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Mrs Sarah Pengelly
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Pengelly

Short inspection of Coley Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 3 July 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 the school was judged to be good in October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have spent considerable time and energy galvanising a strong and resilient team who are committed to giving pupils at the school a great start. Staff believe in your vision and appreciate the opportunities they get to learn and grow. Underpinning all of this is your unwavering aim to do 'what is right for our pupils'. One member of staff summarised the thoughts of many, noting that, 'before we do anything at Coley, we think "what is the impact for the children?"' The school continues to go from strength to strength.

The school serves a rich and vibrant multicultural community. Pupils are fascinated by their similarities and differences but also recognise that 'we are all just people'. This helps pupils from all nationalities and faiths to get on famously. On the playground they play with joy and enthusiasm, ably assisted by staff who facilitate a range of games and activities which pupils happily get stuck into, such as dancing, singing, traversing the climbing wall, and making up their own games using the equipment from the 'play pod'. The work to engage the community is significant and effective. Parents are delighted that their children get to celebrate their own culture and that of others. For example, pupils in Year 2 designed and applied their own mehndi artworks, gaining an important understanding of their significance in the Hindu religion. Leaders work closely with families to encourage and establish strong attendance. Their efforts are well judged and have been met with considerable success. For example, this year, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has halved. Nevertheless, some parents do not yet share leaders' high expectations of pupils' attendance.

Pupils are supported well in class by your team of knowledgeable and skilled teachers and teaching assistants. The 'Coley Coaching' scheme ensures that all pupils receive regular one-to-one time with an adult in school to discuss their learning, what they are good at, and any aspects of their work they find difficult. The information gleaned is used to provide further support and is a great source of pride for pupils. As one pupil noted, 'I love my Coley Coaching file.'

Governors frequently visit the school to gain a first-hand understanding of its work. They are well trained and utilise the expertise of the local authority and other successful schools to improve their performance. For example, governors attended training to develop their understanding of the pupil premium and how it can support disadvantaged pupils. Governors offer effective challenge and support to leaders to help drive further improvement.

At the time of the last inspection you were asked to improve the quality of middle leadership in the school. Middle leaders form an integral part of the school's leadership team. They receive regular training from senior leaders and the local authority and take the opportunity to visit and support other schools. As a result, they are knowledgeable and highly skilled, and drive improvement effectively in their own and, increasingly, other local schools.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose and tailored to the needs of the school and the community it serves. Leaders and governors perform thorough checks on all staff and provide them with tailored training before they take up employment. As a result, staff are well trained to identify and report concerns when they arise. When this is the case, leaders waste no time in supporting families to get the help they need.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They understand their duty to be responsible when using electronic devices, and know how to report anything that worries them. Pupils feel they all have a person to talk in school if they have concerns. Children in the early years are taught to assess and manage risks in a supervised and safe environment. For example, children in Reception built a throne in the sunshine and put up a shade to 'protect their pharaoh from the sun'.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection we agreed to focus on: the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements; how well current pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are progressing in mathematics; how effectively writing is taught in English and across the wider curriculum; and how accurately leaders evaluate the school and use this information to drive improvement.
- Pupils across the school enjoy mathematics and develop secure knowledge and skills in calculation. Teachers consider the needs of all disadvantaged pupils in mathematics and tailor their support to match these pupils' needs; for example, by offering additional teaching to simplify complex problems. As a result, all

pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make strong progress in mathematics. You rightly recognise that pupils require more regular opportunities to explain and record their thinking to improve their reasoning skills.

- Since the previous inspection, the English leader has reviewed and successfully revamped the English curriculum. Pupils throughout the school develop a firm foundation in spelling, punctuation and grammar rules, and use these skills to write eloquent and interesting texts. Writing in English and across the curriculum is a strength. Pupils throughout the school can explain their thinking in science, the humanities and art because they confidently use their writing skills to explain, hypothesise and compare. As a result, standards in English and across the wider curriculum continue to rise.
- Leaders and governors use a variety of well-judged and insightful activities to gather information on the school's performance. This is used to inform the half-termly 'snapshot' report which gives leaders and governors a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. Using this information, leaders form sharply focused plans to capitalise on the strengths and eradicate weaknesses. The plans are time constrained, appropriately resourced and carefully evaluated. The school is well placed to improve further.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils are given sufficient opportunities to reason and record their thinking in mathematics
- they continue their work with parents and carers to drive up rates of attendance across the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Daniel Lambert
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, senior and middle leaders, and two governors, including the chair. I observed learning in eight classes, all jointly with senior leaders. Together we looked at pupils' work. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including information about pupils' achievement, the school improvement plan, and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I considered the 16 responses to Ofsted's online survey,

Parent View, and spoke to parents at the beginning of the day. I met with three pupils from Years 2, 5 and 6, and gathered the views of other pupils throughout the day.