

# St Lawrence Church of England Primary School, Rowhedge

Rectory Road, Rowhedge, Colchester, CO5 7HR

## Inspection dates

5–6 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Children get a good start to school in the Foundation class. They quickly grow in confidence and make good progress because staff are sensitive and caring.
- Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are rising and pupils currently in Year 6 are working at above average levels.
- Teaching is good in all year groups. Lessons are exciting and stimulating. Teachers ask pupils searching questions to make sure they understand and develop their learning.
- Pupils behave well around school. They are polite to adults and to each other. Older pupils help younger ones, especially at playtimes and while eating their lunch. Pupils of all ages get on well together.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They also know how to stay safe on the road, by the river and in other situations outside school.
- The headteacher and senior leaders make regular checks on how well lessons are taught. They make sure that all pupils are achieving well.
- All leaders provide advice and support to any teachers who need it. This has helped teaching and learning to improve even more since the previous inspection.
- Governors are very supportive. Nevertheless, they ask senior leaders challenging questions to hold them to account for improving the school.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is particularly strong. They are given opportunities to reflect on issues raised in assemblies or lessons, and respond in a mature and thoughtful way.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Work in some books is untidy and disorganised. This means that it is difficult for pupils to read what they have written and see where improvements can be made.
- The recently introduced assessment system is not yet being fully used by all teachers to help raise standards.
- While governors visit the school regularly, they do not rigorously report the findings of their visits to the rest of the governing body. This means that some governors have a clearer understanding of how the school is doing than others.

### Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons, five of which were seen together with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff, two groups of pupils, two governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Informal discussions were held with parents.
- Inspectors took account of the 44 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire Parent View, the school’s own questionnaires and the 23 completed staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and reviewed a range of documentation, including the school’s checks on its performance, its analysis and tracking of pupils’ progress, records of behaviour and safety, school improvement plans, records relating to classroom observations and the management of staff performance, safeguarding arrangements and records of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors also looked at pupils’ work, listened to pupils read and checked information on attendance.

### Inspection team

Susan Hughes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Watson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage attend a full-time Reception class, known as the Foundation class.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- About a quarter of the pupils, an above-average proportion, are supported by the pupil premium. This is additional funding for disadvantaged pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to the national average.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage leader, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, took up the leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage in September 2014 and the special educational needs role in September 2013.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

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

- Improve teaching and achievement by ensuring that:
  - pupils' work in books is tidy and well organised
  - all teachers use the new assessment system to check how well pupils are doing and plan work which will help them achieve even better.
- Strengthen the governors' contribution to school improvement by ensuring they rigorously report back the findings of visits, so that all governors are well-briefed and understand how well the school is doing.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has been described by both parents and staff as 'inspirational'. She has built a strong senior leadership team and helped subject leaders develop their skills to drive improvements in their areas of responsibility. The whole staff, teaching and non-teaching, work well as a team to provide a safe environment and to raise pupils' achievement.
- Senior leaders rigorously check how well pupils are doing, especially in mathematics and English. They quickly identify any pupils who may be in danger of falling behind. Through regular discussions with class teachers they ensure that these pupils are helped to keep up.
- The appraisal system introduced last year has supported leaders in improving the quality of teaching. Individual targets are set and linked to pupils' achievement; a rise up the pay scale is only awarded by senior leaders and governors if teachers achieve their targets.
- The school has formed strong partnerships with other local schools. This means that staff can share expertise and develop their skills, and pupils from the different schools benefit from working together.
- The curriculum has been reviewed in light of recent government guidance. It is exciting and varied and pupils talk enthusiastically about their learning. For example, they told inspectors about using different types of chocolate to show how sedimentary rock is formed. A new assessment system has recently been introduced to check the progress pupils are making in relation to the modified curriculum.
- Leaders have used the new primary sports funding to extend pupils' sporting opportunities. Specialist sports coaches are employed to work alongside teachers in lessons. This provides high quality coaching for pupils and also helps teachers learn new techniques that they can include in their own teaching. The funding has also been used to join a sporting partnership so that more pupils can take part in competitions against other schools.
- The spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of pupils runs through all the school does. School values, discussed in assemblies, are used by teachers and other adults in lessons. Pupils are respectful to each other and listen to the views of others, even if different from their own. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain and reflect on how the school values, such as resilience, honesty and friendship affect their lives. For example, the 'Think of the week' gives pupils the opportunity to record their thoughts on such questions as 'what has history taught us?' The 'think' for the week following inspection, 'what is your soul?' was posed by a Year 4 pupil.
- The local authority uses the headteacher's expertise to support other schools in the authority. It has accurately judged that the school does not need much support itself, but still provides useful termly meetings with its leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are very supportive of the school and recognise that it is improving year on year. They ask leaders challenging questions in meetings to make sure that they understand what is happening and hold the headteacher accountable for improving the school. They understand and use performance data effectively to check how well the school is doing.
  - Governors visit regularly. The 'governor days' are a useful opportunity for training updates and to talk about what they have seen in school. However, visits by individual governors to check progress against agreed improvement measures are not always rigorously shared to make sure the rest of the governing body are fully informed about improvement.
  - Governors have made sure that the appraisal system only rewards teachers for the good achievement of their pupils. Governors told the inspectors that this has helped improve the quality of teaching because staff clearly understand what is expected of them. Governors make sure that staff also have adequate training opportunities to enable them to meet their targets.

