

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mrs Jackie Livermore  
Headteacher  
Curridge Primary School  
Curridge  
Thatcham  
Berkshire  
RG18 9DZ

Dear Mrs Livermore

### **Short inspection of Curridge Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 March 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 September 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education since the last inspection. Since your appointment in June 2017, you have worked with determination to improve the quality of teaching in the school. You provide focused and ambitious leadership which gives the school a clear direction. As one governor commented, 'Our new headteacher has put a smile on everyone's face.' You have an accurate understanding of what the school does well and you pinpoint with great precision where further developments need to be made. You have ensured that the curriculum provides rich and varied learning opportunities, which have led to engaged pupils who are very interested in their learning. Leaders have created a staff team that is determined to do the best for the pupils in the school. As one parent wrote, 'A great school that really cares for the individual needs of each child.'

Pupils love their small and caring school. They are polite, well behaved and articulate. They enjoy many aspects of school life, like trips, their 'kind headteacher' and fun lessons. Pupils value the superheroes they have created to encourage their learning behaviours, such as 'Captain Confidence' and 'Captain Collaboration'. Pupils that I spoke to relish the opportunities they have to lead lunchtime clubs. They spoke excitedly about teaching younger pupils how to make slime. Pupils spoke about how friendly their school is. As one parent commented, 'Curridge is a small, incredibly friendly school. I think the children there benefit massively from a warm, encouraging school environment.'

Governors support and challenge the school well. They validate what they are told

by frequent visits to the school, focusing on specific aspects of the school development plan. As a result, they have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need further improvement.

The previous inspection report highlighted the school's many strengths, including effective governance, outstanding pupil behaviour and attitudes to learning, and strong links with parents. The school has maintained these strengths and the capacity for further improvement is clear to see. At the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement in mathematics. In Year 2 in 2017, a higher than average proportion of pupils attained the expected and higher standard in mathematics. However, by the end of key stage 2 in 2017, not enough pupils reached the higher standard in mathematics. Although the school's work is successfully improving the progress that pupils make in mathematics, you recognise that new strategies need to be fully embedded across the school.

Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate. You are aware that there is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching in the school. Leaders are working rapidly to improve this through effective support and challenge. You also recognise there is still work to do in ensuring that teachers' expectations of what the most able pupils can attain could be higher.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of safeguarding awareness in the school. You liaise well with external agencies so that the needs of pupils and their families are addressed effectively. The safeguarding governor regularly checks that the school's safeguarding processes are working well. Pre-employment checks demonstrate leaders' thorough action in ensuring the suitability of all staff and volunteers to work in school. Safeguarding training is regular and well planned. More pupils than usual leave or join the school mid-year. This is due to children from service families who are posted to the local area. Leaders ensure that the transfer of records for pupils who join or leave the school is swift and secure. The pupils told me how they love welcoming new pupils to their school. They are determined to get to know them as quickly as possible. Staff and governors understand very well their roles and responsibilities for keeping pupils safe.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know who to talk to if they have any worries. They said that bullying is rare. They know that teachers would talk through any issues with children and 'sort bullying out' if it were to happen. Pupils spoke about how well their friends help them with any concerns they may have. As one parent commented, 'The children are happy and well mannered and seem to really look out for each other, regardless of which year they are in.' Pupils show a good understanding of the different types of bullying and they understand how to keep themselves safe online.

### **Inspection findings**

- Since your appointment, you have focused rightly on improving the progress pupils make in writing. Recently introduced teaching strategies are having a positive impact on the progress that pupils are making. Aply assisted by a knowledgeable English leader, you have invested in high-quality texts which enthuse your pupils and ensure that they are making more interesting vocabulary choices when writing. Pupils write in a variety of different genres and have many opportunities to write at length across the curriculum to a high standard. Pre-assessment tasks are used effectively, with pupils knowing how to improve their work. Dedicated time to practise key spelling skills and a drive to improve handwriting are also strengthening pupils' writing. You monitor closely the quality of teaching and the impact of these strategies on pupils' progress. Feedback to staff is specific. Leaders are aware that the quality of teaching varies across the school. They are working swiftly to ensure that the improvements to teaching are fully established in all classes.
- In 2017 in Year 6, the proportion of pupils who met the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average for each subject. You are working effectively to raise expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve across the curriculum. We agreed, following visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work, that tasks are not always challenging enough for the most able pupils.
- Since becoming headteacher, you have ensured that there are more opportunities for problem-solving and reasoning in mathematics and that pupils talk about their mathematics with increasing confidence and understanding. For example, in the Year 5 and 6 class, pupils were discussing the 'odd one out' in a group of fractions. They listened attentively to each other's reasoning. They confidently used their knowledge of equivalent fractions to solve the problems, using precise mathematical language. However, leaders are not complacent and appreciate that opportunities for pupils to apply and master mathematical skills need to be fully embedded across the school.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in the school is too small to be reported on. However, provision for these pupils is sharp and evaluative. Vulnerable pupils are provided with a range of additional support to accelerate their progress. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress in the school. Leaders provide timely and effective support to address the needs of service children, who may be missing absent family members currently deployed overseas.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvements in teaching are fully established in all classes
- the most able pupils are provided with the level of challenge they need, to ensure that, by the end of key stage 2, more pupils attain the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics
- teachers develop opportunities for reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics, to deepen pupils' understanding so that their progress continues to improve.

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

Yours sincerely

Lea Hannam  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and your assistant headteacher to discuss the school's effectiveness. We visited lessons to observe pupils' learning, speak to them and look at their work. Together with your English leader, we looked at the quality of pupils' work in books. I considered 32 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the free-text comments from some. Responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire were also considered. I spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day, and to a representative from the local authority on the telephone. I met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke to a group of pupils about their school. I evaluated the school's safeguarding arrangements. A wide range of documents was examined, including: the school's self-evaluation and school improvement planning; pupils' progress information; and attendance information and policies.