

St Lawrence CofE Primary School

Shrewsbury Road, Church Stretton, SY6 6EX

Inspection dates 30–31 January 2014

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.

- Pupils love to learn at this school. They achieve well and reach standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 that are above national averages.
- Pupils make good progress from Reception to Year 6. They make particularly good progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Good and increasingly outstanding teaching inspires pupils' curiosity and their sense of wonder.
- As a result of good teaching, younger pupils quickly learn about letters and the sounds they make. This leads to strong reading habits throughout the school.
- The headteacher, school leaders and governors are improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement.
- Pupils show exceptional pride in their work, their school and the local environment. They show great respect for each other and for their teachers in this calm, safe and well-ordered school. They behave extremely well.
- Pupils themselves have helped the school to create a powerful set of 'learning habits'. The wide range of subjects and activities available to pupils strengthen these habits.
- From outdoor play in Reception to tag rugby at Twickenham, the physical well-being of all pupils is greatly enhanced by healthy eating, enjoyment of exercise and competitive sport.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in writing in Key Stage 2 is not consistently as good as in reading or mathematics.
- The outstanding teaching practice that exists in the school is not yet shared enough to help other teachers improve their skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, three of which were jointly observed with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspection team looked at pupils' work in their books and listened to younger pupils read.
- There were meetings with groups of pupils, senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 52 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and considered the 28 responses to a staff questionnaire. Inspectors also considered the 142 responses by parents to recent questionnaires from the school.
- The inspection team examined: the school's own information on pupils' recent and current progress; the school's evaluation of how well it is doing and its records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Richard Boswell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jenny Edginton

Additional Inspector

Edgar Hastings

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Lawrence is an average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The percentage of pupils who are supported through the pupil premium (which in this school provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs a breakfast club each morning before lessons.
- There is a privately managed nursery on the school site. It was not included in this inspection.
- The headteacher is retiring in the spring term of 2014. A new headteacher has been appointed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding, by giving teachers more opportunities to learn from those whose teaching is already outstanding.
- Improve achievement in writing in Key Stage 2 by encouraging pupils to carefully edit their written work and redraft it to extend their skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children usually start in Reception with skills and understanding above those typical for their age, although the level has declined in recent years. Pupils come to lessons ready and eager to learn and they go on to achieve standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Key Stage 2 that are also above those found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since the last inspection the proportions of pupils making and exceeding nationally expected progress have increased. Progress in mathematics has been above average for the last three years. Progress in reading and writing has been less consistent, varying from above to below average. The more-able pupils generally make good progress, although the proportion of pupils exceeding expected progress in writing by end of Year 6 has been below national levels for the last two years.
- The current pupils are beginning to make better progress in writing, while progress in reading is rapidly improving and strong progress in mathematics is being sustained. Pupils' books from the last school year and the work seen in lessons confirmed this pattern, including for the more-able pupils and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- Children make good progress in Reception, where a well-planned range of activities, both indoors and outside, leads to rapidly developing skills. They receive a strong grounding in the understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics). This good progress continues across Key Stage 1. Performance in the Year 1 phonics check has been above the national average. All the pupils who did not meet the expected level in Year 1 did so in Year 2.
- The pupils supported by the pupil premium make progress in line with other groups. Given the very small numbers, it is not possible to comment on their attainment at the end of Year 6 without potentially identifying individuals. They receive a high level of support and a school leader is specifically responsible for monitoring their progress. The additional funding is used to provide work in small groups on literacy and numeracy, as well as supporting educational visits and drama groups.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is typically good. This is because their individual needs are quickly identified and fully met. Work is tailored to match their abilities and interests so that they make good progress. The school works hard to ensure that there is no discrimination and all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was never less than good, and there were examples of outstanding teaching in each key stage and in both English and mathematics. Senior leaders make accurate judgements of the quality of lessons they see and teaching has improved in the last three years. While school records show that teaching is never less than good and a fifth is outstanding, much of the teaching has yet to reach the highest level consistently. This is because not enough of the best teaching practice is shared with all teachers.
- Pupils are taught to appreciate and understand the natural world that they find on their doorstep and beyond. For example, in a Reception lesson children conducted an investigation of creatures, beginning with toy animals that they had to find, hidden in their outdoor classroom and ending with handling a live snake brought in by a volunteer. Home learning books show that

pupils' enthusiasm for learning frequently leads them to make strong links between home and school. For example, one pupil in Year 4, when asked to conduct a bird survey at home, not only did this but then took his family on a bird watch on the Long Mynd. He then converted the results into graphs on the computer and shared them with the whole class.