- Finances are managed well. Governors check how the pupil premium is spent and make sure that it benefits all disadvantaged pupils. They also appreciate that the sports funding is helping develop teachers' and pupils' skills and enabling more pupils to take part in competitions.
- Governors make sure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet national requirements.

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

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite and respectful, showing a mature sensitivity towards others, whether in their class or in another year group. Pupils enjoy discussing what they think about the things they are learning and celebrating each other's successes.
- Pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning. They are always keen to do well and try their hardest in lessons. They are enthusiastic about the subjects they learn and told inspectors that the best lessons are 'when they really have to use their brains'. Occasionally, however, work in books is untidy and this does not reflect the pride that pupils generally have in their school and their work.
- Older pupils enthusiastically and sensibly take on different roles of responsibility. Year 5 play leaders organise games for younger pupils at playtimes and Year 6 lunchtime monitors help younger pupils to eat their lunch.
- Pupils told the inspectors that behaviour has improved in recent years. This is because the system of rewards and penalties is fair and all teachers use it in the same way. They were adamant that there is very little bullying in the school and any incidents are dealt with well by the teachers. Pupils understand that bullying can take different forms such as name-calling, cyberbullying and teasing.
- The school has worked closely with parents to make sure that pupils attend regularly and are punctual. As a result, attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is now just above average.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe because 'the teachers all look after you'. The school has clear policies and procedures for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils these are rigorously followed and regularly reviewed to check that they are effective.
- Teachers and visitors to the school give pupils good advice on how to stay safe in different situations. For example, talks in assembly about water safety are very relevant because of the nearby river. Pupils also know how to stay safe on the road and recently had a talk about firework safety.
- Older pupils understand the need to observe safe practice when using the internet. They know why it is important not to share personal information. Younger pupils are aware that adults can keep them safe by installing security precautions on the computers.
- Playtimes are very active with a wide range of games taking place. Nevertheless, pupils are mindful of safety aspects and make sure they play in the designated areas.

## **The quality of teaching** is good

- Teachers show high expectations for what pupils can do. Pupils strive to meet these expectations and achieve well. Teachers make the lessons interesting and lively, motivating pupils to try hard. Pupils told the inspectors that they particularly enjoy lessons, and homework, which involve practical activities such as model making.
- Teachers are very skilled at asking questions that not only check pupils' understanding, but make them think deeply about their answers. This helps pupils move on in their learning and make good progress,

building effectively on what they already know. Other adults in the classroom follow the good role models set by the teachers and also probe pupils' understanding well through their questioning.

