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Mrs Melanie Mills
Headteacher
The Albert Pye Community Primary School
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Dear Mrs Mills

Short inspection of The Albert Pye Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 November 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in June 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 provide strong leadership and direction for the school. You have established a team of effective leaders that shares your approaches and ambitions for every pupils' achievement. Together with your leadership team, you work tirelessly to provide pupils with the best opportunities to develop their individual skills and talents. Pupils speak highly about the things they learn at school, not only academically but also socially. Teachers make use of the 'fizzing curriculum' to motivate pupils' learning through real-life experiences. There is a well-planned progression that builds on pupils' skills as they move through the school. Parents agree that the school promotes children's love of learning. One parent stated on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, 'I feel that he really enjoys going and loves everything that he learns.' This comment reflected the views of many others.

You have created an inclusive and nurturing environment. Leaders and staff are quick to recognise where a pupil may require help. Pupils' social and emotional well-being is supported through your highly effective nurture team. They work well with parents to ensure that pupils' self-esteem is improved and that they are more confident with their learning. This makes a good contribution to the pupils' progress.

Leaders know the school well. They make effective use of monitoring systems to quickly identify the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders make detailed plans and work collegiately with staff colleagues to address these priorities. This accurate self-evaluation is successfully securing the school's capacity for further improvement. For example, you recognised that pupils were not making good progress in reading. You and your leaders have taken swift action and already there is evidence of improvement.

Since joining the multi-academy trust, you have made good use of its expertise and support. Your leaders have worked with specialists and other schools to improve the quality of teaching. Assessment systems are secure because you have worked with other schools to check the accuracy of your own judgements. Your leaders use this information well and work with teachers to provide additional support for pupils where it is required. This means that most pupils make good progress from their starting points.

The local governing board is effective and has a good understanding of the aims of the trust in helping the school improve. Governors know the school well. They use the information you provide to ask probing questions about the performance of the school. They challenge leaders about the reliability of their information and whether more can be done to achieve the school's aspirations for each pupil. Governors are clear about the actions leaders take by visiting the school and talking to pupils and staff. Additional government funding is used well because governors check that it is making a difference for the pupils it is intended for. Governors receive regular training through the trust. This ensures that they are knowledgeable about holding school leaders to account.

Parents are very positive about the school. They recognise that school staff are approachable, friendly and responsive to concerns. Parents appreciate the work of leaders, who put on events and meetings to help them support their children at home. One comment on Parent View simply sums up the opinions of others, 'The teachers and staff really care about the children and, as a parent, I could not ask for more.'

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school because all staff are alert to recognising the signs and symptoms of pupils at risk. You provide staff with relevant training and updates so that they are clear about their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. You and your team give pupils' well-being an appropriately high priority. Leaders respond swiftly to concerns and, where necessary, make referrals and engage external agencies. Your nurture team provides additional support for vulnerable pupils and is tenacious in pursuing help that is promised. Your records are well organised and kept secure. The checks that are carried out on adults who work with children are well maintained.

Governors routinely check the school's register. They have all received safeguarding training and use their understanding well to check that procedures and policies are followed by all staff. They ensure that the school is compliant with all its policies regarding safeguarding.

Pupils value their relationships with their teachers. They are confident that they keep them safe and are comfortable talking to them about any concerns. Pupils understand different forms of bullying and consider that it is rare at their school. They identify different ways the school teaches them to be safe, whether using media devices or crossing roads. Pupils are trained as computer cadets and junior road safety officers to reinforce messages about keeping safe.

Inspection findings

- I followed a number of lines of enquiry to ascertain that the school remained good. Firstly, I wanted to check how leaders' actions were improving the quality of reading across the

school. This was because, in 2018, the provisional information shows that pupils' progress in reading at the end of key stage 2 was below the national average. Attainment at both key stage 1 and 2 in reading was also below the national average at expected standards.

- Leaders have acted quickly. Teachers have received training to help improve their expertise in the teaching of reading. A consistent approach is used well to develop pupils' comprehension skills. When you and I visited lessons, we saw pupils using their skills to infer from a piece of text. Teachers asked a range of questions that helped pupils to identify different phrases to describe a scene. For example, in one class, pupils had to consider how they knew that it was the end of the day through the description of the sun and sky. The questions became increasingly challenging, helping to extend the thinking of the most able pupils.
- You have placed a priority upon improving pupils reading for pleasure and enjoyment. The school library has recently been refurbished and now provides a range of reading materials. Pupils told me that they looked forward to their weekly library session where they had opportunity to choose books and discuss their reading with the teachers. Regular times for quiet sustained reading are provided through the timetable. This is having a positive impact upon pupils' stamina and fluency of reading.
- Leaders have raised the profile of reading across the school. Displays in the school environment celebrate favourite authors and genres. You have worked with parents to provide ideas for supporting reading at home. Your leaders have also introduced 'hot chocolate evenings' where parents have the opportunity to come to school and share books with their children. This is ensuring that pupils are reading more widely and often.
- I heard younger pupils read. The pupils discussed their chosen books and told me that they did read to adults. However, there was no clear record of this in their reading record books they took home. There was no expectation on parents to write any comments about their child's reading. We agreed that the use of reading record books is unclear. They do not provide a helpful communication link between reading at home and in school. For some pupils, the books they read were not well matched to their reading abilities. Pupils did not have the phonic knowledge to decode unfamiliar words. For these particular pupils, this limits the progress they make in reading.
- During the inspection we checked the teaching of phonics. Teachers make effective use of strategies to help pupils segment and blend words. Teachers model the sounds clearly, so pupils make links between the letters and sounds they make. They apply this knowledge well to identify words with the particular sound patterns they are learning in the lesson. Pupils use their phonic knowledge well in their writing. For example, in a key stage 1 class, pupils used their phonic sounds to help write what the Gruffalo said.
- I also focused on how leaders ensured that pupils achieved the higher standards in their learning. This is because in 2018, lower proportions of pupils attained the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 compared to the national average.
- Leaders have improved opportunities for extending pupils' learning within lessons. You have provided training to help teachers ask challenging questions to deepen pupils' understanding. High-quality texts are used across all classes to widen pupils' vocabulary. 'Burning questions' and 'chilli challenges' contribute well to supporting pupils' progress. Work in pupils' books and the school's own assessment information shows that more pupils are working at higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Nevertheless,

we agreed that there was more work to be done to extend the most able pupils across different subjects.

- Finally, I looked at how well leaders were using the pupil premium to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders are clear about the barriers faced by disadvantaged pupils. They use the additional funding well to meet pupils needs. For example, opportunity for pupils to attend the breakfast club has improved their attendance. Your teachers have time in the week to check the progress of disadvantaged pupils in the class. Consequently, these pupils are making strong gains from their starting points.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- reading books are well matched to pupils' phonic knowledge and skills
- there is a clear purpose for pupils' reading record books
- teachers plan activities that extend the most able pupils in a range of subjects across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Mellors
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, your senior leadership team and four governors. I also met with your deputy headteacher as leader of disadvantaged pupils, your English leaders and your high-ability pupils team. I had a meeting with the director of primary standards from the Active Learning Trust. Together with you, we visited classrooms to observe teaching and look at pupils' work. I also heard pupils from key stage 1 read and met with a group of pupils from Years 3 to 6.

I scrutinised a variety of sources of information, including subject leaders' improvement plans and minutes of the governing body's meetings. I also reviewed the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures and the records of checks leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children. I held a discussion with you and a member of your nurture team as two of the school's designated safeguarding leads.

Additionally, I took into account the 60 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 40 free-text responses from parents.