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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Miss Colette Richardson
Interim head of school
Cowley St Laurence CofE Primary School
Worcester Road
Cowley
Uxbridge
UB8 3TH

Dear Miss Richardson

Short inspection of Cowley St Laurence CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The Trust appointed you to take on the leadership of the school in November 2016 and you have successfully overseen a period of change and development. Leaders and governors have made sure that key priorities for improvement from the last inspection have been addressed. You came into the school during a period of high staff turnover and have already helped to secure developments.

Pupils say that they enjoy being part of the school's community. They are typically thoughtful and attentive, and have positive attitudes to school. Pupils generally behave well in lessons and around the school, and are polite and friendly. They understand and can explain the school's core values well. They enjoy receiving certificates in recognition for their work or behaviour.

Leaders have made sure that pupils have access to an interesting and stimulating curriculum, examples of which can be seen through the pupils' work in every classroom. Year 6 pupils' thoughtful work about the life of Anne Frank was reflective and moving. Pupils learn a broad and balanced range of subjects, which include French. They enthuse about the many outings and visits that the school organises, for example the forthcoming Year 6 residential trip to an outdoor pursuits centre. The variety of extra-curricular clubs that pupils can choose, including learning to play musical instruments, and football, promote their interests and are very popular.

You have made it clear that you do not accept anything other than the best for the pupils. In the short time that you have been at the school, in partnership with the

Trust, you have taken action to raise the quality of teaching and learning, including appointing new teachers to strengthen the staff team. You set high standards. This is shown in the successful approach you have taken to raising levels of pupils' attendance at the school, a priority for improvement identified by the previous inspection. You are ambitious to ensure that the improvements made are sustained and that attendance levels are raised further. Closer working with parents has helped to improve attendance but you accept that there is more to be done. Similarly, securing even better progress for boys, disadvantaged pupils, low-attaining pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remains a priority for the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Child protection records are detailed and of high quality. The school works closely with outside agencies and liaises with them quickly in order to keep pupils safe. Staff have secure knowledge and understanding of current guidance and procedures as a result of regular training and updates. Leaders have made sure that pupils know who to speak to if they have any safeguarding concerns. Pupils have a clear understanding of the action they can take to keep themselves safe from harm, for example when using computers and information technology. They told me that they know what to do should any problems occur. The governing body checks all safeguarding arrangements regularly during the year.

Inspection findings

- The test results of 2016 threw up issues for the school which governors and the Trust addressed directly. They moved swiftly to put in place measures to address weaknesses, including appointing you on an interim basis. This has had a marked effect. Since your arrival, pupils' rates of progress have increased. This improvement is based on the improved use of more ambitious targets and improved support for groups. You are aware of the need to be vigilant to ensure that all pupils, including the less able, boys, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, stay on track and consistently fulfil their potential.
- Additional funding is used carefully to promote the learning of disadvantaged pupils so that they now make similar progress in reading, writing and mathematics to other pupils at the school, and nationally. This was not the case last year. Those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from additional support that is now more carefully tailored to their individual needs. This was not routinely the case in previous years. Work in pupils' books shows that rates of progress accelerated after your arrival.
- The warm and welcoming assembly, led by a local vicar, highlighted aspects of Christian values – key features of the ethos of the school. Pupils were engaged and responded well when they were given the opportunity to talk and share their experiences.

- Governors understand their role well and hold the school leaders to account. They took strong action when the school did not meet their expectations. They are clear about their vision for the school and are looking to secure improvements through working with the Trust to make a substantive head of school appointment. They know that this can also be achieved by spreading strong leadership more widely through the school.
- Pupils from all backgrounds enjoy reading and read well. Younger pupils, and those at the early stages of learning to read, use the phonics strategies that the school has taught them confidently. Older pupils and more able readers read with fluency and expression. They read widely and often and are well supported at home, as their reading records show.
- Pupils said they feel safe and that school had taught them what to do if they had any worries. They told me that occasionally there are some incidents of misbehaviour but that these are rare and dealt with swiftly. Pupils are motivated to learn and get on well with each other.
- The school is a tolerant and supportive community and pupils can describe how happy they are to be among their friends. Their attitudes reflect the values of the school very well. The older pupils showed caring attitudes towards the younger pupils and were keen to help me with my duties. For example, the older pupils offered to take the younger children back to their classes after reading with me.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- attendance levels rise to meet the school's ambitious targets
- boys, disadvantaged pupils, low-attaining pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make even better progress
- strong leadership is spread through the school so that standards are maintained and built on.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Roberts
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector carried out the following activities during the inspection:

- met the interim head of school, and the executive headteacher
- visited classes from Nursery to Year 6
- looked at pupils' books
- met four governors, including the chair of governors, and the chair of the board of directors
- held meetings with the safeguarding leader, headteacher and pupils
- heard children reading
- observed an assembly
- evaluated recent information about pupils' attendance and progress information
- considered the views of parents, staff and pupils.