

St Laurence Catholic Primary School

Arbury Road, Cambridge, CB4 2JX

Inspection dates 6–7 March 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Good achievement from below average starting points has been maintained over time since the last inspection. A larger proportion of pupils now exceed the levels expected of them because most make consistently good progress.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and most pupils are challenged well in lessons particularly those who are most able.
- Pupils' good behaviour in lessons contributes well to their good achievement. They have positive attitudes to learning and attend school regularly.
- Pupils feel safe and secure.
- The governing body is highly effective. Governors support and challenge the school in equal measure, are knowledgeable and track the work of the school closely.
- Leaders make improving teaching their top priority and have enhanced its quality through good training and support for teachers.
- Almost all parents who responded to the on line survey would recommend the school to others.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs do not always make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to practise their writing skills.
- Some teachers do not direct the work of teaching assistants well.
- Occasionally the levels given for pupils' work are not accurate.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed parts of 19 lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors also observed an assembly and pupils were observed at break and lunchtime.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils and three members of the governing body. They also met with some parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of management documents relating to school self-evaluation, pupils' progress and attainment, the performance management of staff, improvement planning, pupils' behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 51 responses from parents to the online survey, Parent View. They also took into account the 21 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Glynis Bradley-Peat, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Liz Kissane	Additional Inspector
Mike Williams	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is broadly average in size for a primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average and increasing. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also above average and increasing.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for certain groups, in this case for those known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children) is below average but fluctuates from year to year.
- 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 teaching so that progress continues to accelerate across all groups of pupils and classes by ensuring that:
 - there are more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills during literacy lessons and in other subjects
 - the levels awarded by teachers for pupils' attainment are accurate, particularly in writing
 - teachers direct the work of their teaching assistants more effectively to maximise pupils' progress
 - teaching assistants always use their initiative during lessons and are pro-active in promoting good achievement
- Ensure that highly effective support is in place to promote similar rates of good progress for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs to other groups of pupils

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- A significant proportion of pupils exceed the expected rate of progress in reading and mathematics. This represents good improvement compared to last year. All parents who responded to Parent View said that their children make good progress, which agrees with the inspection evidence.
- In the 2013 national tests pupils achieved above average results in mathematics and broadly average results in reading and writing. Currently, inspection evidence and the school's information show a much higher proportion of pupils are working at levels which are above average for their age. This is the result of the accelerated rates of progress for most groups of learners but particularly for the most able, many of which make outstanding progress and are set to reach high levels of attainment.
- The schools' assessments show that pupils' achievement in writing is not as good as for the other key subjects. This is because pupils do not practice their skills often enough or for extended periods. They do not, for example, regularly write for a purpose in subjects other than literacy.
- Some of the assessments teachers make of the level of attainment in writing are not always accurate. This means that the rapid progress attributed to one class in particular is incorrect. Leaders are already aware of the issue and are working effectively to ensure that this is quickly remedied.
- Children start in the Reception classes with skills which are generally below the levels typically expected for their age. Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good although sometimes teachers do not always plan to fully support children in their chosen activities whilst in the outdoor area. A wide range of purposeful activities are on offer in the classroom and children enjoy their learning.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the time they are ready to join Year 1 is close to the national average.
- Pupils perform well in the national reading check because the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is effective. Older pupils say how much they enjoy reading for pleasure and are happy to share their opinions of different authors.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding, although low in number, also achieve well. By the end of Year 6 there is no gap between their attainment and the attainment of other pupils. Because the impact of one-to-one and small group support has been carefully measured, the school leaders know clearly which strategies are being most effective.
- Most pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs make expected rates of progress, rather than good progress. Although they are not falling further behind, they are not catching up with their classmates as quickly as they could. Sometimes pupils are removed from literacy and mathematics lessons for support. This serves to plug one gap in their learning, but it creates another elsewhere.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well. This is because they are welcomed into the school and their needs are quickly assessed.

