

St Laurence CofE VA Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	112912
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	378604
Inspection dates	31 January – 1 February 2012
Lead inspector	Jane Melbourne HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Singfield
Headteacher	Caroline Owen
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jane Melbourne

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Wolfson

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed eight teachers and visited 23 lessons. They held meetings with three members of the governing body, the headteacher, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at: the school's self-evaluation and plans for raising attainment; assessment information; lesson plans; pupils' work; the school's safety procedures and information logs; and responses to questionnaires from 63 parents and carers, 150 pupils and 10 members of staff. At the time of the inspection there were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Information about the school

St Laurence is an average-sized primary school serving the local community and some families from further afield. The proportion of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs is above the national average. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic heritage and in the early stages of learning English are below those found nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is made for children in the Reception class. A breakfast club is provided which is managed by the school. The school meets the government's current floor standards for achievement, which are the minimum expectations set for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

The school was without a substantive headteacher for two terms during the last academic year. The current headteacher took up her post in September 2011. The school is currently in the process of recruiting a deputy headteacher.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	4
Achievement of pupils	4
Quality of teaching	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	4
Leadership and management	4

Key findings

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

- The school's effectiveness is inadequate and its leaders, the governing body and the local authority have been slow to recognise that the school is not performing as well as it should.
- The headteacher has accurately evaluated the school's performance. She has taken decisive action to turn the school around. However, this has not yet had a demonstrably beneficial impact.
- Systems for assessing pupils' progress are inadequate. Assessment information is not used effectively by teachers to plan for the specific learning needs of individuals and groups of pupils.
- Overall, children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils make insufficient progress further up the school and the gap between their attainment and that of their peers nationally is not closing. Consequently, pupils' attainment is significantly below average. Their progress is particularly weak in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching is inconsistent in quality across the school and some is inadequate.
- Around a third of the parents who returned questionnaires expressed concerns regarding the behaviour of pupils at the school. Pupils generally behave satisfactorily. However, a small number of pupils who display challenging behaviour are not always dealt with effectively. This is because the adults are not consistent in implementing the school's policy for managing behaviour.
- While attendance is broadly average, procedures for monitoring the attendance of pupils are weak. Learning at the beginning of the school day is disrupted because a significant minority of pupils are late for school.
- Despite the appointment of an able headteacher, other school leaders including the governing body do not provide the school with the capacity to sustain improvement. Systems for monitoring the school's work, checking the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the curriculum lack rigour.
- The quality of the outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage does

not match the quality of the provision indoors. Consequently, children are not gaining consistent opportunities for learning in all areas of the curriculum.

- The curriculum does not ensure that pupils progress sufficiently well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Under the guidance of the headteacher, develop the capacity of the leaders and managers to ensure that effective steps are taken to remedy weaknesses that affect pupils' achievement and increase consistency across the school by:
 - raising attainment in English and mathematics in all classes
 - securing better teaching in all areas and accelerating progress in reading and mathematics
 - establishing a curriculum that allows pupils to progress consistently well in all classes
 - applying rigorous systems for monitoring all aspects of the school's work, including the consistent implementation of the policy for the effective marking of pupils' work.
- Ensure that, by September 2012, staff use robust assessment information to set challenging targets for all pupils, which are explained to pupils and shared with all staff, parents and carers.
- Immediately devise appropriate policies for the effective management of behaviour and for pupils' punctual arrival at school, ensuring procedures are understood by pupils, parents and carers and all staff, and are consistently applied.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the school with skills and knowledge that are below the levels expected for their age. There are particular weaknesses in communication, language and literacy and in their personal, social and emotional development. Overall, provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The indoor learning environment in the Reception class is good. This ensures that children make at least satisfactory and often good progress in this phase of their schooling. However, they are still achieving below age-related expectations by the time they transfer to Year 1.

