

Saint Lawrence’s Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Heslington Road , York, North Yorkshire, YO10 5BW

Inspection dates 16–17 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The very wide variation in the quality of teaching, though decreasing securely, is preventing some pupils from making rapid enough progress.
- Pupils’ progress is not consistently good across the different year groups in Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly in writing.
- Not enough pupils make more than expected progress in writing by the time they leave the school so that fewer reach the higher Level 5 than they do in mathematics.
- Teachers do not always set pupils tasks that suitably match their differing levels of ability.
- The governing body is not yet sufficiently involved in evaluating the effectiveness of teaching. It has recently acquired the expertise to do so.

The school has the following strengths

- The school provides a warm, welcoming environment where its Christian ethos is reflected in the care and respect that adults show to children.
- Pupils feel extremely safe, behave well and want to learn.
- The headteacher, senior and middle leaders have a clear view of the school’s strengths and weaknesses. Teaching is improving because of their relentless drive for improvement.
- The school provides good support and challenge for its newly appointed teachers.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get a good start to their education because teaching is good, and features a strong focus on developing their communication skills.
- The school has gained the overwhelming support of parents.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with staff, pupils, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school's improvement plan; the school's data for tracking pupils' progress; monitoring reports; the work pupils were doing in their books particularly their writing; and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding. Inspectors also listened to groups of pupils read.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all eight classes, and saw nine teachers teach.
- Inspectors met parents informally at the start of the school day to gather their views of the school, and took account of the 13 responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

David Matthews, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Barbara Martin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The movement of pupils in and out of the school during the year is higher than average because the school caters for pupils whose parents attend the university from abroad and because of movement within the local community.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection the school has appointed a deputy headteacher.
- Five out of the eleven teachers joined the school this term.
- There is a breakfast and after-school club that is managed by the governing body.
- The Children's Centre sharing the same site is not managed by the governing body and is subject to separate inspection arrangements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - making sure that pupils of different ability are challenged appropriately, so that the tasks teachers set are not too hard or too easy
 - strengthening the monitoring of teaching so that lesson observations focus rigorously on the progress of different pupils and groups of pupils during each lesson
 - increasing the rigour with which the governing body monitors the effectiveness of teaching
 - ensuring that, during each lesson, teachers evaluate how well different pupils are progressing, and reshape the lesson accordingly, so that all pupils make good progress.
 - Accelerate pupils' progress in writing through Key Stages 1 and 2, so that in each year group, more pupils make good progress, and more reach the higher Level 5 by:
 - increasing the use of outstanding teaching to model best practice, especially the teaching of writing
 - increasing the number of writing lessons that leaders observe and making clear judgements on the progress of all pupils, especially more-able pupils
 - making sure that pupils develop their writing skills in other subjects.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Most children join the Nursery Year with skills and abilities well below those typically seen for their age. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the good teaching which focuses well on helping children to talk, and this, in turn, prepares them well for starting to write. By the time they start Year 1 many children are approaching the expected standards for their age.
- By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils reach average standards. This is an improvement on recent trends.
- Pupils make inconsistent progress through Key Stages 1 and 2 because of inconsistency in the quality of teaching. Some pupils have gaps in their learning, particularly in writing, because teaching has not always developed their skills effectively. They do not always apply their writing skills carefully in other subjects, including science. Pupils make best progress in Years 2 and 6 where teaching is strongest.
- When pupils leave at the end of Year 6 they usually attain average or above average standards in mathematics. Standards in English have varied over recent years. In 2011, they were below average. In 2012, however, they were average. Fewer pupils attained Level 5 in writing compared to mathematics. The school's assessment information, confirmed by inspection evidence, shows that this securely improving picture is set to continue.
- Pupils make expected progress in reading, though its unevenness reflects the variation in the quality of teaching. Where teaching is most effective, including in Year 6, pupils read widely and most read confidently. Most pupils know how to build new words.
- The progress of pupils with special educational needs is similar to that of other pupils at the school. The school's data show that gaps have narrowed for pupils supported by the pupil premium, and the gap indicated in the 2011 Key Stage 2 results has been closed.
- Improvements in teachers' marking are enabling pupils to make better progress. Pupils value the comments in their books to which they are expected to respond in writing, and do.
- Clear management strategies are eradicating any remaining pockets of underachievement.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies too widely and this accounts for the variable rates of pupils' progress in different year groups through Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage features effective support for children who speak English as an additional language, well focused support for children with specific learning needs, and well planned activities for all children.
- Very effective teaching in Year 6 includes excellent planning, rigorous systems for assessing pupils' learning, high expectations for all pupils and a wide range of teaching styles. In Year 2 expectations of pupils are also high and tasks promote excellent progress because they are sharply focused. Here, teaching promotes pupils' high levels of confidence.
- By comparison, teaching in some lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2 is not as effective. While, here too, teachers have high expectations of pupils, at times the tasks set are too hard for some pupils, and their progress slows because of their lack of understanding.
- Teachers do not always assess carefully how well individual pupils are learning in lessons. This means that they sometimes do not spot children who are finding the work too hard or too easy, and they fail to adapt their teaching to enable these pupils to make good progress.
- There are too few opportunities throughout for pupils to apply their developing writing skills in science and other subjects.
- Teachers in the school, including the high proportion that are new to the profession, are

