

St Lawrence CofE (C) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124303
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380854
Inspection dates	3–4 October 2011
Reporting inspector	David Edwards

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Price
Headteacher	Trish Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2008
School address	Lowfield Lane Stafford ST20 0ET
Telephone number	01785 822391
Fax number	01785 822391
Email address	office@st-lawrence.staffs.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Eleven lessons taught by six teachers were observed. Inspectors scrutinised policies, analysed pupils' work, checked numerical information on pupils' progress and talked to them about it. The team also analysed school improvement plans and governing body minutes, and met parents, carers and governors. Questionnaire returns were considered from 67 parents and carers. The views of staff and pupils were also taken into consideration.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively is the new leadership team bringing about improved outcomes for pupils?
- How consistently good is teaching, especially in Key Stage 2?
- How effectively is the school helping pupils to understand about cultures other than their own?

Information about the school

St Lawrence C of E (C) Primary is smaller than the average primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin and very few pupils are from other minority ethnic backgrounds. These include White and Asian, White and Black Caribbean and pupils from mixed backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. Currently there are no pupils who have a statement of educational need. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school has suffered significant disruption to staffing at Key Stage 2 in particular since the last inspection. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2011. The vacant deputy headteacher's post has not been currently filled. The school leadership team is currently being restructured. The school has achieved the Activemark award and National Healthy School status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Partly because of the difficulties with staffing in the past year, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 dipped in 2011 so that it was broadly in line with the national average. This cohort also had a high level of pupils with particularly low starting points. The latest assessment information and evidence from pupils' current work show that attainment is now rising, especially in Year 2, and in Years 5 and 6. Children make a satisfactory start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2011 rose to above average in all subjects, especially writing, and Year 2 pupils generally made good progress.

Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour in lessons are contributing to the rise in their achievement. Inspectors found a happy school and pupils' enjoyment of learning is reflected in their outstanding attendance. Their personal development is supported by the good care, guidance and support they receive from all staff. Good safeguarding measures ensure that pupils are safe within the school and pupils themselves have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their personal skills, which leads to the school being a cohesive community and there are good links with the local community and the church. Pupils have an effective understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and have many opportunities to participate in regular exercise.

Achievement is satisfactory overall for all groups of pupils. This is predominantly because teaching is satisfactory. Good teaching in Year 2 and in Years 5 and 6 in particular is leading the way forward in accelerating pupil progress. The good pace and strategies used in lessons in these year groups ensure that all pupils are challenged to make good gains in learning through activities that are well-matched to their needs, including the most able. Where teaching is weaker it is because teachers do not use assessment information well to match tasks to pupils' abilities, and do not consistently check on how much pupils have learnt in lessons. Marking of pupils' work does not always show them the next steps needed to improve. There are some good examples in Years 5 and 6 of the way that pupils are taking control of their learning through evaluating their own work and that of others, but this remains inconsistent across the school.

The new headteacher has created a leadership team who are clearly focused on raising standards and are ambitious for the school to improve. They have a clear vision of the key priorities for improvement. Subject leaders and managers are using work scrutiny and pupil assessment data to monitor and evaluate the quality of

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teaching and learning. However, they do not have a strong overview of standards because they are not all fully confident in the analysis and use of whole-school data and not all with leadership roles visit lessons frequently.

The governing body knows the school well and is rigorous in safeguarding pupils. Governors support the school effectively, but are not afraid to challenge it when the need arises. Though the school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily, pupils' understanding of the lives and cultures of other people in the United Kingdom and the wider world is at an early stage. Rising standards across the school and the improvements in writing at Key Stage 1 demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure teaching is consistently good and so raise achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2 by:
 - making the pace of lessons consistently brisk
 - providing greater challenge for the most-able pupils
 - ensuring that marking consistently guides pupils to understand their next steps in learning
 - helping pupils to evaluate effectively the quality of their work and that of others
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information effectively to plan new learning in lessons and make careful checks on the learning that has taken place.
- Improve the effectiveness of subject leaders and middle managers by:
 - ensuring that they have the skills to analyse and interpret data and use the results to inform teachers' planning
 - giving them more opportunities to observe the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.
- Improve the way that the school promotes community cohesion by increasing pupils' first-hand experiences of a range of faiths and cultures in the United Kingdom and the wider world.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Writing has improved strongly following the good impact of specialist support. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enjoy learning and their achievement is satisfactory because of the relevant support they receive through a

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range of intervention strategies and the way staff use assessment information and pupils’ work to judge their progress. The very few pupils from minority ethnic groups make satisfactory progress, because their needs are identified when they join the school and teaching assistants give them targeted help. The progress of pupils in their final year at school remains satisfactory overall, but is accelerating, because of improved teaching in Year 5 and 6. The same is true in Year 2. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils were given engaging practical tasks investigating different ways of making cylinders and constructing a cuboid using cubes. This ensured good challenge and helped to accelerate the progress of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or abilities. Current school assessment information and the work inspectors saw in lessons, demonstrates that more pupils across the school are on track to achieve or exceed nationally expected standards and to meet the challenging targets set for them. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

Pupils behave well and this produces a harmonious community. The spiritual understanding of pupils is strong and their moral and social development is secure. Pupils know who to turn to if they are worried or upset. There is very little bullying in the school and, if it arises, pupils are confident that it will be dealt with effectively. The school council, playground buddies and play leaders are proud of their roles. Pupils make a strong contribution to the school and wider community. For example, the school works closely with the church and local residents on the flower festival, and pupils help to organise the Christmas and summer fairs. Pupils’ satisfactory basic skills adequately prepare them for their next stage of education.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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How effective is the provision?