Pupils' attainment has declined over time. There was a marginal improvement in reading and writing for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2010. However, this was not sustained. In 2011, standards in reading, writing and mathematics for Key Stage 1 pupils were significantly below the national average. In particular, more-able pupils are not making enough progress. As a result, few pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in the end-of-year assessments last year and the attainment of girls was below that of boys. The school has undertaken a focus on reading, including successfully implementing a reading intervention programme for those pupils who find reading difficult. Those pupils receiving intervention support specifically for their reading

were seen by inspectors to be generally making good progress in developing understanding of relationships between letters and sounds. There are signs of improving reading scores since last September, although achievement in reading remains low overall.

Outcomes for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have also declined over time and are well below the national average in English, particularly in reading, and mathematics. More-able pupils are not making the rates of progress they are capable of. As a result, few pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in the end-of-year assessments. By the end of Key Stage 2 last year, boys did not perform as well as the girls, prompting the school to begin to analyse the gender differences in attainment. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are attaining significantly below other pupils, as are those who have special educational needs or who are disabled.

Pupils' progress across the school is not good enough to enable them to catch up with their peers in other schools. Although the results of nationally tests were a little above the current government floor standards, the percentage of pupils making the expected rate of progress in English and mathematics across Key Stage 2 was below average. Inspectors agree with the few parents who expressed a view that their children were not making sufficient progress. In some lessons, for example, pupils found that work was too easy and did not stretch them. Nevertheless, inspectors observed pupils being challenged to use appropriate technical vocabulary in some lessons, but learning of this quality was not consistently seen across classes.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is inadequate because it has been weak over time and pupils are not making sufficient progress. Characteristically, time in lessons is poorly used and there is ineffective use of resources, including support staff. Pupils sit passively for too long and the activities have not been planned carefully enough to promote effective learning. Teaching currently makes too little contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and too little consideration has been given to how this might be promoted through a well-planned curriculum. Transition arrangements at the beginning of the school year are inadequate. Teachers do not ensure that the curriculum sufficiently builds on what pupils already know and can do. Hence, in some year groups, pupils repeat what they have already covered.

Target setting varies in its effectiveness. The pupils do not have a clear idea of what level they are working at or what level they are capable of achieving. Teachers' and pupils' ambitions are too low. There is variability in expectations for presentation and handwriting. Staff do not always conform to the school's approved marking policy. Pupils are not always given clear information about how they can improve, although in some classes they are keen to evaluate the work of their peers.

Opportunities for learning in the outdoor area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are restricted by a lack of resources and a bland learning environment. Staff make regular observations of the Reception children but are still developing a system to ensure that they use these to plan effectively for the next steps in children's learning. Since the headteacher joined the school, teachers are beginning to assess pupils' progress more thoroughly and to use their evaluations to

plan more challenging lessons. However, this improvement is still at an early stage and assessment data about pupils' progress and performance have been unreliable until recently. The work that teachers plan for pupils is matched more effectively to their needs in English and science lessons compared with mathematics. There is more variability in the teaching of mathematics across the school, which is reflected in low standards and more widespread underachievement.

However, inspectors saw some good teaching, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children were observed enjoying their movement across the 'Bear Hunt' course and measuring around the classroom using bear paw prints. In the best lessons in other classes, inspectors saw a brisk pace of learning and pupils getting down to work promptly. There were well prepared, stimulating activities and in these more effective lessons teachers ensured all pupils were appropriately challenged. Where teaching is better, the contribution of all adults is well coordinated, and extension tasks are provided to challenge those pupils who complete their work quickly.

The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is satisfactory overall, but it is not sufficiently well monitored to ensure it is consistently well delivered. The teaching of reading as part of an intervention programme for pupils of lower abilities is good. Pupils in Key Stage 2 enjoy reading, but the reading books have not been graded sufficiently for progression and the library is poorly presented and underused. The school has recently changed the arrangements for grouping pupils of similar ability together in other areas of literacy and mathematics and this is proving beneficial. Class teachers are becoming more aware of the needs of all of the pupils in their class. However, insufficient thought has been given to making the most of all opportunities for reading and writing. In addition, pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to apply practically their mathematical knowledge in areas of the curriculum other than literacy and numeracy.

