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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Lesley Hendrie
Headteacher
Great Alne Primary School
School Road
Great Alne
Alcester
Warwickshire
B49 6HQ

Dear Mrs Hendrie

Short inspection of Great Alne Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 January 2018, 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 November 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, with the support of the governors, lead a school in which pupils are happy and keen to learn. Together with your staff, you show a determination to ensure that every pupil gets the best possible start to their school life. The needs of pupils across the school are well catered for in a warm and nurturing environment. This is particularly true for those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, including social, emotional and mental health needs. Teachers and support staff are enthusiastic and approachable, providing the pupils with good role models.

Pupils are proud of their school. They generally behave well and they develop into confident, polite and respectful individuals. Relationships between pupils and adults are strong. Across the school, pupils have opportunities to take on responsibilities such as school council representation. Older pupils take on a range of school-wide roles such as library and assembly monitors. All Year 6 pupils act as a buddy for a child in the Reception class. These roles are taken seriously by the pupils and help to prepare them well for the next stage in their education.

The great majority of parents spoke positively about the school. They commented on the friendly staff and the high level of support that they provide. As one parent wrote: 'I cannot praise the school enough. They not only care for my children here but they have also supported us as a family unit.' However, a minority of parents expressed concerns about the effectiveness of home-school communication and

difficulties contacting the school office at times during the day. Leaders and governors are aware of these issues and they are starting to address them. This includes the development of a new school website.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders and governors were asked to address some variations in the quality of teaching. You have taken effective action to tackle this through a combination of training for staff, working with colleagues from other schools and a focus on identifying and addressing pupils' individual needs. As a result, the majority of pupils are working at the standard expected for their age. Pupils in key stage 1 achieve well. However, pupils' progress across key stage 2 has been more variable, and not all pupils, especially the most able, have made the progress of which they are capable. You and governors are prioritising actions to improve these aspects rapidly. You have also identified the need to improve pupils' mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills across the school.

While the majority of pupils enjoy school and attend regularly, overall levels of attendance remain low. As a result, ensuring that families are aware of the importance of good attendance and the impact this has on pupils' progress is a development area for the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is an effective culture of safeguarding in the school. You do all that you can to ensure that the school is a safe environment for pupils. You emphasise that safeguarding pupils is everyone's responsibility, and all staff have regular and appropriate training to help them understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe from harm. Pupils are well cared for at all times.

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are stored securely. You work with external agencies as necessary and you are persistent when there are concerns about a pupil's welfare. Governors understand their role in overseeing and monitoring the effectiveness of school safeguarding procedures.

Pupils said that they feel safe in school and that they are taught to stay safe, for example, in relation to 'stranger danger' or when online. Pupils know whom they can speak to in school if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils said that bullying happens very rarely and they are confident that any issues would be dealt with rapidly. As one pupil said, 'Teachers are firm about behaviour and they would stop anything quickly.' The vast majority of parents agree that their child feels safe in school.

Inspection findings

- The curriculum you offer is broad and balanced and is based on a two-year cycle of topics that are linked closely to the national curriculum. Where practical, you and your staff review and adapt your planning to match pupils' needs and interests. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in physical education and music. Pupils enjoy their lessons, trips and a range of extra-curricular activities, all of

which help to bring the curriculum to life.

- Governors and leaders identified the need to improve progress and outcomes in mathematics. This is a key priority for the whole school. You and the subject leader have introduced a new approach to the teaching of mathematics, supported by training for staff and through providing additional resources. There is evidence of an increasing range of strategies being used by the pupils to tackle calculations. Teachers provide increased opportunities for pupils to develop mathematical reasoning and to apply their knowledge to solve a range of problems. It is too soon to see the impact of these changes on pupils' progress. Older pupils have opportunities to choose the level of task that they work at. This is helping to improve their confidence in tackling unfamiliar problems.
- You and your staff have an in-depth knowledge of the needs of individual pupils. As a result of regular discussions, you know which pupils are at risk of falling behind and what input is needed to help them progress. While you use assessment information well to identify individual pupils for support, this information is not yet used to inform staff and governors about the progress of particular groups of pupils. As a result, leaders may not identify groups of pupils at risk of underachieving. You are taking steps to address this in order to help teachers provide opportunities to maximise pupils' progress, especially for the most able.
- While the majority of your pupils have good attendance, there is a small but significant group that does not attend school regularly enough. This is negatively affecting the progress that those pupils are making. You track the attendance of individual pupils rigorously and you have a clear approach to contacting parents when attendance drops below an acceptable level. Actions are stepped up if attendance does not improve. You work closely with the families of pupils who have below-average attendance, involving external agencies when appropriate. The procedures you and your staff follow, including contacting parents on the first day of absence, help to ensure that pupils are safe and not at risk of going missing from education. However, there is more that you could do to raise awareness about the importance of good attendance with both pupils and parents.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide opportunities to maximise pupils' progress, especially across key stage 2 for the most able
- developments to raise standards in mathematics are embedded across the school, with a particular focus on enhancing pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills
- actions are taken to raise the profile of good attendance in order to ensure improved rates of attendance, especially for vulnerable pupils
- actions are taken to improve communication with parents, for example through the development of the school's website.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Crooks
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, leaders for English and mathematics and your office manager. I met with three representatives of the governing body, including one of the joint chairs of governors, and I spoke to a representative of the local authority by telephone. I talked with parents at the start of the day and with pupils both formally and informally.

We visited all classes together, where we observed teaching and learning and looked at the work in some books. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. I scrutinised several documents including your school self-evaluation, improvement plans and documents relating to safeguarding.

I took account of 32 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, 22 free-text responses and one letter given to me by a parent on the morning of the inspection. I also took account of four responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.