

St Laurences CofE Primary School

Old Church Road, Coventry, CV6 7ED

Inspection dates 17–18 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	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.

- Pupils thrive in the positive, caring environment of this improving school. They become confident and capable learners by Year 6 and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The head of school provides clear direction and has the full support of staff, governors and the academy trust. All have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- Leaders, managers and governors have improved the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the academy opened.
- Pupils of all abilities make good overall progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and standards are rising.
- Children in the early years settle quickly and achieve well because they are taught well and nurtured.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do well thanks to careful analysis of their needs and the effective support they receive.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and at all other times during the day. Pupils feel safe in school. They told inspectors that they have teachers who always care and look after them.
- Governors and representatives of the academy trust visit the school frequently to observe lessons, and to check that improvements are having an impact on pupils' progress. They hold leaders firmly to account for the school's performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The teaching of mathematics is not as effective as that of reading or writing.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 do not have a strong enough grasp of number facts and multiplication tables to help them work faster in mathematics.
- Pupils do not use their mathematical skills in different subjects and they are not strongly enough encouraged to do so.
- Occasionally, learning slows when teachers do not ensure that lesson activities engage and challenge all groups of pupils, particularly the most able.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in parts of 27 sessions. Senior leaders joined inspectors in four of these observations.
- Inspectors sampled sessions where phonics (the sounds that letters make) were being taught. They analysed the work in pupils' books, and talked to pupils formally and informally about their work and about school. They also observed pupils' behaviour at play and lunchtimes, and listened to some pupils reading.
- The views of the 56 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. Inspectors also gained the views of parents directly as they brought their children to school.
- The 29 responses to the questionnaire for staff were also considered.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation including the school's data on current pupils' progress, its self-evaluation document and the school improvement plan. Other planning and monitoring documents were also evaluated, including those relating to teaching, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Discussions were held with the head of school (who until September 2014 worked under the direction of an executive headteacher), five governors, various members of staff and three representatives from the multi-academy trust.

Inspection team

Doris Bell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sian Williams	Additional Inspector
Mark Cadwallader	Additional Inspector
Caroline Evans	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school. Pupils in all age groups are taught in single-age classes. The children in Reception attend on a full-time basis.
- The school became an academy on 1 April 2013, sponsored by the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- A high proportion of pupils are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium. This additional government funding is provided to help pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school has its own breakfast club, which was included in the inspection.
- The head of school was appointed in January 2014. The post of executive headteacher is currently vacant.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and speed up pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics and in Key Stage 2, by:
 - providing stimulating activities that engage and enthuse pupils in all age groups, and particularly challenge the most able pupils
 - ensuring pupils learn and can recall multiplication tables and other number facts well, and use these skills to find the most efficient way of solving mathematical problems
 - encouraging pupil to use their mathematical skills in different subjects and planning activities that require them to do so.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and staff have successfully created a safe and positive learning environment for the pupils. This is evident in the calm day-to-day atmosphere throughout the school and the pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour. The results of the staff questionnaire show that the staff feel that leaders are effective in improving teaching and learning.
- The school's evaluation of its own effectiveness is accurate and well-founded, and the outcomes inform the priorities leaders set for improvement. The staff clearly understand the links between teachers' pay increases and the effectiveness of their teaching.
- Staff training is directly linked to teachers' individual performance goals and the current priorities of the school. Leaders work closely with other schools managed by the multi-academy trust and a group of local schools to help improve teaching and learning. They also arrange training through good links with the local authority.
- Effective actions taken by the head of school and senior leaders have improved teaching and learning. Subject and other leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility, and are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The headteacher enables them to lead and influence what happens in the classroom. Close checking of pupils' work and progress, regular observations of teaching with targets for improvement, checks on teachers' planning and meetings with teachers to hold them to account for their pupils' progress are all helping to raise standards.
- Leaders ensure that pupils from all backgrounds have an equal chance to succeed. They focus strongly on promoting each pupil's welfare so that all feel valued and ready to learn. As a result, pupils' self-esteem is high. Different ability groups make equally good overall progress too, despite some weaknesses in challenge for the most able pupils in mathematics.
- Staff teach pupils the importance of accepting and valuing others, treating them with respect and avoiding discrimination of any sort. They also provide valuable opportunities for pupils to explore, understand and appreciate the different professions and jobs to which they might aspire in the future and thus the importance of learning in everyday life.
- High-quality displays celebrate pupils' work in different subjects and remind them of the benefits of living in a free, democratic but culturally diverse society. The displays also reinforce the message that pupils have rights, but that those rights bring with them responsibilities.
- Discussions with pupils show that they understand and appreciate all of this. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about and respect different faiths and cultures and to consider the problems people face in their daily lives at home and abroad. Prayer walls show that the pupils reflect deeply on these issues and understand the knock-on effect they can have on their own lives.
- The curriculum is carefully planned to interest pupils and prepare them for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about democracy through the election of school councillors and about the importance of following rules so that society can operate harmoniously. They learn about the rule of law in this country through, for example, listening to visiting magistrates and asking questions about their roles. Useful links between subjects make learning meaningful and enjoyable for pupils, although their mathematical skills are not developed as well as their literacy skills throughout the curriculum.
- In consultation with other schools, staff are developing new assessment procedures to enable them to track pupils' progress following the removal of National Curriculum levels.
- The leader responsible for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs does a good job. The way their individual needs are identified is thorough and the subsequent support provided is well

