

# St Lawrence Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	116267
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379226
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Michael Pye

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	166
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sarah Broadbent
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dawn Casson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20–21 October 2008
<b>School address</b>	Amery Hill Alton GU34 2BY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01420 84400
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<b>Email address</b>	adminoffice@st-lawrence.hants.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>4–11</b>
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	<b>20–21 June 2012</b>
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Pye

Additional inspector

Sarah Jones

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 11 lessons, including those involving linking letters and sounds (phonics). A total of seven teachers were seen. The inspectors looked at pupils' work and heard pupils from Years 1 to 3 read. They held meetings with members of the governing body, pupils and staff. The inspectors took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at data relating to pupils' attainment and progress. The school's development plan, lesson and curriculum plans, governing body documentation and school policies and procedures, particularly those relating to the health, safety and safeguarding of pupils, were scrutinised. The inspectors also analysed 78 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as those returned by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

Pupils in this smaller-than-average sized primary school come from a predominantly White British background. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action plus is above average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is average. The main group consists of pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in a full-time Reception class. The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The current headteacher joined the school since the last inspection.

A privately owned breakfast and after-school club operates from the school premises and does not form part of this inspection.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. It has some outstanding aspects, including the Early Years Foundation Stage. It has been successful in making improvements driven by the headteacher. It is not yet outstanding because inconsistencies in the quality of teaching slow pupils' progress, and there are some weaknesses in aspects of the monitoring role of the governing body and the management of subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils make good progress to reach levels of attainment that were above average in 2011. A minority of pupils make even better progress.
- Teaching is good and improving, with almost a quarter of lessons observed being outstanding. This results from good monitoring of teaching by leaders and effective management of performance. The pupils enjoy their learning because teachers plan challenging work. However, not all teachers use challenging questioning to extend pupils' knowledge further. Good marking in English clearly guides pupils as to how they can improve their work. It is not as strong in mathematics, homework and some topic work.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Attendance has improved and is above average. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, enjoy their lessons, use their initiative and are determined to do well.
- Leadership and management are good. The inspirational headteacher has instilled a strong vision for school development. The school is self-challenging, monitoring of performance is well established and accurate self-evaluation informs planning. The governing body monitors the work of the school, although its ability to challenge leaders is not fully developed because some members have limited knowledge of interpreting assessment data and do not formally seek the views of pupil representatives. Leadership in literacy and numeracy is good, but there are some shortcomings in the management of

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other subjects. The stimulating curriculum provides some excellent opportunities for reinforcing the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eradicate the inconsistencies in teaching in order to accelerate progress by ensuring that teachers:
  - use questioning that consistently challenges all pupils
  - provide clear messages to pupils when marking, especially in mathematics, topic work and homework, that encourage them to think deeply about their work and about how to improve it.
  
- Fully develop the impact of leaders and managers, including the governing body, by:
  - ensuring all governors have training in the interpretation of assessment data so that they are more able to challenge the school about pupils' achievement
  - ensuring that governors formally arrange to seek the views of pupils
  - developing the role of leaders and managers in subjects other than English and mathematics.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire believe pupils' progress to be good. Children entering Reception have the expected levels of skills and knowledge and make rapid progress. The great majority leave Reception having met or exceeded their early learning goals. In phonics lessons they learn how to link letters and sounds very effectively, for example applying 'igh' to words such as 'light', and 'might'. When pupils leave Year 2 they are applying their phonics knowledge well to their reading and their attainment is above average. Pupils break down difficult words and blend the sounds together to pronounce the word correctly. A Year 1 reader said, 'I just have to sound it.' By Year 3, pupils increasingly use expression when reading and take notice of punctuation. Attainment in reading by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6 is above average.

Pupils also make good progress in writing and mathematics. For example, Year 4 pupils successfully rose to the challenge to improve their writing. One pupil wrote, 'Hot fiery ovens burning on a hot sunny day', and reacted positively when asked to improve the sentence. Shortly afterwards, the pupil said, 'Hot fiery ovens burning on a steamy summer day.' Year 6 pupils demonstrated enthusiasm and a mature approach to work when asked to solve multiplication problems relating to tennis players' ability to play large numbers of games during Wimbledon. These pupils showed resilience when asked to solve problems involving patterns and sequences.

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Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do as well as their peers because teachers plan appropriately challenging work for them. In English, boys do not do as well as girls, and in mathematics the reverse is true. However, the school has focused on these gaps and they are closing rapidly. In lessons observed, there was no perceived difference in the progress of different pupil groups, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, and Year 6 pupils are on track to match the 2011 attainment levels.

### **Quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is good. This is also the view of the vast majority of parents and carers. Teachers plan work that challenges pupils of different abilities, and this includes disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. A lesson for younger pupils saw highly individualised learning being delivered as pupils were given work that was designed to fill gaps in their knowledge from the previous lesson. Consequently, they made good progress when working on solving practical problems using certain numbers.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and they use this to enthuse the pupils through highly original tasks. Their use of a variety of resources is good and, consequently, pupils are engaged and excited by their learning. For example, in Reception, the children eagerly gave suggestions, such as posters and letters, about how to find a 'missing' dinosaur. Without realising what was happening the children progressed their writing skills extremely well when they moved to letter writing, making use of appropriate guidance sheets. One parent supported this, when writing, 'My son is stretched and challenged in a supportive atmosphere with fantastic enthusiasm and innovation to keep them all engaged.'

