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20 April 2018

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Dear Miss Cale

Short inspection of Alwyn Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 27 March 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 September 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Alwyn Infant School goes from strength to strength. Parents and carers are effusive in their praise for what the school provides. One parent summed up the sentiments of many by simply saying, 'Alwyn is a nurturing school with happy children.' Pupils evidently love school, and this is shown by their enthusiasm and high levels of attendance. It is clear to see why.

Pupils are highly valued and cherished. There is considerable rigour in ensuring that pupils make strong progress academically, but not at the expense of their personal development and love of learning. Instead, the full breadth of pupils' development is promoted successfully and the different aspects woven seamlessly together. The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of rich opportunities that inspire and enthuse them to do well. Coupled with this, parents praised repeatedly how 'supremely dedicated' the staff are to pupils' success. As another parent described it, staff are 'warm, welcoming and genuinely care about their pupils'. As a result of all of this, the school is successful in its aim to foster pupils' curiosity, and to ensure that they achieve well and move on to their next schools as 'well-rounded individuals'.

You provide committed, principled and inspiring leadership. You richly deserve the high levels of respect that you command. The positive ethos and values you steadfastly role model are strongly embraced and deeply embedded throughout the school. Your highly skilled approach allows you to combine the warm community feel that you have carefully created with a sharp and insightful finger on the pulse

of the quality of education.

Children get off to a flying start in the busy, purposeful but calm atmosphere in 'Little Alwyn' that houses the early years. Children are increasingly confident, their curiosity is encouraged and positive attitudes to school and learning blossom. By the end of Reception Year, children are very well equipped with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to be successful in Year 1. Across key stage 1, pupils make particularly strong progress in English, including writing, following your successful drive to raise standards. The most able pupils also do well. In 2017, a considerably greater proportion than the national average achieved greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2.

Leaders and staff track closely the progress of each pupil and take prompt action where there are any concerns. Leaders have accurately pinpointed aspects of the school's work that can be still further refined to secure the best possible outcomes for all groups of pupils in all subjects.

Working closely with your effective deputy, and ably supported by other leaders, you ensure that the school continues to move securely in the right direction. The governing body is committed to supporting and challenging you and your leaders to ensure that the school continues to flourish. Following some recent changes in membership, governors are taking sensible steps towards improving the effectiveness of governance. Action to tackle the previous areas for improvement has been effective in sustaining and building further on already effective teaching. Evidence of the collective capacity to secure and sustain further improvement is clear to see.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding practices and procedures are fit for purpose. Leaders and staff know the children and families that the school serves very well. There is a keen and genuine interest invested in promoting the welfare and well-being of pupils. The community is wholly confident in the school's abilities to keep the pupils in its care safe. Staff are well trained in a wide range of safeguarding matters and know what action to take to share any concerns. Leaders are proactive in working with other professionals and agencies to protect pupils and are insistent in advocating in pupils' best interests. Records of even low-level concerns are of good quality and show clearly the decisions that leaders make about the most suitable courses of action. Well-established and systematic checks ensure the suitability of all adults to work with children.

Inspection findings

- Children and pupils make strong progress overall in their time at Alwyn Infant School. Year 2 pupils produce some particularly high-quality work across a range of subjects. You have identified mathematics as a current rightful priority for further improvement. With strong subject leadership, the action taken so far this year is already making a difference. The focus on ensuring that pupils really

master their mathematical skills, including through using and applying these to different situations, means that current pupils are on track for better outcomes compared with previous years.

- You have secured a sharp and accurate analysis of the progress and attainment of individuals and groups in the school. Leaders and staff keep a particularly watchful eye on potentially more-vulnerable pupils, such as those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils, or those who speak English as an additional language.
- Potentially more-vulnerable pupils usually make similar progress to that of their peers, and sometimes better, especially in writing. However, leaders have correctly identified that, while any gaps between their achievement and that of others seldom increase, they do not always reduce as well as they could. Leaders are rightly ambitious that any child already behind age-related expectations when they start school should make up any lost ground. This year, leaders have worked with staff to make tighter use of all available information about pupils' achievement, to target their next steps and accelerate their progress. Leaders are wisely keeping a close check on these evolving systems to ensure that their use makes the difference intended and remains manageable for staff to sustain.
- The previous inspection report asked teachers to ensure that lessons are consistently challenging for all groups of pupils. Leaders have taken rational steps towards ensuring a more joined-up approach to daily teaching and additional support for potentially more-vulnerable pupils. A number of parents particularly emphasised how successful the school is in meeting their children's particular needs. Last year's highly effective focus on writing means that different groups of pupils, including pupils of all capabilities, make especially strong progress in this area. However, leaders correctly identify that pupils are not consistently challenged at the right level in mathematics. They know that establishing consistently high-quality experiences to enable pupils to develop their use and application of mathematical skills is still a work in progress.
- Little Alwyn meets the children's different needs especially well. Staff waste no time in paying close attention to children's existing capabilities when they arrive so that they can start to plan how they can realise their potential. Ambitious for the children, staff quickly identify those already working beyond what is typical for their ages, and are successful in finding ways to ensure that these children also achieve well. In recent years, the proportion of children reaching or exceeding a good level of development by the end of Reception Year has been above national figures. The passionate and knowledgeable leadership of early years has established a relentless drive for continuous improvement and a clear sight about what to tackle next.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they see through their current drive to:

- further improve outcomes in mathematics

- diminish and, wherever possible, eradicate variations in the performance of potentially more-vulnerable pupils compared with other pupils nationally.

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

Yours sincerely

Clive Dunn
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Throughout the inspection, I met regularly with you and your deputy. I also spoke with other leaders, staff, pupils, parents, the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. You accompanied me as I visited classes across all year groups to observe during lessons, look at pupils' work and talk to them about their learning. I took account of 95 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as 68 confidential questionnaire responses from pupils and 19 from staff. All of the additional written comments were considered alongside other inspection evidence. Before visiting, I reviewed the school's website and information about the school's performance over time. On site, I scrutinised safeguarding arrangements and sampled some of the school's documents and records.