- The high quality of teaching in mathematics means that pupils make particularly good progress in this subject. They learn to stick at a tricky problem, looking for different ways to solve it. There is no 'spoon feeding' of solutions and pupils are constantly encouraged to reinforce their key 'learning habits' through working in groups and pairs. More-able pupils are frequently given the hardest work first and are curious to explore further challenges. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 class, having completed work on improper fractions, their teacher gave them an image of a painting by Mondrian. The pupils were soon eagerly calculating the fractional relationships of the shapes in the picture.
- Teachers make very good use of support staff in lessons, planning their involvement with different groups of learners. Many of these staff also provide excellent one-to-one support for disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs. In a religious education lesson, a member of the support staff worked with a group of pupils who have special educational needs, designing and building a Hindu shrine that the pupils then explained to the rest of the class.
- The school has recognised that some aspects of pupils' writing are not as strong as their learning in other subjects. In response, it has created some imaginative starting points for writing activities. For example, a recent project involved the whole school in a fantasy 'Slime Week' in which they became reporters and detectives. The 'surprise' arrival of a fire engine and community police officers made this all the more engaging for pupils. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson, pupils were highly motivated to write short stories for entry in a BBC Radio 2 competition. While these approaches are enthusing pupils to write, teachers do not always making sure that pupils take the time to read over, edit and redraft their work so they get full benefit from the work in extending their skills.
- The highly effective teaching of phonics in Reception and Year 1 has led to pupils making good progress in their reading in Key Stage 1. Teachers throughout the school take every opportunity to encourage the habit of regular reading. Pupils are encouraged to read more books by a favourite author and to move on to more demanding texts as soon as they are ready.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils make an exceptional contribution to the life and ethos of the school and to advancing their own learning. The pride they take in their work and their school is evident from the neat presentation of work in pupils' books, the care taken over handwriting and the layout of data, and the smart appearance of their uniform. The high expectations for these aspects of school life stem from the 'learning habits' that have been developed with the full participation of pupils through the school council. There is a palpable sense in which not only do the pupils have a sense of belonging to the school, but the school also belongs to the pupils.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. They learn a lot about how to keep themselves and each other safe, and they are encouraged to have a voice and always to feel able to talk to a responsible adult. The school recently conducted a survey of pupils' own attitudes, and older pupils assisted younger pupils in completing the survey online and ensuring their voice was heard. Pupils have also recently created their own computerised animation about the importance of e-safety and for this they won a regional award.

