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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mrs Debra Williams  
Headteacher  
Alexander Hosea Primary School  
Honeybourne Way  
Wickwar  
Wotton-under-Edge  
Gloucestershire  
GL12 8PF

Dear Mrs Williams

### **Short inspection of Alexander Hosea Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 14 September 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 March 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. At the time of my visit, you had only been in post for eight days. However, you articulated your clear vision for the future of the school and how you plan to drive improvements in the school's provision and, consequently, further raise pupils' outcomes. School leaders, including governors, are highly reflective and know the school extremely well. Thorough research, including visits to other schools – both locally and nationally – has given leaders an in-depth understanding of the different ways in which pupils learn. This knowledge is now being skilfully applied to meet the needs of pupils at Alexander Hosea. Leaders have created an engaging learning environment which puts pupils at the heart of their learning.

Pupils respond positively to the freedoms they are given in their learning as well as the individual investment they receive from teachers. Parents are equally positive, with nearly all saying they would recommend the school. One parent, summing up the view of many, wrote, 'We feel very fortunate that our daughter attends this school! It has far exceeded our expectations. We have been very impressed by the effectiveness of teaching methods and individual care of pupils. We could not recommend Alexander Hosea enough!'

At the previous inspection, leaders were asked to raise further the quality of teaching across the school. A rigorous programme of monitoring by leaders,

combined with targeted staff training and support, continues to increase the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. There is an open culture in the school where staff, as well as pupils, feel comfortable in taking risks. Staff told me how they value the guidance they are given and talked positively about how this support is developing their classroom practice.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of promoting pupils' well-being and safety in the school. Staff are vigilant and knowledgeable about how to identify signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Training for all staff and governors is up to date and in line with statutory guidance. Checks to keep children safe are extremely rigorous and the recording of these checks is meticulous. The suitability of staff and volunteers is checked before they are allowed to work with pupils, and governors keep a watchful eye to ensure that this is done effectively.

Pupils report that they feel safe and were very clear that they could approach any adult in school if they have a concern or worry. This is a view shared by parents, who describe a nurturing school with a good understanding of its pupils' needs. Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe online.

As the designated safeguarding lead, you show tenacity and determination in making sure that referrals to social care are dealt with to your satisfaction. This means that all pupils in the school, and especially the most vulnerable, are as safe as they can possibly be.

### **Inspection findings**

- Given that my visit to the school was early in the school year, my first line of enquiry was to explore how leaders had used their analysis of the 2017 national test results to improve the quality of provision for all pupils across the school. In-depth analysis by subject leaders had not yet taken place but discussions with leaders, teachers and governors made it clear that Alexander Hosea is a school that knows itself very well. There is a collective understanding of what is working well and of what needs to be improved. In all key stages, including the early years, leaders were able to identify where pupils had not performed at the standard expected for their age. Leaders were also able to explain the specific reasons for this. In the majority of cases, plans have already been put in place to support these pupils as they progress through the school.
- In a small number of cases, leaders' analysis of in-year assessment data had identified subjects or year groups where pupils' progress did not meet the school's expectations. In these cases, leaders have been decisive in identifying and addressing the underlying causes. For example, providing teachers with opportunities to share best practice during their planning and assessment time is ensuring a greater level of consistency and further raising expectations.
- In the 2017 national tests at the end of Year 6, a smaller proportion of pupils than expected had been assessed as working at the higher standard in mathematics. Therefore, my second line of enquiry was to examine the

effectiveness of leaders' actions in ensuring that pupils are being challenged to work at greater depth. Across the school, pupils generally have a secure understanding of the mathematical skills appropriate for their age. Work in pupils' books shows that in 2016/17, the vast majority of pupils made good progress. This was strongest in Year 6.

- Observations of learning carried out during my visit showed that most pupils currently in the school are being challenged to work at greater depth. Where teaching is strongest, pupils are able to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding across a range of different contexts. They can apply reasoning when working on mathematical investigations and are able to justify their answers. However, books from the last academic year highlight that this approach has not been consistent in all year groups. Although pupils make progress in their mathematics, this inconsistency has, in the past, limited pupils' ability to reason and think deeply about their learning.
- My examination of books also showed that the curriculum in mathematics is limiting opportunities for pupils to reach the higher standards. Across the school, concepts are not developed sufficiently well. Topics jump from one area of mathematics to another and present as a 'piecemeal' approach. As the new headteacher, you have recognised this and plans are already in place to develop the school's mathematics curriculum.
- My final line of enquiry was regarding leaders' actions to improve the attendance of the school's most vulnerable learners. Leaders and governors know their families well and continue to work hard to reduce absence rates for these pupils. A wide range of strategies have been put in place, including the engagement of external agencies and, in the majority of cases, attendance is increasing.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the curriculum in mathematics is developed so that understanding of concepts is fully developed within and across year groups and all pupils are supported to reach the higher standards
- mathematical activities provide pupils of all abilities with opportunities for further development of their reasoning and problem-solving skills.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Dyer  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. We discussed the school's self-evaluation, information about pupils' progress and improvements made since the previous inspection. Together, we observed pupils in classrooms and spoke to them about their learning. Work in books from both the current and previous academic years was analysed.

I had meetings with middle leaders and four governors, including the chair of governors, and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I looked at a range of written evidence, including documents relating to safeguarding and attendance. I took account of the views expressed by 80 parents who completed the online survey as well as their written comments. I also considered the views of staff and pupils who returned their questionnaires.