

Cowley St Laurence CE Primary School

Worcester Road, Cowley, Uxbridge, UB8 3TH

Inspection dates

3–4 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2	
Quality of teaching	Good	2	
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2	
Leadership and management	Good	2	

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Governors and staff share the vision of developing the academy into an outstanding school.
- The academy is led and managed well. The executive headteacher is a very positive role model and is well supported by the governing body and other senior leaders in the drive to raise the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.
- Pupils make very rapid progress in all years and standards have risen, especially in mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and get along well with each other. The site is secure and pupils feel safe and well looked after.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children quickly develop their social and communication skills. They speak confidently and learn how to cooperate with each other.
- Teaching is usually good and some is outstanding. Teachers plan lessons that interest and engage pupils well. They mark pupils' written work regularly.
- Relationships are strong and staff have created an atmosphere where pupils feel confident to ask or answer questions and discuss their ideas openly with each other.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Occasionally the pace of learning slows because teachers do not always plan tasks that really stretch all pupils.
- Teachers do not always make sure that pupils respond to their written comments in their marking.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to consolidate and develop further their writing skills in the different subjects they study or to practise handwriting.
- Attendance is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 28 lessons or parts of lessons, including four joint observations with senior leaders and looked at pupils’ written work.
- Meetings were held the Chair of the Governing Body, the director of the multi-academy Trust, the executive headteacher and other school leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of pupils and others around the school. They listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed by parents and carers as they arrived with their children at school and in 13 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- They took account of 38 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors looked at a number of school documents, including data about pupils’ progress and the support given to pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, the school’s own evaluation of its performance and its improvement plan, evidence about monitoring and evaluating teaching, and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.

Inspection team

Jim McVeigh, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Melanie Clapton	Additional Inspector
Noureddin Khassal	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cowley St Laurence CE Primary School is part of a three-school multi-academy Trust. It opened as an academy in February 2013. This is its first inspection. The executive headteacher took up his position in March 2010.
- It is larger than the average primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British but there are small proportions of pupils from several other ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and children of service personnel) is higher than average and there are more pupils than average who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who receive extra support through school action is above average, but the proportions supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- The school has met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by making sure that:
 - all teachers plan activities that appropriately challenge pupils
 - a good pace of learning is maintained in all lessons
 - time is given for pupils to respond to teachers' guidance in marked work
- Accelerate progress in writing still further by giving pupils more opportunities to practise their handwriting and to write for different purposes in a wide range of subjects.
- Improve pupils' overall attendance further by working with parents and carers to ensure their children attend regularly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 is rising. Current attainment in Year 2 is in line with expected standards; in Year 6 it is in line with the expected standards in English and above in mathematics.
- Since the executive headteacher took up his post, pupils' progress in all subjects has accelerated because of the strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. The academy's own performance data and pupils' written work, seen during the inspection, show that pupils are making rapid progress in English and mathematics across the school. Pupils reach higher standards in reading and mathematics than in writing due to the limited opportunities to extend their skills in the different subjects they study.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language generally do as well as their peers in both English and mathematics as their learning needs are identified and addressed early on. One parent or carer, recently arrived from abroad, commented that the academy had been 'amazing' in helping her child settle in and make good progress in English through well-targeted support.
- When children begin school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, their attainment is well below that expected for their age. They get off to a good start because they receive individual attention and a good range of activities they can choose from themselves, linked to adult-led activities.
- The environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly the outside area, is effective in stimulating children's imagination; children persevere with their chosen activity and make good progress. Their personal, social and speaking skills are promoted well so that they develop self-confidence and get on with each other well. A group of reception children were seen acting out the 'Lion Hunt' story well; they squealed with delight when the 'lion' woke and chased them.
- The academy has introduced a good phonics (the sounds letters make) programme that, together with strong encouragement to read at home and at school, is helping pupils to become fluent readers. Parents and carers listen to their children reading at home and pupils read in guided reading sessions every day. Pupils enjoy reading and read often.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in all areas; they are doing better than their peers nationally. Their needs are identified early and they receive effective extra support, including from outside specialists such as speech therapists.
- Currently, the gap between pupils in Year 6 who are eligible for the pupil premium and others is about two terms in both English and mathematics. The gap is closing due to the school's effective actions. For example, in Year 5 the gap is narrower being one and a half terms in English and half a term in mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Following the arrival of new leadership at the academy, the quality of teaching has improved significantly. Teaching is usually good and some is outstanding so that pupils across the school make rapid progress.
- Relationships between pupils, teachers and other adults are a strength of the academy. Pupils are self-assured and speak confidently when asking or answering questions or in small-group discussions.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and make learning interesting. Pupils enjoy their lessons and persevere with tasks that are set for them. Teachers are skilful in their questioning, making pupils think hard, and listen carefully to the answers given. For example, Year 1 pupils were helped to pose their own questions to help them investigate sound in a science lesson.
- Literacy and numeracy are taught well but not enough emphasis is given to developing good handwriting skills or writing for different purposes.
- Teachers typically plan their lessons well to meet pupils' different needs and work well with teaching assistants to provide the appropriate targeted intervention. However, occasionally the

pace of learning slows because teachers do not move pupils on to work that stretches them.