The school has a team of committed teachers who demonstrate a positive attitude to their work and to the pupils in their care. Most teachers use questioning skills well to help pupils to think for themselves. The effective intervention strategies that teachers and teaching assistants use are beginning to accelerate the progress of pupils identified as at risk of underachieving. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and pupils themselves can explain how teachers help them to learn, but in some classes the marking is not guiding pupils sufficiently well to improve their work. In addition there is inconsistency in pupils’ ability to check the quality of their own work and that of others, so that they are able to take control of their learning.

The use of challenging targets is uneven across the school. In the best lessons, work is pitched well to match pupils’ abilities. A good example of this was in a Year 6 English lesson. Pupils were analysing patterns in poetry and justifying opinions by using success criteria to refer to the text to help them to assess the quality of their judgements. All the pupils were appropriately challenged and, as a result, made good progress. However, teaching and learning are not always as effective in other classes across the school and more able pupils, in particular, are not always sufficiently challenged.

The curriculum provides well for art and modern foreign languages, but pupils have inconsistent opportunities to practise their basic skills in literacy and numeracy across a range of subjects. There is a good range of stimulating activities in lessons, clubs and local visits. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable receive special help through the good caring and sensitive support of all staff and effective links with outside agencies to help to meet their needs. The school is rigorous in pursuing their interests. Pastoral care is particularly effective, as staff build mutually respectful, supportive and trusting relationships with pupils, who have many opportunities to develop responsibility.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The recently appointed headteacher has established a clear vision of what good practice looks like in all aspects of provision and outcomes, and quickly secured the confidence of the staff in the drive to improve standards of attainment and progress for all pupils. Middle leaders and subject leaders are using a range of monitoring and

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evaluation strategies to assess the quality of teaching and learning, but do not currently have enough opportunities to observe standards in their subjects through lesson observations and the rigorous analysis of data. The school has secured the support of the local authority to help these staff to be more effective in their roles so that they make the desired impact on the quality of teaching and learning and improve pupil outcomes.

The governing body has provided satisfactory support to the school in recent years. Members know the school well and are not afraid to challenge when the need arises. Safeguarding is given a high priority so that all statutory requirements are well met and the safety of staff and pupils is assured. The way that the school rigorously pursues the interests of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is particularly good, as are the careful checks that the governing body makes when appointing new staff. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily, enabling all pupils, including the potentially most vulnerable, to make satisfactory progress. Gaps in attainment between pupils and their peers nationally are closing. School leaders have helped to create a cohesive school community with a strong sense of its place in the local and wider community. Pupils currently do not have a good understanding of faiths and cultures other than their own.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Staff work well to ensure that children settle quickly, through effective induction arrangements and ongoing links with parents and carers, such as the sharing of achievements at home through the “proud clouds”. Children’s behaviour is good and they demonstrate enjoyment in their learning. When children begin in Reception their skills and abilities are often a little above those expected for their age. Children make

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satisfactory progress because of satisfactory provision and enter Year 1 with strengths in social development, creative development and communication, language and literacy. There is a satisfactory balance of teacher-led activities and those initiated by children. Children respond with enthusiasm when they are encouraged to take an active part through a wide range of learning activities that help to develop their independence in learning. For example, children were enjoying developing their independent writing skills well in one activity. In another, the ‘veterinary surgeon’s’ role-play area provided opportunities for cooperative learning and the development of speaking and listening skills, but some opportunities were missed to challenge the most able.

The class teacher is well supported by a teaching assistant. They share information about each individual to ensure that children feel safe and well cared for. Their use of assessment to match activities to childrens’ needs is satisfactory, but opportunities are sometimes missed to set the next steps in learning. On occasions there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use the outdoor area in a constructive way to enrich their learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who returned the questionnaire were particularly positive about the fact that their children enjoy school; that the school keeps their children safe; that the school helps parents and carers to support their children’s learning and that school helps children to have a healthy lifestyle. A significant minority of parents and carers raised concerns about the way behaviour was dealt with in school. However, parents and carers who spoke to inspectors felt that behaviour was dealt with effectively by the school. Inspectors witnessed good behaviour and that the school has effective strategies to deal with any challenging behaviour that may occur. A section of parents and carers who responded said that the school did not meet their children’s needs. However, inspection evidence suggests that the needs of all groups of learners are at least adequately catered for. The school has identified that there is more work to do to challenge the more-able pupils. Concerns about the leadership and management of the school appear to be historical, as indicated by written comments on a number of questionnaires. In several areas a significant number of parents and carers chose not to respond.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Lawrence CofE (C) Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 67 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 169 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	57	22	33	4	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	61	25	37	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	27	40	32	48	5	7	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	34	31	46	7	10	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	21	31	32	48	4	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	24	36	38	57	1	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	39	35	52	3	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	31	46	26	39	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	18	27	31	46	9	13	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	27	29	43	10	15	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	33	33	49	4	6	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	25	37	27	40	2	3	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	30	45	28	42	4	6	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



5 October 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of St Lawrence CofE (C) Primary School, Stafford ST20 0ET

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for your friendly welcome. We enjoyed meeting and talking to many of you, looking at your work and visiting your lessons.

You told us that you enjoy coming to school and this is shown in your outstanding attendance. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. Most of you are making satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Some of you are making good progress. The headteacher, the staff and governing body make sure you are safe and well looked after. You know how to stay safe and keep yourselves healthy. In lessons and around school you behave well. You are polite and kind to each other.

To improve the school further we have asked the school's leaders to:

- raise the standards you reach in reading, writing and mathematics
- improve teaching and learning by improving marking so it lets you know how well you are doing and sets the next steps in your learning
- teach you the skills to take greater control of your own learning
- increase your knowledge of other faiths and cultures
- make sure that the most able among you are always challenged.

You can play your part in achieving these things by continuing to work hard and doing your best. Thank you once again for making us feel so welcome. We wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards
Lead inspector

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