There exist inconsistencies in some aspects of teachers' marking. In English the marking is good with clear guidance for improvement and often further challenge for pupils. However, this is not as consistently strong in mathematics, in topic work or homework. There are some good examples of how teachers use questions to consolidate learning and deepen understanding but this is not consistent across the school.

Teaching supports the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. For instance, pupils were asked to write a letter from a Titanic survivor. This exercise developed writing skills but also their ability to empathise with the people of the time who had witnessed a great tragedy.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour over time is good with no exclusions taking place last year. The overwhelming majority of staff, parents and carers believe this to be so. The vast majority of pupils behave extremely well and most of those who completed the questionnaire believe behaviour is good. They say that it has improved over time.

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Pupils have a healthy respect for the value of learning. They demonstrate resilience and take a pride in producing good work. This was seen in the celebration assembly and when they showed their respect by applauding others' achievements.

Pupils are friendly and care for each other extremely well, often helping each other out. One pupil said that she reads to adults, but also, 'My friend helps me to read in the playground at lunchtime.' Pupils say they feel safe but that occasionally bullying occurs. Pupils know who to approach if they have a problem and say that the school deals effectively with bullying when told about it. While a small minority of parents and carers have concerns about how the school deals with bullying, the vast majority say they are happy that their children are safe in school. Pupils learn about cyber-bullying through visits from the police. Through the school's personal and social development programme pupils are made well aware of emotional bullying and given coping strategies. The proactive and caring nature of the school has resulted in barriers to learning being overcome for pupils who find school life difficult.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted. They participate in charity fund raising, older pupils help younger pupils, and there are positive links with the local church and community. During their work on 'Rights and Responsibilities' pupils reflect on issues that interest them and have a very strong sense of respect and caring for others. Through a visit to Canary Wharf pupils developed well their understanding of the business world. One parent echoed the view of others when writing, 'A cracking school! Expectations of learning and behaviour are high. The atmosphere is fantastically caring and nurturing.'

### **Leadership and management**

The very determined headteacher has driven and achieved significant improvement since the last inspection. The message for improvement is based around the 'Olympic values' coupled with an emphasis on improving teaching. Pupils tell of attendance and behaviour having improved. The Early Years Foundation Stage external area has been well developed and provision is now of high quality. This vision for improvement has been effectively shared with adults. Rigorous monitoring of learning through lesson observations and work scrutiny has improved the quality of teaching. More accountability has been introduced. For example, progress meetings challenge teachers to review the achievement of pupils and take quick action to support any pupil falling behind. These also make a good contribution to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils. Pupils' work on 'Rights and Responsibilities' makes very clear that discrimination is not tolerated.

The effective distribution of management responsibilities has brought improvement. Accurate self-evaluation by the subject coordinator has resulted in a new mathematics scheme of work which emphasises using real problems which excite pupils. In English, more focus to guided reading sessions has resulted in improving reading levels. In other subjects, leadership roles are not as developed.

As a consequence of monitoring systems and self-evaluation processes, highly

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relevant development priorities are identified. These are linked effectively to performance management targets and in-service training. The local cluster of schools has made a good contribution to professional development, including in the areas of special educational needs and design and technology.

The governing body, through regular visits and reports, has built a good knowledge of the school. While governors talk informally to pupils when visiting, there is no formal programme of meeting pupils to ascertain their views. As a result of their monitoring they are able to ask searching questions of the school on matters such as finance. However, not all governors have sufficient knowledge of interpreting assessment data to enable them to raise challenging questions about pupils' progress and attainment. Their close monitoring of the child protection register and their commitment to safe recruitment and the overseeing of safeguarding training enable them to make a good and secure contribution to pupils' safety.

The curriculum has been well developed so that it manifestly meets the pupils' basic skill needs. Additionally, the topics successfully motivate pupils and give opportunities for them to develop a good range of skills, including reinforcing their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, when learning about the First World War pupils visited a theatre, wrote letters from soldiers in the trenches, and used mathematical skills to identify the area filled by trenches and rates of troop movement. Such topics make a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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](http://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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.**

22 June 2012

Dear Pupils



**Inspection of St Lawrence Church of England Primary School, Alton GU34 2BY**

You may remember our recent visit. You were eager to tell us about your school and we listened carefully. Like you, we judge St Lawrence's to be a good school. Some of you completed a questionnaire for us – thank you. These showed that almost all of you are happy to come to school and that you learn a lot in lessons.

Your headteacher and the other adults in the school have worked hard to improve things. We liked the way that you are benefiting from more good lessons now, as your teachers design lessons that are fun and interesting for you. We are pleased that you enjoy your lessons and are proud of your work. Your above average attendance levels show this. Well done! We have asked that the school ensures that all of you are challenged by the questions asked by teachers.

When teachers mark your work you receive some good guidance about how to improve your work in English. We have asked that all teachers carry out similarly good marking in mathematics and when they look at your homework, and topic work. You can help by telling your teachers when you are finding the work too easy or too hard. We have also asked that governors are given training to improve their knowledge of your progress.

Your work shows us that you reach standards above those expected for pupils of your age. From Reception onwards you make good progress. Well done! We especially liked the way you show respect for each other and the adults. Your behaviour is good and most of you said that you feel safe and that the school deals with bullying very well. Your headteacher and the other adults want to improve things even further. We have asked that the leaders of all subjects make a difference to improve the school. We have also asked that the governing body makes arrangements to talk more regularly to you about things that are important to you.

Thank you once again for your help and I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Pye  
Lead inspector

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