

St Laurence CofE VA Primary School

Collingwood Road, Long Eaton, NG10 1DR

Inspection dates

5–6 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Pupils' achievement is not high enough, particularly in mathematics.
- Recent improvements in the quality of teaching have not been in place long enough, particularly at Key Stage 1, to bring about good progress and achievement over time.
- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently strong enough to ensure that pupils' learning is always good and to compensate for a legacy of past underperformance.
- The curriculum is not planned well enough to secure good learning across a broad range of subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has been instrumental in driving improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement by raising the expectations of both pupils and staff.
- There have been rapid improvements in pupils' attainment and progress in Key Stage 2 and, as a result, standards are rising.
- Children make excellent progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of consistently good or better teaching.
- Pupils' behaviour, and especially their attitudes to learning, are good. Pupils are looked after well and feel safe.
- The nurture group provides a safe haven for those pupils who need additional support with their behaviour and learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed eight lessons. One of the observations was carried out jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors watched an assembly and made a series of short visits to classrooms to observe the range of activities taking place.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, looked at samples of pupils’ work in mathematics, literacy and topic work, and reviewed children’s records from the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Meetings or discussions were held with the headteacher; senior and subject leaders; five members of the governing body, including the Chair; teachers and teaching assistants; a group of pupils; and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 19 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke to a number of parents and carers at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors looked carefully at the arrangements and records kept to safeguard pupils.

Inspection team

Dorothy Bathgate, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Philippa Darley

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- This is a slightly smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of educational needs is in line with the national average.
- The school receives additional funding, known as the pupil premium, to improve the progress of particular groups of pupils such as those known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority. The proportion of pupils supported is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of and consistency of teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics, so that pupils' attainment and achievements are consistently good or better throughout the school by:
 - making sure that all teachers use assessment information to plan work that is precisely matched to pupils' different abilities
 - providing enough challenge for the more-able pupils so that they can go on to reach the highest possible levels in reading, writing and mathematics
 - sharing the outstanding elements of existing teaching with all teachers, so that they are clear about how to improve their own teaching.
- Fully develop the curriculum so that it is engaging, exciting and motivates pupils to learn by:
 - consulting pupils about topics and themes which interest them
 - developing opportunities for outdoor learning in all year groups
 - ensuring that the curriculum is relevant and prepares pupils for their future lives in the wider world.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement. In the most recent tests at the end of Year 6, most pupils made the expected progress nationally given their starting points in reading and writing, with many doing better than this. However, in mathematics, not enough pupils made the progress expected nationally and only a few made better than expected progress.
- Standards are low at the end of Year 2 and pupils' progress is not uniformly good in all year groups. As a result, pupils do not always reach the higher levels of which they are capable, particularly in mathematics.
- Although teaching is becoming more consistently good throughout the school, work is not always sufficiently challenging. In some classes, progress slows because teachers underestimate what pupils can achieve, particularly the more-able and especially in mathematics.
- In 2013, the proportion of Year 1 pupils achieving at the expected level in the phonics screening check was below average. A more consistent approach to teaching sounds and letters is ensuring that younger pupils are increasingly using their knowledge to build words and blend sounds. Older pupils are developing a good range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words and to understand and enjoy a variety of books.
- The progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent. From their below-typical starting points, many children make better than expected progress. As a result, they are well prepared for Year 1 and reach a good level of development.
- During the inspection, pupils' progress in lessons at Key Stage 1 was good. This is because of recent improvements to the quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1. Recent data show an improving picture, confirming that underachievement is being swiftly and successfully tackled.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Precisely planned, balanced and sensitive support enables these pupils to grow in confidence and, as a result, they frequently tackle more demanding work.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium do particularly well because of the well-targeted support they receive. The attainment of these pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is above that of similar pupils nationally, and is similar to, or better than their classmates.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although the quality of teaching seen during the inspection was generally good and included some that was outstanding, teaching requires further improvement. This is because some of the improvements seen are only very recent and, over time, teaching has not been good enough to bring about consistently good progress in all year groups. That means that not all pupils are achieving as well as they should. The headteacher and other school leaders realise that the proportion of good or better lessons needs to increase quickly to make up for the gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Staff have received useful training on how to use assessment information to plan lessons to help all pupils learn as much as they can. However, sometimes work is not always matched closely enough to pupils' abilities. Opportunities are sometimes missed to change work when pupils fail

to understand or to move more-able pupils on to more challenging activities. This slows progress, especially in mathematics.