The quality of the individual education plans for some pupils with special educational needs is poor because targets are not precise enough to support them to make the progress that they should.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is inadequate although the majority of pupils behave satisfactorily in lessons and around the school. Procedures for managing pupils' behaviour are insufficiently clear and are inconsistently applied by adults. Low-level disruption is evident in some classes and a very small minority of pupils are not effectively managed. The school ensures the ongoing safety of its community by using support staff to help manage inappropriate behaviour. A few pupils spend time out of the classroom to avoid disrupting others, but this means that they often miss out on important learning. The school also makes use of external partners for advice. Improving behaviour over time is evident for those pupils being closely supported. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying and know to whom to report incidents. They state that they experience bullying behaviour regularly. There were a few parents who disagreed that the school dealt with bullying well enough. Pupils, parents and carers recognise that some pupils disrupt the climate for learning but most agree that the school generally deals with incidents, including any bullying

behaviour, promptly. Consequently, most pupils say they feel safe at school. Some pupils take special responsibilities seriously, for example, by being peer 'buddies' in the playground, hearing younger pupils read or setting up the hall ready for assembly. The school prides itself on its caring ethos and inspectors agree that this is an area of strength.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are inadequate and the school has not demonstrated that it has the capacity to improve quickly enough. Since the last inspection, there has been instability in leadership and management. Improvements and the development of the capacity within the staff team have been limited because of the lack of continuity. The imminent change of deputy headteacher illustrates this pattern. Staff and governors have not ensured that concerns raised at the last inspection have been fully addressed. There has been no rigour to monitoring or evaluating how well the school is doing and insufficient steps have been taken to secure consistently good teaching for all groups of pupils. The governing body has not held the school to account effectively. It has, however, maintained a commitment to promoting equality and ensuring there is no discrimination. The school fulfils its statutory duties with regard to safeguarding pupils and to providing a broad curriculum, although this is not being adapted well enough to improve pupils' literacy and mathematics skills in all subjects. In addition, the school has not thoroughly considered how pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development can be fully provided for through all curriculum areas.

The headteacher has a strong ambition and drive for school improvement. Since her arrival, actions taken have been appropriately prioritised and based on accurate self-evaluation. However, these are at too early a stage to demonstrate any impact on outcomes for pupils. There is variation in the experience and capability of other leaders within school, and in the effectiveness of their monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress and the quality of the curriculum. However, all staff demonstrate a genuine desire to do their best for the pupils and work more effectively as a team. They accept that they have not had sufficient guidance, training or time allocated to enable them to develop the necessary monitoring and management skills in order to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement across the school.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory

		school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Laurence CofE VA Primary School, Long Eaton, NG10 1DR

You will remember that we visited your school recently to check how well you are all doing and whether the school has changed since its last inspection. Thank you for talking to us during lessons, in the playground and at lunchtimes. Also, I would like to give a big thank you to those of you who completed the questionnaires, which we read with interest. Your views, and those of your parents and carers, are very important to us. I am pleased that the large majority of you enjoy coming to school, but I am aware that you do not enjoy it all of the time – you say that you do not always know how to improve and that sometimes the behaviour of some pupils is not as good as it should be.

Currently your school is not providing you with an acceptable standard of education and requires special measures to help it do so. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is determined, with the support of the governing body, to make the improvement required. We want the school to help you all to do better and achieve more so that you are doing as well as pupils in most other schools. I have, therefore, asked your headteacher, governors and staff to do the following things, all of which you can help with.

- Improve the quality of your lessons and make sure you aim for challenging targets which you, school staff, and your parents and carers are clear about.
- Make sure that a firm policy for managing behaviour is known, understood and used so that behaviour is good all the time.
- Make sure that senior leaders run the school effectively by checking that everyone is doing as well as they can.

One of my colleagues will be coming back to the school each term to check the school is making enough progress. You can all help by making sure you come to school on time and are in lessons promptly, work as hard as you can and tell your teacher if your work is too easy. Always support your friends if they find being calm and ready for learning difficult.

Yours sincerely

Jane Melbourne
Her Majesty's Inspector

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