

St Laurence Church of England (A) School

Thame Road, Warborough, Wallingford, OX10 7DX

Inspection dates 30 April–1 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher's good leadership of teaching and learning, together with effective management of teachers' performance, has ensured that teaching is at least good and some is outstanding.
- Pupils make good progress because learning is interesting. They know how well they are doing because teachers' marking helps them to improve their work.
- Parents appreciate the school's caring ethos, which ensures that everyone is included, pupils feel very safe and behaviour is excellent.
- Staff and senior leaders ensure that subject areas are well organised to give pupils a broad range of experiences and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They have a very positive attitudes towards their learning and attendance is high.
- Members of the governing body know where the school's strengths and weaknesses lie. They hold the school to account and work well in partnership with the headteacher and staff to drive the school forward.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of teaching which is outstanding is not high enough to ensure all pupils progress in their learning exceptionally well.
- Attainment in writing is not as strong as reading and progress in mathematics is not as rapid as progress made in reading.
- When making checks on pupils' learning across the school, teachers do not always discuss and agree pupils' levels of work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in 10 lessons, taught by five teachers.
- Nine joint observations of teaching and learning were conducted with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, members of the governing body, the local authority, staff and groups of pupils.
- The inspector listened to pupils reading.
- The inspector spoke to parents and took account of two letters and the 37 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised pupils' workbooks, and looked at school policies, including those relating to safeguarding and equality, minutes of governing body meetings and planning documents.
- The inspector took account of the 14 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Barbara Atcheson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Laurence Church of England School is a smaller than average primary school.
- Most pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for extra funding (pupil premium) is well below the national average. The pupil premium provides extra funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, those in care and those with a parent in the armed services. There are no pupils at the school who are in care. .
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action are above average and those who are supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are average.
- An above-average number of pupils are admitted to the school at times other than the usual time of entry.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in 2012.
- The school runs a breakfast club for its pupils.
- There are four classes. There is one Reception class for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6 are taught in mixed-aged classes.
- Until September 2012, there were only three classes. All three have been affected by staff changes. At the time of the inspection, two of the four classes had supply teachers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing and accelerate progress in mathematics by setting challenging termly targets.
- Strengthen checks on pupils' learning by holding regular meetings for teachers to discuss and agree levels of work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- As this is a small school, children's attainment on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year. Therefore, although all groups of pupils make good progress, standards at the end of Year 6 also differ year on year.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 dipped below average in 2012. However, only three of the seven pupils in the year group had been at the school all the way through and four of the seven pupils were identified with special educational needs.
- The class had also spent three years in a mixed Year 4, 5 and 6 class and during that time had had five teachers. In addition, the unrealistically high results awarded to pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2008 made it statistically impossible for them to improve on previous progress made.
- School information, confirmed by inspectors' analysis of pupils' work in books and lesson observation, shows that although attainment is weakest in writing and progress is weakest in mathematics, all pupils do make at least good progress. One pupil said 'Our teachers push us to the limits' and another added 'but they do not force us!'
- Pupils want to learn. This was clearly seen in a Years 5 and 6 guided reading lesson to find additional detail in a text. Every pupil was industriously employed in searching the texts they had been given. The teacher skilfully refocused the pupils' learning at important points throughout the lesson, asking them to check what they had done so far and increasing the challenge. Pupils worked well together, saying it is very helpful to work in pairs or as part of a group because, as one pupil said, 'You can help each other out of a problem.'
- Teaching assistants provide good support and help move pupils' learning on. Reception children, working with a teaching assistant in a small group outside, practised and perfected how to spell simple three-letter words because the teaching assistant asked the right questions at the right time, helping the children think about each letter and sound.
- Teaching assistants are also skilled in taking small groups of pupils who may have just come to the school and have gaps in their learning. These group sessions successfully help to close these gaps and help the pupils make good progress. This is particularly so in mathematics, where vital steps which form the building blocks of mathematical thinking have been missed out. However, those pupils who have had the benefit of being at the school all the way through are more secure in their learning and so make more rapid progress.
- Accurate identification and an appropriate range of extra support, in the form of skilled teaching assistants, enable disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to make the same rate of progress as their peers.
- Pupils supported by pupil premium funding benefit from a wide range of extra support, such as financial help for trips and one-to-one tuition in reading, writing and mathematics. This not only helps to narrow any attainment gap between this group of pupils and the rest but also helps them to perform as well as others in the school in reading, writing and mathematics. In the 2012 National Curriculum assessments at the end of Year 6, pupils supported by the additional funding attained a little above their peers in both English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers and teaching assistants are very enthusiastic. Their good subject knowledge is evident in the way that they question pupils in order to deepen their understanding and clarify any misunderstandings. They have a good relationship with their pupils. This means that pupils want to do their best, make good progress and that they achieve well over time.
- Consistently good teaching ensures that pupils are secure in their learning and can talk knowledgeably about what they are doing. They are confident to apply newly acquired learning in a variety of ways and enjoy opportunities to work independently and to experiment.
- Every pupil in an outstanding Years 3 and 4 literacy lesson was highly involved in performing

'freeze frame' of parts of the story they were studying. There was a high level of challenge as they struggled to correctly identify part of the story. Although they were all 'on the edge of their seats' wanting to answer, they showed a very mature interaction with each other as they contributed to the lesson. When they answered, they demonstrated a very secure comprehension of the story and what it implied.

- Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in asking questions which make pupils stop and think. They are also good at picking up areas where pupils have misunderstood something and helping them to learn from this. In a Years 5 and 6 lesson where pupils were formulating their own problems relating to time, the teacher's prompt relating to previous errors helped pupils not to repeat the same mistake and to work out, for instance, how many days there are in a decade.
- Accurate use of assessment ensures that tasks are generally well matched to pupils' needs and helps them to extend their knowledge and understanding and make good progress. However, teachers' views vary on what constitutes a particular level and this can mask the degree of progress pupils make.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary because the high level of care for every pupil in the school enables them to develop a very clear set of personal values.
- They work and play harmoniously and say 'We respect everybody.' Attendance is above average because pupils enjoy school. They are consistently punctual and lose no time in settling down to their work. Pupils who have been at the school from Reception through to Year 6 are adamant that the school has always been a very happy, safe place to be and that pupils want to learn and want to help each other.
- One pupil who had come from another school said that he preferred St Laurence, because he felt so much safer. Pupils are very clear about how to keep themselves safe and how to use the internet safely at home and at school.
- Pupils are extremely polite to adults and each other. They have positive attitudes towards learning, readily taking responsibility for their own learning when given the opportunity, and always trying to improve.
- Pupils show a good knowledge of the different types of bullying. Those who spoke to the inspector were emphatic that there is no bullying and said if they ever had a problem, there would always be someone to listen and that prompt action would be taken.
- Pupils work well together and say it is helpful to discuss their work as they learn from each other and pool ideas.
- The school's excellent focus on values and the wide range of opportunities that it plans for pupils to develop their understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues stand them in good stead for life in the outside world. They reflect on their work and explore questions of right and wrong. They learn to respect and understand the beliefs and religions of other people through their lessons and their links with a hospital and a school in Uganda.
- Parents appreciate the benefits of the school's breakfast club and pupils enjoy the companionship and games. Parents also recognise what the school strives to achieve. Most of those who responded to Parent View said, that they would recommend the school to another parent. They also said that the school dealt effectively with bullying, and their children were happy, felt safe and behaved well.
- One parent, voicing the views of many, said: 'I have had three children at the school and right now it is the best it has ever been.'

The leadership and management are good

- Following last year's dip, the headteacher has quickly got to grips with what needs to be done to take teaching and achievement even further forward. She has an accurate picture of the school.

Staff, senior leaders, and members of the governing body share her aspiration to make the school outstanding. Parents appreciate the improvements that have been made and the numbers of pupils on roll have grown appreciably.

- The local authority, rightly, provides 'light touch' support for this good school, but has given more support since the dip in standards last year.
- Staff work well as a team and the small size of the school means that communication is good and everyone shares a consistent commitment to continuous improvement.
- Although there have been many changes of staff, teaching and learning has improved strongly as a result of effective checks on these areas and good quality professional development. Teachers can point to courses which have helped them improve their teaching and, as a consequence, helped raise pupils' achievement. There is a growing proportion of outstanding teaching within the school.
- Teachers' performance is managed effectively. Following an audit against the Teachers' Standards, school and personal targets are set and the level of support needed to reach those targets is discussed. Reviews of performance tackle weaknesses and recognise and reward improvements in teaching.
- The school ensures there is no discrimination and that all pupils are treated equally. All teachers are held to account and pupils' progress is checked at regular meetings. If any pupil is seen to underperform, extra help is arranged.
- Partnerships with parents are good and parents say that they find the school very approachable. This in turn helps parents to become partners in their children's learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body bring a wide range of skills and expertise to the school. They use them effectively to play an active part in the strategic direction of the school. They have an accurate view of the school's performance, including the quality of teaching and how pupils' test results compare nationally and to those of other similar schools. They regularly undertake training to enhance their skills. They fulfil their responsibility in rewarding teachers' performance only when justified by pupils' achievement. Governors are fully involved with setting targets for the school and hold it to account. A schedule of work ensures all that statutory duties such as safeguarding are met and that financial resources are managed well. For example, they know how many pupils are eligible for extra funding through the pupil premium, their levels of attainment and the impact of the extra help provided by the money allocated.

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	123199
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	412175

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	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Newey
Headteacher	Nicole Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 May 2010
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