- Pupils are becoming increasingly successful in sporting activities, especially in events against a number of other schools. For example, the government's primary school sports funding has been used effectively to improve the teaching of gymnastics. As a result the school gymnastics team came third in a recent competition against local schools.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and plan work which challenges most of them. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the most able pupils spoke highly of the way their teacher makes their learning interesting and how they learn new things each day. Their discussion about experimental probability showed their understanding of fractions and how these could be multiplied to show what would happen if the cubes were drawn out of the bag a hundred times. This demonstrated pupils' high standards and rapid progress.
- Teachers use their imagination to plan lessons which motivate and stimulate pupils' learning. In a literacy lesson in Year 3, pupils worked eagerly on their 'Hogwart's prospectus'. The teacher promoted pupils' moral education well when she asked questions about who the bully was at Hogwarts. Answers provided by the pupils showed their understanding of bullying and they also demonstrated empathy with the other characters.
- Teachers set targets which pupils understand and use to reach the next level of attainment. Target sheets are stuck in the front of books and pupils regularly complete them, logging their own progress. Teachers check that this is done and when a target is achieved, new ones are set. Pupils say that this helps to move their learning on quickly and that they know what they are expected to be able to do next.
- Teachers are keen that pupils should find out things for themselves. Pupils in Year 2 busily worked in groups to sort and classify three dimensional shapes using Venn diagrams. They excitedly talked about which solid should go in which group whilst the teacher circulated around the groups and quietly facilitated learning through astute questions.
- Teachers' marking provides hints and tips about how work can be improved. It also sets extra challenges for pupils who need them. Occasionally pupils do not respond well enough to their teachers' comments and teachers do not always systematically check this is done. This is why marking is good rather than outstanding.
- In a few classes, teaching assistants do not support pupils' learning as well as they could. Sometimes this is because they are not clearly directed to do so. At other times they are not pro-active and do not show their initiative when pupils require help. Time is sometimes spent conducting administrative tasks and preparing materials for lessons when learning should be being supported. As a result, pupils are sometimes left to struggle for too long without the necessary support to help them learn effectively.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs are not always supported effectively to ensure that they achieve well. For example in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, the task provided left the least able unchallenged. In addition, the teaching assistant had been directed to make notes rather than working directly with the pupils; this hampered their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. All members of staff and the large majority of parents who responded to Parent View support this view. The school's records show there have been no serious behaviour or racist incidents in recent times.
- In most lessons pupils behave well because there is much to engage them in their learning. The school's motto which focuses on the growth of knowledge and understanding backs up good quality teaching. Pupils are clear about how knowledge and understanding apply to other aspects of their lives, particularly to the development of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- The vast majority of pupils across the school have positive attitudes to their work. They are keen to answer questions and spend extended lengths of time persevering with challenging tasks without giving up, for example in mathematics and literacy. Occasionally, a very few pupils in Key Stage 1 do not pay full attention to their teacher and find it hard to sit still and listen.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The vast majority of parents say that they feel that their children are safe in school. Pupils say that they feel safe. A small number say that there is some name calling but that the teachers and adults sort this out quickly. Through assemblies and in lessons, pupils are taught about risks and how to minimise them, for example when using the internet or when crossing the road.
- Pupils participated fully in 'World Book Day' on the first day of the inspection and dressed up as their favourite character. On day two they dressed smartly in their uniforms which clearly demonstrated their feeling of belonging to their school community.
- Behaviour around the school and during breaks and lunchtime is usually good although some pupils forget their manners when eating in the dining hall and leave litter and food on the floor for others to clear away.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leadership team and the governing body are highly committed to the school's Catholic culture and ethos. They drive forward improvements in the school persistently. Their high aspirations for the future are shared by all staff, parents and pupils. Those staff with responsibility for subjects and phases, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, contribute well to the school's good effectiveness.
- The performance of staff is well managed and is clearly related to pupils' achievement, particularly the progress they make. Teachers are set clear targets which are regularly reviewed. Teaching continues to improve because staff are supported well through good quality training and guidance. Support is kept simple and focuses in well on one or two areas for improvement so that teachers do not have to attempt to change too many things at once.
- Leaders evaluate their own performance accurately and formulate clear priorities for improvement which have well-defined, measureable targets. Good systems for tracking the progress of pupils ensure that the achievement of groups is checked regularly. If any pupils begin to fall behind, the school intervenes in a timely fashion. Leaders are aware that the progress of pupils with special educational needs is not quite as good as for other pupils and are working to improve the equality of opportunity for this group.

- The curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils. Many of them attend the numerous clubs and benefit from a broad range of activities such as 'mad science', art, crochet, cross country, choir and model making. During the inspection a visiting author worked with some pupils to inspire their writing. Year 5 children went to London to make a presentation to members of parliament as 'Young Ambassadors of RE' and others were invited to the engineering department at Cambridge University during science week.
- The school makes effective use of the additional primary sports funding. Money has been spent on developing the sports leadership skills of Year 5 pupils and on transporting pupils to competition venues. Teachers' own knowledge of how to teach physical education has been improved especially in gymnastics. This is having a good impact on pupils' health and well-being.
- The local authority and the school improvement partner have provided effective support which has promoted further improvement particularly in the use of assessment information. It has also ensured that senior and middle leaders have received development which is enabling them to carry out their leadership roles more efficiently.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body work tirelessly to ensure that they are able to support and challenge the school to the best of their ability. They familiarise themselves with the attainment and progress information so that they can ask poignant questions of the school leadership team. They do not accept the reports they are given without question and go the extra mile to check that the information given to them is accurate and reliable. This enables them to play a full part in school improvement. Governors are able to speak coherently about the impact of the pupil premium funding on the pupils' achievement and describe clearly how assessment at the beginning and the end of support programmes helps them to do this. They are very clear that weak teaching is not tolerated and that leaders do not award pay rises to those teachers whose pupils do not make good progress. Finances are well managed and statutory duties, including those for safeguarding, are met.

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	110845
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	431558

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	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Janet Scally
Headteacher	Mrs Jan Southgate
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2009
Telephone number	01223 712227
Fax number	01223 712227
Email address	office@stlaurence.cambs.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 2014

