the outdoor area. This curiosity was well developed by staff as they discussed with the child why the classroom was not the best habitat for it to live in.
- Parents are happy they are kept up to date with the progress their children make in the early years. Teachers skilfully share assessments through an online tool, but ensure that parents without access to information technology can also see the outcome of their children's learning. One parent explained, 'I love being able to see what my daughter has been up to in Reception. She is doing brilliantly. I wouldn't change schools for anything now, even though I live a long way from the school.' This illustrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity, which is also evident in the efforts to support parents to complete Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, in between school inspections.
- Across the whole school, pupils are clear that behaviour has improved over the past two years. They say they enjoy school and feel more is expected of them. Parents virtually all agree behaviour is at least good. Many say playground conduct has been improved by the different activities available at lunchtime. 'Before there was just a concrete playground with little to do. Now pupils have different things they can play and they are more spread out.'
- Pupils enjoy the additional responsibilities on offer. For example, Year 2 pupils are proud of their appointment as lunchtime helpers. They talk with clarity about what they have learned from applying for the role and having been through a job interview. As a result, pupils from a young age develop an understanding of jobs and the world of work.
- Pupils' absence was in line with the national average in 2015. However, disadvantaged pupils had much higher persistent absence (absence of more than 10% across the academic year). Leaders have rightly focused on improving attendance further. The school's attendance officer meets with parents and local authority absence officers fortnightly. Together they meet with parents to support and challenge families to ensure that their children attend frequently. This partnership work has effectively improved attendance so it is now above the national average for 2015. However, although persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils has halved, it is still above the national average for all pupils.
- The local authority judged that the school was not improving swiftly enough after the last inspection. This quick and significant challenge helped to ensure that the school maintained previous strengths and continued to develop. The local authority now rightly judges that the school has maintained its previous good level of effectiveness while continuing to strive for excellence.

- Governance has improved significantly in the past two years. In 2014, the governing body was reduced in size when it was reconstituted. Governors carefully considered the skills they needed to develop the quality of challenge given to leaders. They have used this knowledge to broaden the skill base of the governing body and tightly focus on improving the outcomes of pupils. As a result, the school has improved the progress and attainment of pupils in the past 18 months.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a greater proportion of pupils make better than expected progress in their reading across key stage 2
- they work with families to further reduce persistent absence, especially of those who are from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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

Yours sincerely

David Storrie  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

The inspector visited a range of classes across the school to check on the progress and behaviour of pupils. Pupils' work books were scrutinised during these short visits to classes. These observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. Meetings were held with senior leaders, two members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, a group of parents and a group of pupils. A range of documentation was scrutinised including the school's own evaluation of its performance, information relating to safeguarding, the school's plans for development and information about pupils' progress, including evidence of learning in the Reception classes. The inspector took account of the 76 responses to Parent View and the 45 responses to the staff questionnaire. The inspector also took account of a phone call made to Ofsted during the inspection.