

St Laurence CofE Primary School

Jockeyfield, Ludlow, SY8 1TP

Inspection dates 10–11 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has improved following the positive response to the headteacher's determined drive to improve teaching and pupils' progress. Both are good and standards are rising.
- Staff benefit greatly from the good support they receive from school leaders. All staff work together well and support each other.
- The use of assessment has improved. Assessment information on how well pupils are achieving is used effectively in teachers' planning of learning. Consequently, pupils are making faster progress.
- Governance has improved since the previous inspection. Governors rigorously hold the school to account for pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the constant focus on securing good learning in all activities results in children making good progress.
- A rich, well-taught range of learning opportunities provides many opportunities for pupils to learn across the full range of subjects.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This valuable experience is threaded through everything it does.
- Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. The school instils the values underlying modern British society, and pupils respect different points of view and ways of life.
- Pupils behave well and are eager to learn. They feel safe and well looked after. They are taught to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the school and what it does for them and their children.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not typically outstanding to help pupils make even faster progress.
- In Key Stage 2, some pupils lose valuable learning time because they do not persevere enough with their work. They too often wait for adult approval or attention instead of using the good range of books and other materials available for them to find things out for themselves.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 22 lessons. The headteacher shared one of the observations and visited several others. Inspectors also observed play and lunchtimes.
- A number of documents were examined, including: the school’s data on pupils’ current progress, the school’s own self-evaluation document and its learning-improvement plan, other planning and monitoring documents, documents relating to safeguarding, and records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at the work in the books of pupils currently in the school, from the current year, and also from last year. They also examined the books of pupils who left the school in 2013.
- Inspectors talked to pupils, formally and informally, listened to them read, and observed sessions where phonics (letters and the sounds they make) were being taught.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, governors, senior leaders, staff and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 32 responses in the online questionnaire for parents, Parent View. They also gathered parents’ views at first hand at the start of the school day and considered letters sent in by parents.
- Inspectors received and considered the views of the 22 staff who completed the questionnaires for staff.

Inspection team

Doris Bell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alison Miller

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is average. This funding is for pupils in local authority care and/or those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is part of a federation that works closely with a group of local schools to support each other with school improvement.
- The present headteacher took up his post in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching and pupils' progress outstanding by:
 - helping pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, to use their initiative to find things out for themselves by making best use of the books and other materials available so that they do not lose valuable learning time waiting for adult approval or help.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Staff morale is high. This is because the headteacher quickly established a culture of high expectations among staff and pupils, and all know what is expected of them. He also ensures that staff are supported well in the drive for improvement through well-targeted training, and opportunities to learn from each other and from other schools.
- Staff performance is managed well. Targets set for staff arise out of priorities in the school improvement plan and the school's accurate evaluation of its own effectiveness. Staff know and understand these whole-school priorities and their part in helping the school to improve further.
- Teaching and learning are thoroughly checked by the headteacher and senior leaders, who themselves are excellent role models for other staff. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. Subject leaders are growing into their responsibilities successfully, having received much help to do so in the past year. They all understand the part they must play in helping pupils to do as well as they can.
- The school's systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are thorough and analysis is accurate. A good start has been made on determining how to assess progress within the new National Curriculum, based on the expectations for different year groups.
- The broad and balanced range of learning opportunities is planned well to ensure that literacy and numeracy skills and provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are evident through all subjects. Innovative approaches, which include much work across the arts and a good range of visits, visitors and well-attended extra-curricular activities, excite and motivate the pupils to learn.
- Pupils have many opportunities to learn about democracy and about life in Britain today. Their successful campaign for road safety outside the school led them to visit the local council, engage the support of their local Member of Parliament and visit Parliament to present their case. They are successfully taught the importance of working together irrespective of different social and ethnic background, and of respecting differences in faith and belief which are morally acceptable.
- The school receives an appropriate level of support from the local authority, which it values and uses well – for example, to check the accuracy of its monitoring of teaching and learning, and its evaluation of pupils' progress.
- Leaders and managers also use the links with other schools in the federation effectively. For example, they initiate and share valuable training and development opportunities for staff. They also use strategies for the planning of learning to help parents to support their children's learning.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is managed well, with due attention to the new national requirements. Helpful attention is also given to raising further the achievements of the most-able pupils as the school works towards the gifted and talented award.
- The school has used the primary school physical education and sport premium effectively to improve the skills of the staff to teach physical education, encourage pupils' healthy lifestyles and extend the range of sporting activities available to pupils. It is justifiably proud of its extensive sporting successes in the past year.
- Good use is made of pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils. The money is spent on additional support staff, one-to-one tuition and a widening range and type of learning opportunities to engage disadvantaged pupils. As a result, eligible pupils make good progress and gaps between their performance and that of others have narrowed.
- Safeguarding requirements are met. Recent changes in parental access and actions to secure the school