focused but flexible, so it can respond to any changes in the pupils' needs.

- Good leadership of the early years ensures that staff are focusing strongly on increasing literacy and numeracy skills to help more children reach a good level of development.
- The school's comprehensive safeguarding procedures are effective in ensuring pupils' safety and meet current national requirements. Attendance has improved through close monitoring and meticulous following up of absences, and close working with pupils and their families.
- Leaders have made good use of the additional funds to promote physical education and sport. The teaching of physical education is improving as teachers work alongside the sports coaches employed to plan and lead physical education lessons and after-school activities. Pupils' participation rates have increased, as has their understanding of how regular exercise keeps them healthy.
- The use of pupil premium funding is effective. The additional support given to the eligible pupils is focused on what each pupil needs. Consequently, they make good progress.
- The vast majority of parents are very satisfied with the school. They appreciate the ways in which it helps them to be involved in their children's learning through different events, including open days, and the productive dialogue they have with the teachers through their children's 'learning journals'.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The multi-academy trust knows the school well. It uses its expertise effectively to speed improvement. Together, the trust and the governing body provide the school with good governance. They challenge and support it effectively and ensure that it is led and managed well.
 - Governors' monitoring is rigorous and thorough. The trust's designated school improvement partner visits the school frequently and subjects all data to robust enquiry and challenge, giving good advice and guidance where needed.
 - Governors visit the school regularly to gain information at first hand, and then use it to challenge the school to do better. They attend training with the trust and the local authority to fine-tune their skills.
 - Governors have a good oversight of spending, including of the pupil premium and sports funding. They ensure that their decisions have a positive impact on pupils' learning, and provide value for money.
 - Careful monitoring by the trust and by the governors ensures that teachers' pay awards are securely based on achieving the targets set for pupils' progress. Governors know which teachers have been rewarded and why, and which teachers are receiving support to improve their performance. This is beginning to drive up standards and improve achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff and pupils agree. The school promotes good behaviour through well-chosen contexts that combine moral stories and encourage reflection on, for example, friendship. Assemblies help pupils to become increasingly reflective and caring, and respectful towards others. Most pupils are unfailingly polite and mannerly. They stand aside on corridors, open doors and are ready to help at all times.
- Pupils are proud of their school and look after it well. They come prepared to learn, with their 'toolkits' so that they always have, for examples, rulers, pencils and rubbers readily available in lessons. Occasionally their attitudes to learning falter, particularly when staff do not explain clearly enough what pupils are expected to do, or learning is too easy and they get bored.
- Pupils readily accept others. They speak confidently to visitors and make them feel welcome. Pupils new to the school speak highly of how other pupils quickly befriend them and encourage them to join in everything. Staff can cite many instances where pupils who come with reportedly poor behaviour are quickly absorbed into the school's very positive ethos and learn to behave and learn well.

