

Inspection of a good school: Cowley St Laurence Church of England Primary School

Worcester Road, Cowley, Uxbridge UB8 3TH

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 March 2022

Outcome

Cowley St Laurence Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school and feel safe. Pupils and families know that staff have high expectations for behaviour. Pupils said that bullying rarely happens. If there are any issues, they know that they can speak to adults. While incidents are rare, adults resolve any that do occur quickly and effectively.

Pupils are proud of their school and welcome visitors. They enjoy talking about the learning they do in class and about keeping healthy in the playground's outdoor gym. Older pupils take on a range of responsibilities. For instance, many volunteer as play leaders for younger pupils at breaktimes. Other pupils play an active role in the school council. They like being able to organise whole-school events, such as the upcoming celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Children in the Reception and Nursery class learn in a space designed to foster their independence. Adults are skilled in promoting children's language development. They provide rich opportunities for children to build up their vocabulary and explore the world around them, from melting blocks of ice to hatching ducklings.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from an ambitious curriculum and typically achieve well. Year 6 pupils said that their teachers have prepared them well for secondary school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have organised and planned the curriculum carefully in most subjects. As a result, pupils learn knowledge and skills in a logical order, and in turn develop their understanding effectively.

Guided by subject planning, teachers devise sequences of lessons that help pupils to know more and remember more over time. Essential knowledge is recapped frequently. Teachers also continually check whether pupils can recall their previous learning with accuracy and fluency. Pupils like the way that teachers use questions and quizzes to go over what they have learned before. They said that this helps them to remember important ideas and information.

Nevertheless, in a few instances, staff lack clarity about what pupils have learned in previous years and how this learning contributes to leaders' long-term goals for pupils' achievement. This means that it is harder for staff to deepen pupils' understanding of the subject.

Early reading is well planned and sequenced. Pupils learn to read well. They are eager to take part in the phonics sessions each day. Teachers provide extra phonics sessions for pupils who find reading challenging. Staff have been trained to teach the phonics scheme, and resources are matched to pupils' phonics knowledge. During individual reading sessions, for example, staff identify the specific sounds that pupils are unsure of and provide opportunities for further practice. Pupils enjoy reading in school and at home.

The early years curriculum is planned to provide children with the foundations they need for their learning in all subjects. For example, children gain a strong understanding of number through a range of well-planned activities. This understanding is then recapped and built on effectively in subsequent year groups. Over time, pupils gain the knowledge they need to solve more complex mathematical problems. Following the COVID-19 restrictions, leaders identified that pupils had gaps in their understanding of some basic mathematical principles. Leaders adapted the curriculum so that these areas are addressed before pupils moved on in their learning. Leaders have adopted a similarly successful approach in other subjects.

Pupils who may have SEND are identified quickly and accurately. Leaders and staff communicate well with parents and carers and with a range of external professionals. This helps to ensure that these pupils receive the support they need to learn the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Staff find ways to support pupils' wider development and to enrich the curriculum. For example, older pupils have visited the nearby Battle of Britain Bunker to learn about its important role during the Second World War. Pupils also have opportunities to go on residential trips. They spoke enthusiastically about the adventurous activities in which they take part.

Staff value the clear behaviour system that is in place. The school is calm and orderly, with a positive feel as a result. Lessons are rarely interrupted by low-level disruption. In early years too, children know exactly what is expected of them. Staff work closely together to teach all pupils to be responsible and respectful. Pupils are eager to learn and support each other with their work in class. They like having opportunities to discuss their ideas and what they understand about their work.

Staff feel appreciated and supported by leaders. They are motivated to do a good job and enjoy working at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff receive regular training. This means that they have an up-to-date knowledge of risks that pupils may face. Staff report and record any concerns about pupils' welfare promptly. Leaders work closely with other agencies to support pupils and their families. Together, they make sure that pupils receive suitable additional help that is tailored to their needs and circumstances. Leaders review arrangements regularly. For instance, they are taking effective steps to strengthen record-keeping so that they have a precise picture of pupils' needs over time.

Learning how to stay safe is threaded through the school curriculum. Pupils are taught about what they can do to look after their well-being, including, for instance, when they are not in school or are using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not thought as carefully about what pupils need to learn and in what order. Where this is the case, it is not clear exactly what ideas and knowledge pupils need to be taught. To address this, leaders should refine their curricular thinking in these subjects. They should provide teachers with greater clarity on what pupils need to learn in order to build up and deepen their knowledge securely.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	139306
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10211368
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	397
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ken Buckler
Headteacher	David Davies
Website	www.cowley.hillingdon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2018.
- The number of pupils attending the school has fallen since the previous inspection.
- Leaders do not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the headteacher and other leaders and staff. Inspectors also met with members of the local governing board and the academy trust board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, science and history. For each of these subjects, an inspector held discussions with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with staff and pupils, and looked at pupils' work. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection.

- Inspectors considered the views of staff and pupils through the Ofsted online surveys. The inspectors also spoke with parents and considered the 42 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses from parents.
- The inspection team observed behaviour in lessons and at lunchtime. Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about their views of pupils' behaviour, and staff workload and well-being. The inspectors also spoke with pupils to consider their views.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff about the school's work to keep pupils safe. Inspectors also considered safeguarding records, documentation and the single central record of staff suitability checks.

Inspection team

Adam Vincent, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jasper Green

Her Majesty's Inspector

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