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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Krysia Vickery
Headteacher
Alveston CofE Primary School
Knights Lane
Stratford-upon-Avon
Warwickshire
CV37 7BZ

Dear Mrs Vickery

Short Inspection of Alveston CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 October 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 June 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

- Alveston Primary is a warm and welcoming church school, where pupils are provided with a successful, well-rounded education. The school's aim of 'Achieving at Alveston' is well supported by the creative curriculum and the strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision in particular. Staff are very supportive of the leaders, are proud to be part of the school and agree that pupils' behaviour is typically good. Leaders have made some improvements since the previous inspection and agree that changes are still needed. There are a number of strengths in this school, such as well-organised resources and the broad curriculum providing a range of rich learning experiences for the pupils. To further improve pupils' progress, leaders now need to sharpen priorities for improvement and use the existing strengths to develop the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment across the school.
- Pupils receive a good education at this school. They are rightly proud of their school and enjoy the exciting curriculum, grounds and extra-curricular opportunities on offer. Pupils can join after-school clubs run by the school and apply for leadership opportunities such as the 'E-safety Committee'. 'Peer mediators' help others at playtimes and Year 6 'buddies' support Reception children when they first start school. As part of their work to teach a broad curriculum and work with outside organisations, the school has achieved national awards for internet safety, 'Healthy Schools' and 'Artsmark' gold.

- At the previous inspection, it was recommended that leaders and managers should accelerate pupils' progress in writing in particular. The school has had success with this for most pupils, although boys' progress in writing is not as strong as that of girls. The school has been rightly focusing on mathematics more recently and the high standards at the end of key stages 1 and 2 demonstrate success. Leaders and teachers have also been successful in making further improvements to the curriculum to increase cross-curricular learning through educational visits for example. However, leaders' improvement plans are not sufficiently focused on some of the pupil groups which do not perform as well as others, such as boys and those with low prior attainment.
- The proportion of vulnerable pupils at the school is lower than the national average. This includes disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, those with low prior attainment and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Typically, the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are met successfully and they are progressing well. A few pupils in this group have more complex needs and their progress has been slower. The school nurtures and caters for vulnerable pupils carefully. Leaders recognise that there could be better targeted support for some pupils to help them make the progress they are capable of by the time they leave the school in Year 6.

Safeguarding is effective

Leaders ensure that the systems in place to keep pupils safe meet statutory requirements. There is a good awareness of safeguarding around the school, as staff are kept up to date with the latest requirements and know what to do if they have any concerns. For example, a clear system is in place for staff to alert leaders about concerns and three senior leaders are trained to manage any safeguarding concerns. Pupils say they feel safe because staff resolve any issues they have. One pupil told me, 'There are plenty of staff who we trust.' Parents can easily find information on the school website about internet safety. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are appropriately detailed.

Behaviour is good because pupils are typically respectful of each other and members of staff. Pupils say that there are very few problems at playtimes because adults help to resolve any disagreements that occur. Leaders agree that a few pupils can be a little boisterous during some playtimes and say that systems, such as the 'thinking room', are in place to manage this. In the past, some pupils had low attendance. Leaders have worked with these pupils and their families to ensure that no pupils are currently persistently absent. Overall, staff promote good behaviour and personal development through the school's strong values and spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have continued to develop teaching, the curriculum and improve the provision for pupils in this school since the last inspection. For example, staff intervention and support has helped to improve younger pupils' English skills,

so that initial gaps, identified in Reception, have diminished by the time they are in Year 1. This is reflected in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected phonics standard by the end of Year 1, which has steadily increased and remains just above the national average. Standards at the end of Year 2 have continued to improve and are consistently above the national average. Initial assessment information suggests that this pattern has continued in 2016.

- At the end of Year 6, pupils' outcomes have been consistently above the national average in mathematics and well above in reading and writing. Initial information suggests that this will also be the case for the 2016 Year 6 cohort when the national averages are published. By the time they leave the school, pupils typically make good, and sometimes better progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points. In addition, pupils have strong grammar, punctuation and spelling skills by the end of Year 6, helping them to be well prepared for secondary school.
- The most able pupils achieve well at this school, especially in reading and writing. The proportion of pupils who achieve high standards in these subjects at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are consistently above the national average. The pattern in 2015 demonstrated an increasing proportion of pupils achieved a higher standard in mathematics by the end of Year 6. Initial assessment information suggests that these trends have continued in 2016. The small number of disadvantaged pupils in this school typically perform as well as other pupils nationally. A few of these pupils also reach higher standards by the time they leave the school, although the numbers are too small to make a meaningful comparison.
- Teachers improve their skills through training and working closely with staff in other schools to check teacher assessments for example. Due to younger pupils' increasing speech and language needs, leaders have introduced interventions to help improve these skills. Examples of this are additional phonics teaching and one-to-one support to help improve pupils' speech and improve their vocabulary.
- Pupils were observed engaging in purposeful learning activities across the school. In Reception, children were using mathematics resources to quickly recognise the number 10. Pupils' learning in Year 1 included writing a letter to Mrs Claus explaining which material would be best for Santa's new coat. Linked science work on investigating materials is a good example of the school's cross-curricular learning. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were completing reading and writing activities based on class texts and the school's work with the local Royal Shakespeare Company. Workbooks demonstrate progress in pupils' skills across classes and different pupil groups. However, progress is not consistently strong because some teaching needs further development and the school's marking and feedback policy is not as effective as it could be. The school's handwriting policy is to teach joined letters from Reception. A sample of pupils' workbooks across the school shows that pupils use neat, joined handwriting and careful presentation in their books, but this is not yet consistent enough.
- Nearly all parents are very pleased with their children's education and several made very positive comments such as 'Alveston School is a wonderful place where every child is made to feel part of its warm nurturing environment.' Parents appreciate the effort made by staff to support pupils and ensure that they settle well in school, especially in Reception Year. A small number of

parents also commented that they would like to see greater consistency in communication, homework and more detailed feedback on how their children progress as they move through the school. In discussion with me, leaders agreed that these areas could further improve.

- Governors know and support the school well, but do not provide enough effective challenge to hold leaders and teachers firmly to account for pupils' progress. Some governors work closely with the school leaders and the church to develop the Christian ethos of the school and its place within the community. The committee structure has recently been improved and governor visits to the school are now more focused on those aspects of the provision which need improving the most, such as mathematics, but not all.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- improvement plans are succinct and sharply focused on the areas of the school's provision which need improving the most
- the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment is further improved to meet the needs of pupils or groups more closely, especially boys and those pupils with low prior attainment
- the school's marking and feedback policy is consistent and effective in supporting pupils' progress
- there is greater challenge from governors and senior leaders to hold subject leaders and teachers more rigorously to account.

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

Yours sincerely

Stuart Bellworthy
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

To check the actions taken by leaders since the last inspection and to ascertain that the school still provides pupils with a good education, I met with you, a group of governors, senior leaders and a group of teachers. In addition, you and I observed teaching in four classes across the school and looked at the progress and quality of pupils' work over time. I spoke to a range of pupils in lessons and at playtime. Informal discussions were held with parents to gauge their views on the school and 54 recent responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), including any free-text comments, were considered. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes were observed around the school and at playtimes. A wide range of documentation was also scrutinised, including the school's plans for improvement,

external monitoring reports, records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding, records of checks made by leaders and information on pupils' current progress and most recent outcomes.