- Pupils take responsibility well, for example, as school councillors. The democratic elections held to select the councillors give them an insight into how British society works. Representatives meet regularly with staff to discuss school improvement, and know their views are valued.
- The parents to whom inspectors spoke were overwhelmingly satisfied with what the school does for them and their children, and the progress pupils make. They say their children are happy and enjoy school, and that the school deals effectively with any concerns they might have. There were a few negative responses in the online questionnaire for parents, but inspectors found no evidence to support them.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff assess diligently the risks associated with all activities. Regular fire practices and effective links with external agencies ensure pupils understand the importance of keeping themselves safe at all times.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They and their parents agree that the school teaches them how to keep themselves safe. Pupils move around the school sensibly, including in the narrow corridors, with due respect for each other's safety and well-being. They talk positively about the things the school does to support their emotional needs.
- Breaks and lunchtimes are happy, social occasions during which pupils play safely and help each other. Effective organisation, good levels of supervision and a wide range of physical activities, including sport, ensure pupils are active and have much to enjoy.
- Pupils are adamant that they know of no bullying but say that if they did, they know what to do. They have complete trust in the staff, saying, for example, 'We have teachers who always look after us. They're everywhere.'
- Pupils enjoy attending the breakfast club and say they would prefer to be there, see their friends and take part in the activities than spend more time at home in the morning. The breakfast club has helped to improve pupils' overall attendance and punctuality.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most activities maintain pupils' interest and successfully promote good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Where learning is most effective, teachers' skilful questions probe and deepen pupils' thinking and set the right tone for learning so that pupils are hungry to learn more.
- Displays in classrooms mirror those around the school in supporting pupils' learning and personal development well, and celebrating the quality of their work. They also provide a wealth of information for pupils, who often use them to further their own learning rather than waiting for an adult to help them. Pupils say they feel challenged in lessons and know what to do if they are stuck.
- Parents speak positively about teaching and about the homework set for pupils and the interest in learning that it sparks. Teachers set challenging targets for pupils. Pupils know their targets and how to check whether they are meeting them. In literacy, they know the steps they need to take to reach them, and what to do to take their learning further.
- The teaching of phonics is effective and pupils show good ability to use their phonic skills from an early age. For example, Reception children corrected an inspector who mis-heard a child's name. They explained that although the name sounded similar to that of another child, it started and ended with a different letter sound. Phonics teaching continues into Key Stage 2 for pupils who need extra support for reading and helps them to make up the ground they have lost in the past.
- Reading and writing are taught well, particularly in Reception and Key Stage 1. School data show that pupils in Key Stage 2 are catching up on work they missed earlier, when teaching and learning were less

secure. They are becoming better able to understand what they read, and to use what they learn about different authors' styles in their own writing.

