

St Lawrence CofE (C) Primary School

Lowfield Lane, Gnosall, Stafford, ST20 0ET

Inspection dates 24–25 October 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good and has rapidly improved since the previous inspection. All groups of pupils make good progress from their individual starting points, resulting in attainment that is now above average at Key Stage 2 and well above average in Key Stage 1.
- Children in the reception class make good progress as a result of teaching which is consistently good, and often outstanding.
- Teaching across the school is good. Teachers use a wide range of activities to interest pupils in their work and pupils are encouraged to develop independence and resilience in their learning.
- The consistent approach taken to the teaching of writing across the school is rapidly improving pupils' writing skills in all year groups.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together very productively to ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Pupils behave well, participate well in lessons and are well looked after. They feel safe and happy.
- The headteacher has developed a highly successful team approach to raising achievement and aspirations which involves all staff and governors. The whole school community embraces change and is ambitious for the children.
- The governors know the school well and hold the senior leaders to account for its performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some lessons, teachers do not plan activities that stretch all the different ability groups, so that the most-able do not always make the rapid progress they could.
- Pupils do not always have the opportunity to respond to teachers comments about their work and teachers do not always check that improvements have been made.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, six of which were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made other short visits to lessons and to learning areas in the course of their observations of pupils' behaviour. They also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of the 67 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke informally to parents as they brought their children to school.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, a representative from the local authority, governors, senior and subject leaders, and teaching staff.
- The information from 21 staff questionnaires was taken into consideration.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school, and looked at pupils' books and at a number of documents, including the school's own data, self-evaluation and monitoring of how well pupils are doing. They also checked planning documents, records of checks on the quality of teaching, and records of behaviour, attendance and punctuality, as well as documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Simon Blackburn, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Bird

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding to support pupils eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority or with a parent in the armed services) is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs.
- The large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that a greater proportion of lessons are outstanding by ensuring that all teachers:
 - plan lessons that provide demanding activities for all pupils, especially the most able
 - give pupils opportunities to respond to the comments teachers make about their work and check that improvements are made.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement has improved rapidly since the previous inspection. From their starting points all groups of pupils make good progress, leading to above average attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2012 and 2013. This ensures that all pupils are well prepared to move onto secondary school.
- When children start in the Reception Year, their skills and knowledge are below those expected for their age. They make good progress as a result of good and sometimes outstanding teaching and enter Year 1 secure in the full range of knowledge and skills and well prepared to tackle the challenge of new learning.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and in 2012 completed Key Stage 1 with attainment well above the national average and likely to be so again in 2013. Phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught extremely effectively throughout the school and particularly in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2 and this resulted in all but one pupil (97%) reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check.
- Attainment and progress in writing in Key Stage 2 is not as strong as in reading and mathematics, although still above national averages by the time pupils move onto secondary school. The introduction of a new writing programme that is used consistently by all teachers is having a marked impact on progress for all pupils and the work in pupils' books and the school's own progress tracking show that writing will soon be as strong as reading and mathematics.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide effective support which enables the small number of eligible pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. In 2012, pupil premium pupils, as a group, were about half a year behind others in both English and mathematics. In 2013 there was no gap in writing and about a term's difference in reading and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve as well as other groups, making good progress as a result of early identification of their needs and well-targeted support that meets their needs well.
- Boys slightly outperform girls in Key Stage 2 while it is the opposite way around in Key Stage 1 except in mathematics. The school has introduced new interventions to improve the achievement of girls in the older age groups. Pupils of all abilities make similar progress and the most able pupils in mathematics make particularly good progress as a result of specialist support from a secondary school mathematics teacher.
- Pupils enjoy reading and they are given opportunities to read in many lessons across the school. Inspectors listened to pupils in Year 2 read and found that they had a good range of strategies to read unfamiliar words and had a clear understanding of what they were reading so that they could guess how the story was going to end.

The quality of teaching is good

- The good quality of teaching results in pupils' good progress. In their responses to Parent View, the vast majority of parents agreed that their children are well taught and make good progress.
- Teachers use a wide range of activities to interest pupils in their work. For example, in an

outstanding Year 2 mathematics lesson pupils moved directly from a library activity into a brisk question and answer session that encouraged pupils to reflect and justify their answers and also involved paired discussion that revealed effective use of subject-specific terms. They then went on to practical shape activities that were matched to their ability level with excellent support offered to the least confident pupils by a teaching assistant.