- Pupils' attendance is above average and improving further as the school continues to offer rewards and encouragement and to closely monitor the reasons for any absences. There have been no permanent or fixed-term exclusions from the school for many years. Pupils want to be in a school that has fair and familiar routines that are consistently applied by all staff. School records show that any bullying is a very rare occurrence and that it is swiftly dealt with. This was confirmed in the views of parents and staff, and in discussions with pupils.
- The attitudes of pupils to their learning in class are outstanding. They arrive to lessons ready and eager to learn. They listen attentively to their teachers and to each other, and are confident in asking questions. The mature level of their behaviour was seen in a number of lessons in the way the teacher can confidently encourage a lively class discussion or enjoy a joke with their class, knowing that the moment they ask a direct question to an individual, the rest will fall quiet and listen. The staff's most effective tool for managing behaviour is good teaching. The pupils are interested and inspired to learn more.
- Some pupils at times find it difficult to behave appropriately, but the learning of the whole class is never compromised by very occasional disruptive behaviour. The staff's high expectations are well understood by all pupils. School records show that pupils who had arrived with a low level of skills left the school having achieved above-average standards and showing they were able to conduct themselves responsibly and sociably, for example on a Year 6 school visit to an outdoor education centre.
- Older pupils take their responsibilities very seriously because they see the school valuing their contributions and listening to their opinions. This was evident in their involvement in the selection of the new headteacher. With sensitivity and good sense the pupil school council consulted their classes and drew up a list of the qualities they would look for in a headteacher. These were passed on to the school governors.
- The many other responsible roles that pupils fulfil include acting as playground 'buddies' and hearing younger pupils read. Pupils also show great initiative and budding entrepreneurial skills, setting up a market stall in town, calculating turnover and profit, and starting their own school newspaper, having put advertisements in each classroom for contributions of cartoons, jokes and reports.
- The school has devised a 'School Charter', a record of pupils' achievement beyond lessons that they take with them to secondary school. It indicates the wider qualities of a rounded education that are valued at this school and also serves as an audit for the school to assess how well they are achieving those broader goals. Many pupils participate in a variety of sports and arts clubs from netball to choir and drama to cookery. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about cookery club and showed a strong awareness of health, hygiene and safety in the kitchen.
- The breakfast club is a help to many parents and reinforces the school's caring ethos. It is a healthy, friendly and positive way for many pupils to get ready to learn. There are board games, toys, music and plenty of books for a calm and secure start to the school day.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has provided strong leadership that has been both creative and purposeful. With the other leaders, staff and the pupils, he has created an innovative curriculum that is well matched to pupils' needs. The school has not only got pupils in the habit of learning, it has got them to be eager to explore it further. This approach has come from improvements in the

quality of teaching and has resulted in raising pupils' achievement.

- Leadership is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stages 1 and 2. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also benefit from experienced and expert leadership. Consistently applied policies and accurate monitoring of progress create secure, familiar routines for pupils, who know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The headteacher leaves these robust systems to his successor, and a school that demonstrates the capacity to make further improvements.
- The good quality of teaching is kept consistent through regular monitoring by leaders and appropriate training of staff. While there is already some sharing of best practice among staff, there is not yet a comprehensive and detailed programme of coaching to ensure that more teaching is consistently outstanding.
- The school has a clear and realistic view of its own strengths and weaknesses and has set itself ambitious but achievable targets. It is aware, for example, of the need to improve the progress pupils make in their writing. These targets are linked to the performance management of teachers and there is a rigorous system of accountability to reward the best teaching and in case of any underperformance. The overwhelming majority of parents, as well as staff and pupils, are extremely positive about the school's leadership and management.
- The range of subjects that pupils study gives them the opportunity to learn about the wider world through history, geography and religious education. The school encourages pupils to consider the diversity of faiths and cultures in their own country. This broadening of horizons is well illustrated in a recent educational visit to London. Every opportunity was taken to create a memorable and productive visit. Pupils were asked to write letters to their local Member of Parliament and one spoke over the telephone to the MP's private secretary to make arrangements for their visit to the Houses of Parliament.
- The school has a mutually supportive relationship with the local authority, from which it has received valuable training and guidance. The headteacher, as a local leader of education, acts as a mentor to other headteachers within the authority.
- The primary school sports funding is spent well to give the maximum benefit to the largest number of pupils. The school employs a highly effective and well-qualified sports coach who works with teachers and pupils on wide range of different sports. The school has had notable successes in recent years in tag rugby in particular, winning through to the finals at Twickenham. There is, however, an equal emphasis on sport for all and healthy regular exercise. All pupils, for example, are able to make use of the swimming pool next door.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body makes a very valuable contribution to the success of the school. Governors are well trained, know all about the quality of teaching and show a good understanding of information about pupils' achievement, both at the school and in a national context. Some work within education, others bring their perspective as parents. They offer both support and challenge to the headteacher, for example requesting detailed analysis of the use of the sports funding. A governors' committee oversees the performance management of the headteacher and other staff, including their pay. The governors show care and diligence in their handling of the school finances, including a clear understanding of the impact of funding derived from the pupil premium.

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	123468
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	431504

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	266
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Zoe Keeling
Headteacher	Richard Langford
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2009
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