perimeter have enhanced security in and around the building.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body ensures that the school meets all its statutory duties. Governors fully support the headteacher’s vision for the school’s further improvement. They visit regularly to check the quality of teaching and learning and the impact of the decisions they make, including the impact of the physical education and sport premium funding.
- Governors are well informed about the new curriculum and the systems the school has developed to assess pupils’ progress within it. They know and understand how to interpret data about pupils’ progress, including that of disadvantaged pupils, and they use the information effectively to challenge the school to improve further. They also support the headteacher well in making decisions about pay based always on teachers’ performance.
- The governing body is strongly focused on ensuring the school prepares pupils positively for life in modern British democratic society.
- Governors engage well with staff, pupils, parents and the wider community.
- Using their considerable expertise effectively, governors contribute well to school self-evaluation and improvement planning. They also attend training to refine their skills and gain knowledge relevant to their roles and responsibilities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school. They understand how good behaviour helps them to learn and ensures that the school runs smoothly. Much laughter can be heard as pupils enjoy learning and engage confidently with each other and adults.
- Pupils understand the different forms bullying can take and know what to do if they experience or know of any. They report that bullying is extremely rare and that misbehaviour of any kind is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils manage their own behaviour well, including in the playground, reflecting the strong provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are reflective and caring. They respect others and the rich learning environment in which they work and play. They are proud of their work, which is neat and well presented. They appreciate the importance of doing corrections to show that they understand how to improve. They know how well they are achieving and what they need to do next to take their learning forward.
- While pupils have positive attitudes to learning, they do not all have the resilience needed to pursue learning without close direction from an adult even though they are capable of doing so. For example, in some classes in Key Stage 2, they wait with hands up for an adult’s approval or help before moving on, despite having many resources and prompts on their tables or around the classroom to help them. This lack of initiative loses valuable learning time.
- The school’s work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils trust staff to help them and keep them safe, and they know how to keep themselves safe, including, for example, when using computers, the internet, mobile phones and social networks. Leaders apply stringent risk assessments and employment checks on staff to ensure that pupils are also safe during external activities, or when working with coaches or other visitors.
- Pupils’ attendance is average. The school works together well with external agencies, following up all absences to ensure that pupils are safe. It also impresses on parents, with varying success, how pupils’ absence affects their learning.
- Parents who responded to Parent View were unanimous in saying that pupils’ behaviour was good, and that the school looked after their children well and kept them safe. All would recommend the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Leaders and managers have ensured that teaching and learning have improved considerably since the previous inspection. Virtually all teaching is now at least good and an increasing proportion is outstanding. Reading, writing and mathematics are mostly taught well and literacy and numeracy skills are given due attention in different subjects.
- Throughout the school, expectations for behaviour are high and pupils respond well. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. Teachers reflect on their own practice and how it affects pupils' learning, and they help pupils to reflect on their own learning and behaviour.
- Helpful marking of pupils' work ensures they understand how to improve it. The time allocated for pupils to respond to marking is used well, and further assistance is given where necessary. All this good practice ensures that pupils have the individual support they need to learn better. Pupils' learning and progress are carefully tracked and accurately assessed. The information is used well in planning to meet the pupils' different learning needs.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught well. They and pupils eligible for the pupil premium are supported well, often by well-trained and well-briefed support staff. Teaching also ensures that the most-able pupils have suitable challenging work to do so that they too make good progress.
- High expectations of pupils' learning in Key Stage 1 and Year 6 result in consistently good or better progress in those age groups. Elsewhere in Key Stage 2, teaching does not always encourage pupils well enough to persevere with their own learning. This limits progress in some lessons. Work is in hand to achieve consistency throughout the school to enable some pupils to show more initiative by, for example, enabling teachers to learn from each other's best practice.
- Pupils enjoy the homework set for them. It includes reading, writing and mathematics and is often linked to topic work. As they proudly discussed their science homework, pupils said they enjoyed writing when it was done in topic work because there was a 'reason to write'. They described writing in literacy sessions as 'sometimes boring'.