- Pupils are encouraged to develop independence and resilience in their learning. Teachers expect pupils to be able to access help and more demanding work from the well resourced 'working wall', from their classmates, and from other adults in the classroom before resorting to sitting and waiting for assistance from the teacher.
- Teaching in the Reception class is good and often outstanding. The class teacher works very closely with the teaching assistants to ensure that the children learn rapidly from activities that allow them the freedom to discover for themselves within a themed framework. On a whole-school themed 'dayglo' day, during the inspection, children in the Reception class made pictures of reflective jackets and tested them out in a dark tent where they discussed light, the clocks going back, and road safety.
- Pupils work is marked accurately and often and teachers give pupils good quality feedback that allows them to understand what they need to do to improve. Pupils are not always given time to respond to teachers comments or to make corrections so that it is not always clear that they are learning from their teachers comments.
- The improvements seen in the quality of pupils' writing at the end of Year 6 are a direct result of the consistent way teachers are using a literacy programme to develop reading and writing across the school. Rapid gains have been made in all year groups because the programme is valued and teachers share their successes and learn from setbacks.
- Some teaching does not provide enough challenge to pupils of different abilities early enough in lessons to guarantee that they make rapid progress. In these lessons, the same task is sometimes given to all pupils with the result that, particularly with regards the most-able; pupils' knowledge is not deepened or extended.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is tracked accurately and additional staff are deployed well to provide thoughtful additional support where it is required. Parents who spoke to an inspector as they dropped their children off for school were particularly complimentary about this aspect of the school's work. One parent added that her child had made excellent progress in his new secondary school as a result of the work that his primary school teachers and others had done to ensure a smooth transition.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in school. They have good attitudes to learning in lessons and are courteous and compassionate to one another in the playground and as they move purposefully around the school site. However, when tasks are not well matched to their ability and they are not challenged, their attention can wander.
- Good manners and care for each other are values that are constantly reinforced in the Reception class. As a result, the children's personal, social and emotional development is accelerated. When one child was upset, a boy comforted him by putting his arm around him and talking softly to him until he was calm.

- Parents and carers told inspectors that they think the school keeps their children safe. Pupils and staff agree and inspectors find the school to be a safe and caring learning environment. Pupils are clear about their learning on a range of safety issues and enjoy meeting and learning from members of the fire service, the police and road safety officers.
- Pupils have a good awareness of the different forms of bullying they might encounter, including cyber-bullying, but say that incidents of bullying are very rare. They know who to speak to if it occurs and know that all incidents are dealt with effectively.
- Attendance is above average and pupils are keen to come to school. The breakfast club is well attended and well supervised, offering healthy food options and enjoyable activities and so promoting good attendance. The after school club is similarly well managed and enjoyed by pupils.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has developed a very strong team spirit amongst all staff centred on achieving her determination to raise the aspirations of all the children in the school. As a result of the open management and leadership style she and her senior team employ, teachers and other adults embrace change and have become reflective, self-critical practitioners who are constantly seeking improvement.
- The leadership team and governors have secured rapid improvements, especially in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection. The leadership of teaching is good, and effective systems to manage teachers' performance are in place to make sure that the levels of pay reflect how well their pupils learn.
- Leaders check pupils' progress and attainment regularly and, after accurate analysis, use it to discuss the best course of action to increase the progress of individual pupils and of groups of pupils. The data is also used to assess how effective the additional support put in place for pupils who need extra help is being in improving their rates of progress.
- The school's view of its own performance is accurate, providing a firm foundation on which to plan improvements for the next phase of school development. The process used to decide on school priorities involves all staff and governors and is constantly reviewed ensuring that the most important issues are addressed.
- Leaders have rightly focussed attention on ensuring that the curriculum allows pupils to succeed in English and mathematics, nevertheless the curriculum is broad and balanced and includes many opportunities for pupils to develop English and mathematical skills across a range of subjects. Pupils enjoy a range of visits and speakers which give them a wide experience of different faiths and cultures which contributes well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The primary school sport funding is used to provide specialist coaching and training for teachers and it features in the breakfast club with Zumba and gymnastics sessions. During the inspection, there was an interactive presentation by a group of acrobats that was inspirational for the pupils and staff.
- The local authority works well with the school, and has supported developments in English and mathematics as well as in behaviour management and the successful development of stronger governance.
- Safeguarding and child protection policies and practices meet all current statutory requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governors know the school well and ask challenging questions about its performance because they understand the pupil progress data that is presented to them. Their actions are focused on improving the school experience for all pupils and they are not afraid to take difficult decisions. They have maintained this focus through the challenge of planning for a new school building, resulting in continued improvement. Governors are fully involved in the school's evaluation of its own performance and planning for the future through 'action parties' to look at particular strands of the school's development. Governors ensure that the pupil premium and primary school sport funding is used efficiently. They also check that the budget is planned well and that it is used to reward good teachers.

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	124303
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	427002

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	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Price
Headteacher	Trish Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	03 October 2011
Telephone number	01785 822391
Fax number	01785 822391
Email address	office@st-lawrence.staffs.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