- Teaching assistants give good support to pupils but do not do too much for them. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, lower ability pupils made good progress because the teaching assistant gave them clear explanations of how to use a number line to work out journey times from transport timetables.
- All teachers mark pupils' written work regularly and in detail. They show pupils what they have done well, correct mistakes and usually indicate what they need to do next to improve further. However, pupils do not often make good use of the teachers' advice on how to improve: it is not always clear that they have read, understood and acted on it.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Teachers are consistent in their application of the behaviour management system so that pupils know it well and develop a good understanding of the consequences of their actions. Pupils' good attitude to learning and their good behaviour help to maintain the calm and orderly atmosphere in the academy.
- Teachers rarely need to waste time in lessons correcting misbehaviour. Around the academy, pupils behave sensibly and are usually courteous to adults and one another. Playtime is well monitored and pupils get along with each other, though play can be too boisterous at times in both playgrounds.
- Pupils feel valued and enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as class monitor, play leader or as members of the school council. Year 6 reading buddies help Year 2 pupils with reading once a week while Years 3 and 4 pupils pair up to read together. Pupils are keen to earn certificates for good work and behaviour which are handed out at achievement assemblies and then prominently displayed.
- The school monitors attendance closely and works hard to promote the need for good attendance with parents and carers. Attendance is just below average but persistent absence has been reduced from former high levels due to the school's effective actions.
- Governors, parents, carers and staff agree that pupils' behaviour at school has improved greatly and is now good. The academy records incidents of misbehaviour conscientiously. There have been no permanent exclusions this year and there have been few incidents of misbehaviour. The academy is an inclusive school: discrimination is not tolerated and opportunities are open to all equally.
- Pupils have learned how to keep themselves healthy and safe from lessons, assemblies and visitors such as the police who talked about road safety. They understand the concept of bullying well for their age. They think bullying at school is rare and any incidents that do occur are handled effectively by their teachers. Pupils know that any form of discrimination, bullying or being unkind to others will not be tolerated.

The leadership and management are good

- Governors and the senior leadership team have high expectations for the academy and a clear vision of developing into an outstanding school. The governing body is overseen by the Trust's board of directors, which extends the experience and skills of governance well and adds a useful further check on the academy's work.
- The academy is well led and managed. The executive headteacher is a very positive role model and, with the strong support of the governing body and other senior leaders, gives clear direction to the academy. There is a relentless drive to improve the quality of teaching so that pupils achieve the best they can and reach the highest standards no matter what their starting points are.
- School leaders have developed a robust system to check on the quality of teaching regularly through lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' books and evaluation of their progress. Any underperformance in teaching is tackled immediately. A 30-day action plan focusing on individual

teachers' needs and including coaching, seeing good teaching in operation and planning with an advanced skills teacher, is implemented to ensure a good pace of improvement.

- Leaders know the school well, have identified key areas for development and are following well-thought-out plans for improvement. There are clear links between teachers' movement up the pay scales and pupils' good progress. Teachers are set challenging targets to improve further, including raising the achievement of pupils.
- The multi-academy Trust is able to provide most of the professional training needs of teachers, including courses that meet the identified needs of individual teachers. The academy makes good use of the teaching skills available in other academies to provide coaching, mentoring and support for planning, especially for those just starting their teaching careers.
- The academy monitors pupils' progress closely and provides effective support to any who are underperforming. Special attention is paid to pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium. Those who need it are provided with a meal when they arrive at school, along with other pupils, in the academy's breakfast club.
- Child protection has a very high profile at the academy. The academy is very proactive in following up suspicions of abuse and keeps full records securely. Through the 'Marlborough Project' the academy provides good support to parents and carers who struggle with their parental responsibilities.
- The academy promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, clearly linked to its Christian values, and has improved the range of learning opportunities available for pupils. As well as a good focus on the core subjects, there is a good balance of humanities, practical and creative subjects. The academy is developing topics that will link subjects more closely and improve learning further and, following training, all middle leaders are now ready to play a full part in detailed planning for their subjects. Opportunities for pupils to write for a wide range of purposes in different subjects are not fully exploited. A good range of visits and clubs further enriches pupils' experiences.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a wide range of relevant skills and experience and have received effective training to understand school data and their role in both supporting and challenging the academy. They are well informed about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress through reports from school leaders and their own focused visits. They oversee the academy's decisions about teachers' movements up the pay scale and ask searching questions about the impact of plans on pupils' achievement. The governing body knows how leaders are bringing about improvements in teaching and makes sure the academy makes good financial decisions, such as allocating the pupil premium where it will have most impact. All statutory arrangements for safeguarding are securely in place.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139306
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	421704

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	427
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catherine Allen
Headteacher	Christopher Cole
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2010
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