The achievement of pupils is good

- All pupils, from the least to the most able, achieve well. Already, a week into the new school year, pupils have done a good amount of work. Their books from last year confirm their good and, sometimes, outstanding progress, as do the assessment data held by the school. Therefore, the outcomes of this inspection differ from what the published results for 2013 might indicate.
- The upward trend in attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 has continued in 2014, resulting in both year groups attaining above the national average for 2013, the latest year for which published national averages are available.
- In the past, Year 6 pupils have done better in writing than in reading or mathematics. For example, in 2013, despite there being little or no difference in the attainment scores, pupils were over two terms ahead of pupils nationally in writing, but less than one term ahead in reading and mathematics. They also made better progress in writing than in reading and mathematics. Initial indications from the 2014 results indicate that the gap has narrowed this year, and outcomes are similar in all three skills.
- The results of the Year 1 phonics screening check are regularly above the expected national standard. Most pupils use their phonic skills well to help them read new words. Pupils understand what they read and they are developing a love of reading.
- The most-able pupils achieve well across both key stages. Their progress and that of other, more-able, pupils is accelerating because they are given more challenging work and are expected to work at and achieve higher standards than in the past. This expectation resulted in a greater proportion of Year 6

pupils reaching Levels 5 and 6 in the national tests in 2014. It also reflects the school's successful drive to help all its most-able pupils to achieve well.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress. Their learning needs are met well in class and in support groups. Their learning is carefully broken down into the specific steps each learner needs to take to ensure success.
- In 2013, the difference in attainment between pupils eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils in the school meant that disadvantaged pupils were about two and a half terms behind other pupils in reading and mathematics and one and a half terms behind in writing. The reading and mathematics gaps were similar to those found among all pupils nationally, but the gap in writing was narrower.
- Data in school and initial analysis of Year 6 2014 results show that the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school narrowed to half a term in reading and one term in mathematics, but rose to two terms in writing. Overall, however, all gaps were narrower than the latest national comparisons with all pupils. Disadvantaged pupils made good progress and continue to do so.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about sport and exercise. They participate wholeheartedly in the wider range of sporting activities now available to them, most of which are oversubscribed, and understand the importance of exercise in keeping them fit and healthy. They are notably proud of their many successes in competitive sport with other schools.

The early years provision

is good

- In most years, children start school with knowledge, skills and understanding that are broadly typical for their age. Good teaching, overseen by good leadership and management, ensures they make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1. Boys sometimes do less well than girls, but they are being effectively helped to catch up.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development was above average in 2013. It fell to broadly average in 2014, reflecting the unusually lower attainment on entry of that year group. Nevertheless, the children made good progress.
- Staff are vigilant in identifying disabled children and those who have special educational needs. Additional support is provided, in consultation with parents and, where relevant, external agencies, so that personal and learning needs can be addressed as early as possible. Staff also note children who are most able and extend their learning accordingly.
- Children's learning is planned well. Good use is made of the indoor and outdoor environments and there is a good balance between activities that are directed by an adult and those that children choose for themselves. All activities have a clear learning purpose.
- Most staff are skilled at questioning children and building on their responses. Occasionally, one-word answers are accepted, and opportunities are missed to improve the children's communication skills.
- Good emphasis is placed on promoting children's safety and their physical and emotional well-being. They work and play in a safe and secure learning environment. Most settle quickly into school routines and enjoy attending. They behave well and they are eager to learn. The activities on offer stimulate their curiosity well.
- Staff work closely with parents to ensure that all learning is taken into account. They assess and record children's progress well and constantly adjust learning in response to what children say and do.

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	123529
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	442550

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Duck
Headteacher	Stephen Matthews
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2012
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