- Teaching assistants help pupils to make good progress. Well-chosen training ensures they have the skills they need, and that they understand the difficulties faced by the pupils with whom they work. Teachers make good use of their skills, usually to work with disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, but also with disadvantaged pupils.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and overall, the marking supports good progress. Pupils usually do their corrections and, consequently, their learning improves.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving rapidly but variations remain between different year groups and classes. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 did not get a secure grounding in mental mathematics when they were in Years 3 and 4, and still do not have the skills they need to solve mathematical problems efficiently. Teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to use their skills in subjects other than mathematics. More effective teaching is helping pupils to catch up rapidly but the legacy of underachievement is still evident in mathematics.
- Teachers usually plan activities that build well on what pupils have already achieved. Occasionally, some activities are not very interesting or not hard enough. This affects the progress of the most able pupils in particular, and means that some end up marking time, or become restless and lose concentration.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Many children start school with skills and understanding below the levels typical for their age. They make good progress and by the time they leave Reception, the proportion reaching a good level of development is in line with that found nationally.
- Good progress continues throughout Key Stage 1 as staff build well on the improved outcomes from early years. As a result, standards at the end of Year 2 are rising and in 2014 they were above average overall. While pupils make rapid progress in Years 5 and 6, their progress is not as consistently good in Years 3 and 4. These inconsistencies mirror the quality of teaching.
- Standards are also rising in Year 6. In 2014, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average. These proportions are improving as pupils systematically catch up on learning they missed earlier in their school lives, when teaching and learning were not as good. Pupils' work shows that more are now working at the higher levels than in the past and are increasingly well prepared for the next stage of education.
- The pupils who left Year 6 in 2014 did not make good progress over Key Stage 2. Weak teaching in previous years led to a legacy of underachievement. These pupils made good progress while they were in Year 6, but this was not good enough to make up all the ground they had previously lost. Current pupils are making good progress and on track to achieve well in the 2015 national tests.
- The results of the phonics screening check for pupils in Year 1 were in line with the national average in 2014. Pupils use their knowledge of phonics well to break down and read new words. Throughout the school, pupils develop a love of reading. They readily share their favourite books, and learn about different authors and styles of writing, as they read more widely.
- While pupils' writing in Year 6 still has some spelling errors, much of it demonstrates a good level of imagination, well-chosen vocabulary and a range of punctuation and grammar that helps to draw the reader in. In displays, handwriting is neat and well-formed. Pupils use their writing skills well in different subjects.
- Mathematical learning is improving rapidly and pupils are making good progress in Key Stage 1. Progress in Key Stage 2 is more variable because older pupils did not learn their multiplication tables or other number facts well enough when they were younger. As a result, they sometimes struggle to determine

how best to solve mathematical problems. The school's recent initiatives to tackle these issues are helping, but standards are not yet as high as they should be, and pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to use their mathematical skills in different subjects.

- The most-able pupils make good progress. They are expected to write well, and they do so. In mathematics, they do not always have hard enough work to do to challenge their mental skills, or work that requires them to solve more complex mathematical problems. Therefore, their progress, although overall good, is more limited than in English.
- Well-planned support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs ensures that these pupils make good progress. The school is vigilant in checking the impact of support programmes to ensure they are working, and quickly changes them if not.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, also make good progress. Pupils who arrive at the school speaking little or no English quickly pick up the language. Some make outstanding progress and exceed nationally expected standards in Year 6.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was approximately one-and-a-half terms behind other pupils in the school in mathematics, just over one term ahead in reading, and exactly the same as other pupils in writing. When compared with other pupils nationally, they were three terms behind in mathematics, just over a term behind in reading, and about half a term behind in writing. Their progress was slightly behind that of other pupils in the school and nationally. However, gaps are narrowing in all year groups because the progress of disadvantaged pupils across the school is now consistently good.

The early years provision

is good

- Good teaching and effective leadership ensure that children in the early years achieve well. They enjoy the attractive learning environment in which they play and learn. They move around it safely, with consideration for others. They share tools and equipment and play together amicably. They respond quickly to instructions and behave well at all times. Children are well prepared for their work in Year 1.
- Children enjoy school and are proud to show how well they are doing. Adults are sometimes slow to intervene to move children's learning on, as happened when some children completed easier mathematical work quickly and accurately and did not have more difficult work to do.
- The school has responded well to its analysis of last year's data by giving children more opportunities to develop their early literacy and mathematical skills. Speaking and listening skills are included in everything the children do, as is a focus on developing early reading and mathematical skills. In order to help boys learn better, some topics are selected particularly to engage boys.
- Children use their phonic knowledge to help them begin to read and spell. They are able to sound out the letters in their names and to explain the different spellings that similar names might have.
- Staff observe and assess children's learning regularly throughout the day. They do this electronically or in writing and build up a comprehensive log of achievement. Children's books also record and identify attainment and progress well, for example through annotated photographs and samples of work.
- All groups of children receive equally good support to help them learn. Staff quickly identify those who might find learning difficult, for whatever reason, and support them well. The result is that, for many, additional help is not needed later. Children who speak English as an additional language benefit from working in small groups to help them learn to speak English quickly.

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	139383
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	449861

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	406
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Melanie Cleveland
Headteacher	Joseph Jennings (head of school)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
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