committed to school improvement and respond well to senior leaders' advice. As a result, teaching is improving rapidly and securely.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in and around school, in lessons and at playtimes. They are responsive to the positive adult role models that the school provides and they mirror the care and respect that staff show them in their dealings with others.
- Typically, pupils are polite, get on well with one another and enjoy school life.
- Pupils feel exceptionally safe. They know who to turn to should a problem of any sort arise, and they are confident it 'will be sorted'. They know how to keep themselves safe when not in school and are aware of different types of bullying including cyber-bullying, physical bullying and verbal harassment.
- Instances of all kinds of bullying are rare, as pupils and parents agree. 'Everyone is kind here', one pupil said.
- Incidences of low-level disruption in classes are rare and usually associated with the least effective teaching. Pupils at St Lawrence's want to learn.
- Pupils behave well at the breakfast/after-school club where they enjoy making puppets and necklaces to take home.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because pupils' attendance is not yet high enough. Currently, attendance is average, having improved from just below average last year. The school encourages pupils to attend regularly and a racing-car display in the hall is an exciting initiative to motivate them. The school is working effectively with parents to ensure that pupils miss as little of their education as possible, for example by avoiding holidays in term time.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher and senior leadership team, comprising the deputy headteacher and mathematics leader, are having a marked impact on improving teaching. They work in harmony to effectively support, challenge and galvanise the school's staff in a concerted effort to improve what the school provides. The impact is beginning to show in the most recent results at the end of each key stage, in the results of the Year 1 national reading test and in pupils' current accelerating progress which is evident in lessons and in books.
- The headteacher 'grasps the nettle' in tackling weak teaching, while providing ample support and encouragement to all staff. The two senior leaders are equally passionate about providing practical support, particularly for the school's newly qualified teachers who say that the school meets their professional needs very well.
- These very competent key staff model lessons and are involved in discussion groups where teachers, particularly those who are new to the profession, receive valuable guidance. Already the school is identifying potential leaders from among these new recruits. While the exemplary teachers are having a good impact on the quality of teaching, there is scope to increase and extend the scope of their influence.
- The senior team's lesson observations sometimes do not focus rigorously enough on evaluating the progress of different pupils and groups of pupils during each lesson. As a result, the feedback to the teacher concerned is not as helpful as it might be in enabling them to accelerate the progress of pupils in their class.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate in identifying pupils' progress in writing as a weakness and that, compared to mathematics, too few pupils reach the higher Level 5 by the end of Key Stage 2. However, leaders and managers have not yet observed enough writing lessons to enable this weakness to receive a sharp enough focus.
- The key leaders know that there is much to be done to ensure that teaching is consistently

good. However, their determined efforts are starting to pay dividends and staff are pulling well together with a clear sense of purpose and focus on improvement.

- The school's curriculum meets the needs of most pupils, including those with special educational needs. It fosters behaviour well and through circle time and assemblies, when pupils have time to reflect, it promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- The school has earned the overwhelming support of parents. Almost all speak very positively about their children being happy and about teachers being approachable. One even said, 'I wish I could take the teacher home'.
- The local authority has effectively supported the school in improving teaching in key subjects.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
 - They regularly review policies, carefully monitor expenditure and ensure that safeguarding receives high priority.
 - A new executive Chair of the Governing Body with high levels of expertise and energy has been appointed and the level of challenge to hold the school more rigorously to account is already evident.
 - This has placed the governing body in a strong position to better evaluate the effectiveness of teaching which, hitherto, has been lacking.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121607
Local authority	York
Inspection number	402042

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Lewis
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Nellar
Date of previous school inspection	27 April 2010
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