

# Lydeard St Lawrence Community Primary School

Lydeard St Lawrence, Taunton, Somerset, TA4 3SF

**Inspection dates** 1–2 October 2014

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Standards in mathematics vary too widely across the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in mathematics is below the national average.
- Teaching requires improvement. Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is not consistently strong. Consequently, not all pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to apply their writing skills to a wide range of subjects.
- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, some middle attaining pupils do not make enough progress.
- Teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of work. Not all pupils take sufficient care to present their work neatly.
- Leadership requires improvement. Leaders have not always acted with sufficient rigour to improve the quality of teaching.
- Governors have not, until this year, been firm enough in holding leaders to account.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is now higher than the national average.
- The teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) is particularly strong and contributes to above national attainment in reading and spelling across the school.
- Since her appointment a year ago, the headteacher has brought about improvements in achievement and has developed a team of staff who share her vision for improvement. Her meticulous checking of pupil progress and action to put a range of support in place are addressing underachievement.
- Pupils' good behaviour and the strong relationships between all adults and pupils create an environment where pupils feel safe and are eager to learn.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out in response to a complaint made to Ofsted, which raised serious concerns. The complaints were deemed to be qualifying complaints and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that an inspection of the school should take place to follow up the whole-school issues that were raised. The inspector sought to establish whether safeguarding procedures are adequate.
- The inspector observed eight lessons or parts of lessons. These were all carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector talked with groups of pupils as well as individual groups of pupils during lessons and at playtimes to find out their views about the school.
- The inspector heard four pupils read and scrutinised mathematics and writing books to establish the quality of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with middle and senior leaders and members of the governing body, and three telephone conversations took place with local authority representatives.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation related to school improvement including those relating to pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour, and safeguarding.
- The inspector held informal discussions with parents as well as taking account of the 27 responses to the paper questionnaire sent out and 12 online responses.
- Questionnaire responses from nine members of staff were also analysed.

## Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, Lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Lydeard St Lawrence Primary School is smaller than the averaged-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes apart from the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Most pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is below the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible free school meals and looked after children.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs identified as eligible for special educational needs support is larger than the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is an on-site pre-school (Ladybirds) which is run by an independent management committee and was not part of this inspection.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better and raise pupils' achievement by:
  - developing teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics so that all teachers are able to plan activities that will develop pupils' mathematical understanding
  - insisting on a high standard of presentation and handwriting in pupils' written work.
- Ensure that leaders raise standards by:
  - setting clear actions in the school's improvement plan that identify when and how governors will check and evaluate the success of the school's work
  - continuing to develop the skills of the newly appointed subject leaders so that they are able to demonstrate measurable and sustained improvements
  - making sure that teachers have regular and sufficient opportunities to share information with parents about how well their child is doing in school.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership requires improvement because action has not been effective enough over time to address weaknesses in achievement and progress for some groups of pupils.
- Levels of attendance have been below the national average for the past two years. The new headteacher has been rigorous in addressing this issue. Although the decline has been halted, attendance is not yet improving over time.
- Middle leaders have not had sufficient impact in improving the work of other teachers. Weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics have resulted in poor pupils' progress. Middle leaders can now demonstrate a clear understanding of standards in their subjects and have clear plans in place, but these have not been implemented quickly enough to improve standards, particularly in mathematics.
- Previous weaknesses in the safeguarding of pupils have been addressed. Systematic procedures have been put in place which meet statutory requirements. The school has improved the school site security. Records reflect that the school works closely with external agencies to address concerns. These records are well documented and suitably stored. All staff speak knowledgeably about the school's procedures to keep pupils safe.
- The school promotes the development of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural skills well. Weekly class assemblies provide opportunities for pupils to learn about and discuss issues such as conflict, Fairtrade and saving the planet. The school follows the new National Curriculum and uses the Somerset agreed religious education syllabus. This provides pupils with broad opportunities to learn and understand about the impact of our actions on others. For example, when studying a topic on chocolate, pupils' work reflects consideration of Fairtrade issues and the impact of travel on the planet.
- Leaders have used additional sport funding to employ a sports coach to work alongside teachers to develop their knowledge and skills in teaching physical education. There is a broad and balanced programme of sports teaching which has inspired pupils to attend clubs, take part in local sports events and develop a healthy lifestyle. There are many after-school clubs and participation rates have doubled over the last year. This is having a positive impact on pupils' physical well-being.
- The very large majority of parents are very happy with the school and its work. They say that their children are happy and are making good progress. A few parents told the inspector they would like better communication between the school and home. In particular, they would like the opportunity for more contact with teachers to discuss their child's progress. The inspector agrees that this would better support learning.
- There has been little local authority support for the school in recent years and, therefore, no intervention to prevent the decline in standards. The headteacher has forged useful local partnerships with other schools and has acted quickly in making use of local partnerships with other schools and commissioning external support from consultants. This support has contributed to improvements in writing and enabled middle leaders to understand their role in school improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Until recently, governors have not been routinely checking, first hand, the progress of the school improvement plan. Not all groups of pupils have made sufficient progress and governors have not been sufficiently robust in their actions to bring about change. Since the appointment of the headteacher, governors have been fervent in pursuing improvement. This new drive has ensured that some aspects of the school's work have improved. However, change has not been swift or wide-reaching enough to address the insufficient progress made by some pupils in mathematics. In the last twelve months, governors have engaged an external adviser to support and challenge their effectiveness, which has resulted in a new governing body structure and a clearer focus on checking how well the school is doing. The governing body's work to keep pupils safe and secure is effective. Governors have supported the school's efforts to address inadequate teaching and have developed clear procedures for rewarding good teaching. They have a good understanding of financial budgets and are now frequently checking on how additional funds are being spent to support disadvantaged pupils. This has been effective in securing good progress for this group.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are courteous and polite to each other and to all adults who work with them. Many speak with confidence and pride about their school and, in particular, their learning. When asked what they would improve in the school, all pupils say they would like to 'learn even more' because they 'are good learners'. They are particularly proud of the improvements in their writing.
- Both playtimes and lunchtimes are relaxed and calm. Pupils move safely around the playground and are carefully supervised by staff. They show great sensitivity and sincerity when they speak about how they look after each other and, in particular, how they support new children who join the school. This was confirmed by a parent of a new child who was overwhelmingly positive about the good start her child had made.
- Pupils of all ages say that bullying is rare and that the school deals with it right away. An overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire concur with this view. Pupils can speak about the difference between bullying and being unkind. Pupils say that behaviour has improved in the school and speak with great passion about the rewards and sanctions in school. A scrutiny of the school's records of behaviour incidents clearly supports the pupils' views. There has been a significant reduction in incidents of poor behaviour. The records demonstrate that leaders deal with incidents effectively.
- Older pupils were able to speak about the importance of valuing differences and how it was interesting to learn about other cultures and faiths. They were passionate when discussing why war happens and how it could be prevented.
- The school's consistent approach to managing behaviour has resulted in most pupils being attentive and responsive in lessons and demonstrating good attitudes towards their learning. Parents who responded to the questionnaire agree with this view. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because, on a few occasions, some pupils lose focus and do not achieve as well as they should.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils and parents say that pupils enjoy coming to school. Leaders rigorously follow up any absence. This has resulted in improvements to pupils' attendance, which is now broadly in line with the national average.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders have made significant changes since last year. There have been improvements to the security of the school site, school boundary fences have been repaired and replaced and new locks fitted to gates.
- Many pupils speak knowledgeably about internet safety. The local community police officer regularly visits the school to speak about issues such as cyber bullying and how to keep safe.
- Staff and volunteers are carefully checked prior to appointment. Pupils know who they go to if they have worries and are confident that they will be supported.
- School activities are carefully assessed to avoid any possible risk. The leader for special educational needs has been commended by local authority representatives for her attention to detail in ensuring that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are kept safe. A strength of the school is that all staff read and understand all individual learning plans. This ensures that the needs of the most vulnerable pupils are met, as they benefit from a consistent approach.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is not yet outstanding because not all children of all ages are able to demonstrate a high awareness of how to keep themselves safe in different situations.

**The quality of teaching requires improvement**

- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly in mathematics. Sometimes the work set for the middle ability pupils is not sufficiently challenging. Consequently, progress is too slow. Work in books demonstrates that pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their mathematical reasoning skills.
- A few teachers have weak subject knowledge in mathematics. Progress for some pupils is not good and achievement by the end of Years 2 and 6 is not as high as it should be.
- Inadequate teaching in the school has resulted in poor progress for some pupils. The headteacher is clear about strengths and weaknesses in teaching and her actions have eliminated inadequate teaching. However, there remain gaps in knowledge for too many pupils, particularly in mathematics.
- Not all teachers insist upon high standards of handwriting and presentation of written work. As a result,

pupils do not always take the greatest care with their writing. Handwriting is inconsistently formed, and, on occasions, scruffy and untidy.