- Pupils' progress is good when they receive interesting and progressively challenging activities to tackle which help to develop their knowledge and understanding of key concepts and skills. In an outstandingly well-taught lesson for Reception children, the teacher developed children's understanding of shape through a succession of activities. The lesson started with a shape guessing game, moved on to probe children's understanding of shape names and properties, and then challenged the children to use this knowledge to design rockets.
- The Reception classroom is a highly stimulating environment which promotes curiosity and creativity. Teaching in the Reception class is often outstanding and, as a result, children thoroughly enjoy their learning and thrive on the rich curriculum and care they receive.
- Marking, which was an area for improvement from the last inspection, is of a good quality. Pupils receive advice and guidance, with clear points for improvement. They have regular time to check, correct and respond to the marking. As a result, pupils are confident in discussing their targets and understand the steps they need to take to improve their work.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers plan effectively for their deployment and they are valued as equal partners with teachers in pupils' learning. They are skilled at both supporting and challenging the pupils they help.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy their work and have extremely positive attitudes to learning. Their good behaviour makes the school a safe, happy and harmonious place to be. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent. Older pupils look after new and younger pupils well and are good role models. This creates a very positive climate for learning.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good, although they recognise that a few pupils need help to manage their behaviour. Pupils are clear about what the school expects of them because whole-school strategies for ensuring good behaviour are now consistent in all classes.
- Pupils understand that bullying can take different forms, including cyber-bullying, but say that it is rare. Pupils are confident that staff will sort out any issues if pupils are concerned. The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View felt that the school makes sure that its pupils are well behaved.
- The few pupils who need additional support to manage their behaviour receive effective help through the excellent work of the nurture group. The carefully planned sessions are well led by the learning mentor and lead to good improvements in behaviour and in learning. The warm and caring school environment underpins the approach to these individuals.
- The school has taken effective steps to tackle pupils' absence, including a review of the attendance policy, a tightening of expectations, regular reminders to parents and carers and work with other agencies. Although attendance remains below the national average, it is clear that attendance is better as a result of these actions and it is showing steady improvement.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. She ensures that strong values and a culture of continuous improvement are communicated clearly. This clear agenda for change has raised expectations for higher achievement among staff and pupils, despite some considerable staffing turbulence in recent years.
- Leadership and management are good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This has resulted in major improvements to the use of the outdoor learning environment since the previous inspection.
- Senior leaders, including the governing body, set high expectations and challenging targets for improvement. They use effective systems to keep a check on pupils' learning and progress. Senior leaders hold regular meetings with all teachers to discuss pupils' progress and to identify suitable support. Teachers do not get enough opportunities, however, to observe and learn from the examples of outstanding teaching in the school.
- Subject leaders share responsibilities with senior leaders for leading the recently introduced curriculum development teams. Team leaders are able to identify accurately strengths and weaknesses in teaching and are able to demonstrate the impact their monitoring is having in bringing about improvements.
- The curriculum has an appropriate focus on developing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the curriculum is less strong in providing pupils with exciting experiences across a wider range of subjects which interest them. The school recognises that there are few opportunities for outdoor learning and limited opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures.
- The new physical education and sport funding is being used to introduce pupils to new activities, such as golf and hockey, purchase new equipment, and provide training for all staff.
- Assemblies, visits, and visitors all help to promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development effectively. Pupils develop strong values, as well as a wide range of social skills that help them to grow into mature individuals. The school has created an effective culture of mutual respect and cooperation and effectively promotes pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils proudly fulfil their various roles as reading buddies, mini-leaders and librarians.
- The school liaises with parents via the school website and newsletters, as well as inviting them into school regularly. Parents are fulsome in their praise of the headteacher for her readiness to meet with them to discuss any matters of concern. They report that subsequently, issues are resolved swiftly and sensitively. Of those who completed the Parent View survey, 90% would recommend the school to others.
- The school has received good support from the local authority to bring about improvements since the last inspection. The governing body appreciates the local authority's guidance and support and has received a range of well-tailored training sessions.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. The governing body is capably led and has a very clear understanding of its responsibilities. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are well informed about the performance of the school. They regularly visit the school and use a variety of ways to check the information they are given by the headteacher. Governors provide good support and are passionate about the school's future.

Performance management processes are carried out robustly to ensure that the headteacher meets challenging targets set. Governors understand the quality of teaching across the school and make sure that teachers are only rewarded financially for the effectiveness of their teaching, as measured by how well pupils achieve. They ensure that additional funding received from the government is spent wisely and monitor the impact of this to ensure that it is being used effectively to help pupils make rapid progress. This can be seen in the decisions made on how to spend the pupil premium, which has improved pupils' achievement. Governors ensure that the arrangements for safeguarding meet government requirements.

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	112912
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	423863

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Ray
Headteacher	Caroline Owen
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2011
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