- Teachers build excellent relationships with pupils and between the pupils themselves. This means that pupils are confident to try new work or offer their thoughts in a very safe environment. This in turn leads to some deep and complex discussions which support pupils' academic and also spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are ably supported, mainly in the classroom. Sensitive and well-briefed adults work alongside class teachers to help pupils with specific needs to achieve well. They strike an appropriate balance between supporting the pupils while making sure that they do not become too dependent on adult help.
- The most-able pupils make good progress. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide work which helps them think hard and achieve well. For example, pupils in Year 4 were investigating states of matter and confidently talked about the movement of particles in gases, solids and liquids.
- Teachers develop literacy, numeracy and communication skills in different subjects to help pupils consolidate their learning. In a Year 5 English lesson, while writing cinquaine poems and haikus about mathematical shapes, pupils reviewed their knowledge of their mathematical vocabulary.
- Disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium make progress at least as good as their peers. The funding has been spent on additional adults to provide support in lessons. This carefully chosen support is also provided by other adults and the class teacher at different times.
- Marking in books and discussions give pupils strong guidance as to how they can improve their work. While teachers track pupils' progress carefully, assessments of their attainment in relation to the new curriculum are less well developed and not all staff are using the new assessment procedures.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Attainment has risen since the previous inspection. Apart from a slight dip in 2014, over recent years there has been a steady rise in standards in reading, writing and mathematics in both Key Stages 1 and 2. From an average starting point in Key Stage 1, pupils currently in Year 6 are working at above-average standards.
- The results of the most recent national screening check at the end of Year 1 on pupils' knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters represent in words) were above average. During the inspection, pupils were heard reading with enthusiasm and enjoyment, using these skills to read unfamiliar words. Younger pupils who found reading difficult were still able to read simple words by joining the sounds together. Most who read fluently read regularly at home, as well as in school.
- Pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1. In 2014, from a slightly lower than average starting point, Year 2 pupils attained average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2014, Year 6 pupils also achieved average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This represented good progress from below-average standards in Key Stage 1. They made exceptionally good progress in mathematics. School data show that pupils in all year groups make good progress as they move through the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils are well supported. Most progress at least as well as their peers, and many make better progress. In 2013 and 2014 there were too few pupils eligible for the pupil premium in Year 6 to comment on their attainment in mathematics, writing and reading without risk of identifying individuals. Current data show that attainment gaps are narrowing as eligible pupils move through the school.
- The most able pupils achieve well. More pupils are reaching higher levels of attainment by the end of Key

Stage 2 year on year. They make similarly good progress to other pupils.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. They receive well chosen support to meet their specific needs. This is reviewed regularly to make sure it continues to help them achieve well alongside their classmates. The special educational needs coordinator has refined the way the support is planned so that both pupils and their parents are more involved in the process.

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

- Although new, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader has already made sure that children have settled into school life quickly through her strong leadership and the able support of her team. The caring attitude of all the adults and common approaches to supporting children means that they are helped to feel safe and secure and quickly learn the routines of school. They are confident to share ideas and happily play together, taking turns and sharing toys.
- The activities planned for the children include adult teaching and opportunities for children to explore for themselves. Plans are adapted to suit children's needs or responses. For example, when a child noticed a huge puddle outside the classroom, the group went out to look at it and discuss why that particular area had such deep water. Having established that there was a blocked drain, the next day they investigated how to unblock a tube so that they could successfully drop pasta down it.
- Teachers encourage children to talk about their learning and ask searching questions to help develop language and understanding. For example, once they had compiled a bar chart about their favourite fruits, children animatedly discussed what it was showing them.
- The safe and secure environment means that pupils thrive and make good progress. While this varies from year to year, pupils generally start school with skills typical for their age in most areas, but a little weaker in reading, writing and mathematics. By the time they leave the Reception class, their skills are more typical for their age which means they are well prepared for Year 1.

## 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>	115077
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	448450

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	183
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Austin Dalby
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kerry Malcolm
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 December 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01206 728517
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