- The teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) is particularly strong and results in above national attainment in reading and spelling across the school.
- Reading is encouraged and promoted well throughout the school. Pupils' reading records demonstrate parental involvement and class teachers ensure that pupils read from a range of different types of books. Pupils spoken to were enthusiastic about books. They read for pleasure and recommend books to one another.
- The school has recently developed a whole school approach to writing. Teachers give pupils clear and specific advice on how to improve their writing. As a result, pupils make at least good progress.
- The vast majority of parents who completed a questionnaire agreed that their child receives appropriate homework for their age. The inspector concurs with this view.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and their skilful questioning and interactions with children help pupils to succeed.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is below the national average and their progress in this subject is not good. This is due to inconsistencies in teaching. Where teachers' subject knowledge is stronger, pupils make swifter progress.
- The progress of the most-able pupils is better in reading and writing than in mathematics. In 2013, a lower proportion than nationally achieved at the higher levels in Years 2 and 6. This is because the work set does not always provide sufficient challenge or opportunities for pupils to use mathematical reasoning.
- Children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge broadly in line with all children nationally. They make at least good, and some rapid, gains in their learning. The proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development has improved since 2013 and is now above the national average.
- By the end of Year 1, children have sustained the good progress made in their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make (phonics). The proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard in this area is above the national average. Pupils' application of spelling rules is effective across the school and, by the end of Year 6, pupils do better than the national average in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- The good start in phonics helps pupils to learn to read quickly. Standards in reading are good across the school.
- In 2013, pupils in Years 2 and 6 did better in writing than in other subjects. This reflects the concerted efforts by leaders to address previous weaknesses. However, pupils do not apply their writing skills confidently across the full range of subjects. The school has recognised this and has put measures in place to address this barrier to higher achievement.
- Very few pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding. All are making at least expected progress. The school invests carefully to provide a range of additional academic and social activities to meet the needs of these pupils. Leaders are meticulous in tracking the progress of disadvantaged pupils and governors regularly check that the funding is making a difference. The school's current information on pupils' achievement demonstrates that these pupils are on track to achieve at least national standards by Year 6 in all subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make expected progress from their starting points. Leaders are effective in working with external agencies to get advice on how best to meet the needs of these pupils. Leaders make regular checks to ensure that the support is meeting the needs of the pupils and invest heavily in staff training and high quality materials. Governors regularly check on the effectiveness of this work.

**The early years provision****is good**

- Children get off to a very good start. They join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills typically in line with the national average. Teaching is consistently good, relationships are strong and, as a result, children made good progress. The proportion who achieve a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is above the national average.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed effectively. Actions from the previous inspection have been robustly addressed. The teacher works closely with the pre-school and carries out home visits to ensure she has sufficient knowledge of each child to help them settle quickly and make good progress. All children, including those with disabilities and special educational needs, achieve well in this nurturing environment. No time is lost. The teacher's planning includes a broad range of activities across the areas of learning, carefully matched to individual needs and interests.
- Leaders have addressed the issues in the last inspection of 2010 so that both indoor and outdoor environments are well organised and stimulating. Children move freely and safely between the two areas. Carefully thought out activities ensure that children enjoy the activities. They show respect for the equipment and use tools safely.
- The teacher works in partnership with parents to capture their child's achievements. Parents were overwhelmingly positive about their child's smooth start to school, how well the adults know their child and how the school involves them in their child's learning.
- The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage leads a group of early years teachers in a local schools network. She is continually supporting others with best practice and ensuring that she is up to date. Consequently, the children benefit from carefully considered activities that support their individual learning needs, enabling them to make swift progress.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage teacher works closely with the teaching assistant to share plans and expectations and, as a result, the teaching assistant is also effective in her interactions with the children. Children quickly become confident and enthusiastic learners who are keen to share their learning. Adults are quick to move on children's knowledge and understanding.
- Both adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage grasp every opportunity to reinforce and extend basic number and reading skills. Recent work to improve early writing skills is evident in all areas of the learning environment and this is reflected in children's swift progress.
- The work to keep pupils safe in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Security is effective, the children have ample space in which to explore and learn, free from harm. Equipment is in good order.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage prepares the children well for the next stage in their education, particularly in reading.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123702
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	441590

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	85
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jo Mackenzie
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janine Donovan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24–25 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01984 667287
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