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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Carla Clarke
Executive Headteacher
Albert Pritchard Infant School
Crew Road
Wednesbury
West Midlands
WS10 9QG

Dear Mrs Clarke

Short inspection of Albert Pritchard Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 14 June 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 May 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

You and your staff work tremendously hard to ensure that the learning experiences for pupils are purposeful, enjoyable and appropriately challenging. Teachers know their pupils well and plan work which meets their needs. As a result, pupils make good progress from their starting points and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

You are a dynamic and ambitious leader who puts the development of pupils' learning at the heart of everything you do. You, along with a committed and determined leadership team, continually seek ways to further improve the quality of education at Albert Pritchard. You frequently ask for the opinions of others, including pupils and parents, to find out what could be made better at the school. You then act on their responses promptly. For example, following feedback from parents, you now record learning targets in the home-school diary.

You and other leaders have effective plans of action for making the school outstanding. Your improvement plans are tightly focused and identify the right actions to further strengthen the already good teaching and learning. Senior leaders' high expectations are understood and embraced by everyone, which creates a tangible energy for improvement in the school. Governors share the same ambition and are passionate about the school. One governor commented, 'We all

want what's best for the children.' However, governors, while generally effective, are not always challenging enough in holding you and other leaders to account. They do not make enough use of information about the progress of different groups of pupils to contribute to decisions about how best to improve outcomes for all. They are not contributing enough to the future direction of the school.

There is a buzz of excitement in every classroom at Albert Pritchard because teachers plan engaging work which captures the pupils' interests. For example, pupils told me enthusiastically about their 'pirates' topic and the dance they are creating. Eye-catching displays of work along the corridor walls celebrate the pupils' achievements. As a result of pupils' deep involvement in their learning, they show very good behaviour and positive attitudes to school.

You have been effective in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Despite several changes in staffing, you have maintained the quality of teaching and ensured that pupils are given time to practise skills independently and build on their knowledge. You have made significant strides in building leadership capacity through some innovative practice, including sharing teachers' expertise across the federation. Core subject leaders are now more involved in contributing to whole-school improvement, although you recognise that there is further work to be done in relation to the leadership of foundation subjects. Some of these subject leaders, while having a good overview of their subjects, do not yet make full use of monitoring information to raise standards in their subject areas and so help pupils to progress at a faster rate.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture throughout the school. Staff know precisely what they should do if they have any concerns about a child. All staff receive regular training about different aspects of child protection, which enables them to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities fully. You deal with any concerns promptly and work in collaboration with other agencies, as necessary, to reduce the risk of harm to pupils. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. There are effective procedures in place for the recruitment and induction of new staff.

Pupils are safe in school. They are taught about how to keep safe in a range of situations. For example, they have a good awareness of protecting themselves from the sun and know how to cross the road safely. Pupils also talked confidently to me about e-safety and how they keep themselves safe when on the computer. The school's website contains a lot of useful information for parents linked to online safety. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and nearly all parents agree. Pupils are responsible and know 'out-of-bounds' areas on the playground and how to get first aid if they need it.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed three key lines of enquiry. As well as checking the effectiveness of safeguarding, I looked at how well the pupil premium funding is used to support disadvantaged pupils, the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils' attendance. As a result of responses on Parent View, a fourth key line of enquiry was added, relating to communication with parents and keeping them informed about their children's progress.
- By the end of key stage 1 in 2016, only about half of disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 attained the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, despite this, most disadvantaged pupils made good progress from their low starting points because the pupil premium funding was targeted appropriately to support these pupils. Those pupils who have fallen behind with their reading benefit from one-to-one teacher support, which helps them to make accelerated progress.
- Leaders' ongoing focus on improving further the quality of teaching across the school has a positive effect on raising levels of achievement for all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because teachers plan lessons which closely match the needs of the pupils. Their explanations are clear and the guidance they give to pupils helps them to move forward in their learning.
- During lessons, pupils independently select and use a range of resources well to help them understand and make sense of their learning. This benefits all pupils, especially those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, I observed pupils regularly choosing different equipment to help them successfully solve mathematical problems.
- Leaders track pupils' achievement carefully, holding regular meetings with teachers to check on each pupil's progress. Teachers put in place extra support when needed for any pupils who are beginning to slip behind. You have established a thorough system for making sure that teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate. While this includes pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the moderation of their work could be more robust, particularly those working at P scales (the measures of the smallest steps of progress).
- The leadership of special educational needs is strong. The inclusion manager coordinates a range of effective support to help pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to overcome barriers to learning. As a result, these pupils make at least good progress from their individual starting points.
- You have enabled pupils to be at the very heart of decision-making in school. It is obvious that their voice really matters. As a result, pupils show unusually high levels of autonomy, and proactively take a lead in improving their school. For example, pupils told me about the 'play patrol' that they had invented, whereby pupils take responsibility for keeping a check on playground behaviour. This initiative has successfully prevented playground disputes from escalating. Another good example I observed was the popular 'never-lonely library' solely run by

pupils at playtime. This enterprise enables pupils to do something purposeful during their breaktimes, such as using 'spotter sheets' to identify minibeasts. These initiatives have a positive effect on the self-esteem of all pupils.

- Pupils' attendance remains below the national figure, although the attendance of specific groups, including pupils eligible for free school meals and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is improving. This is because leaders are doing everything possible to combat poor attendance and encourage pupils to attend school regularly. Pupils' good attendance is rewarded, and leaders rightly take forceful action against parents who fail to send their children to school without good reason. Information from the school's data shows how those pupils who are attending regularly are making better gains in their learning.
- Leaders have worked determinedly to build better links between home and school. Recent developments include a 'headteacher's surgery' for parents and a 'parent forum', both with the aim of increasing parents' involvement in the school. Despite less favourable comments from a few parents, the vast majority welcome and support the raft of improvements you have introduced. Some parents do, understandably, have concerns about e-communications when their access to computers is limited. However, you have tried to alleviate this by making computers available for parents to use in school. Parents receive a wealth of information about school events and their children's learning and progress, including termly reports.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- middle leaders of foundation subjects use their findings from monitoring activities to improve the quality of teaching across the school and contribute to raising pupils' levels of achievement
- governors challenge leaders more rigorously about the performance of different groups and strategically contribute more to shaping the school's future
- assessment of work for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and who are working below the standard of key stage 1, is carefully moderated to ensure accuracy
- the school continues to support and encourage all pupils to attend regularly.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim Hill
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held discussions with you, the deputy headteacher and the inclusion manager to discuss the school's current evaluation. I observed learning in all classes and reviewed a selection of pupils' books. I met with a group of staff to discuss safeguarding. I also held a meeting with the school improvement adviser from Sandwell local authority. I met with four governors to discuss governance.

I listened to pupils read and also held a discussion with a group of Year 1 and 2 pupils and considered the 29 responses to the online pupil survey. I evaluated a wide range of documents, including action plans, governors' meeting minutes, pupils' assessment information and records about child protection. The views of parents were considered through the 23 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, as well as through discussions with parents after school and the nine comments on Ofsted's free-text online facility. I also gathered the views of staff through the 31 responses to the online staff survey.