

Saint Lawrence's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Heslington Road, York, North Yorkshire YO10 5BW

Inspection dates	8–9 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders have not done enough to tackle the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Overall, standards have declined in the last two years and pupils are underachieving.
- Inadequate teaching is failing to meet the needs of too many pupils in Years 1 to 6. Too few pupils are working at the levels they should be for their age.
- The majority of pupils are not well-prepared for secondary school, because they are not reaching the expected standards in mathematics, reading, writing and other subjects, including science.
- Leaders are not rigorous in checking that the actions they take to make improvements are having the impact they should. The monitoring of teaching is inadequate. Leaders' self-evaluation of its performance is overgenerous.
- Governors are not adequately informed regarding the impact of actions on pupils' learning and so are not holding leaders to account sufficiently.
- In some subjects, including mathematics and science, teachers' subject knowledge is weak. Pupils do not have the level of work they need to achieve well. The most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to allow them to reach the highest standards.
- Teachers' assessments of progress do not reflect the work in pupils' books, particularly in writing. Teaching does not consistently reflect school policies and feedback to pupils is often superficial.
- The early years requires improvement. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development is average but few children exceed these levels because the most able are not challenged sufficiently.
- A number of parents raise concerns about the school, including its leadership and pupils' progress.
- Current leadership does not have the capacity to move the school forward quickly.

The school has the following strengths

- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities often make good progress.
- The school promotes pupils' welfare, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning and their understanding of British values effectively.
- Most pupils behave well, are kind and courteous and make good friendships. They want to learn.
- Attendance has improved to above the national average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school.
- The teaching of physical education (PE) is good.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by:
 - systematically and rigorously evaluating the impact of actions to improve pupils' learning, particularly those relating to improving outcomes for the most able
 - checking the quality of teaching more rigorously, including teachers' planning, so that teaching is consistently effective in meeting the needs of all pupils
 - ensuring that teachers have the training they need to improve their knowledge and skills to teach the full curriculum effectively and to assess pupils' achievements accurately
 - improving the quality of middle leadership, including subject leaders, and more rigorously holding them to account for securing better outcomes for pupils in their areas of responsibility
 - sharpening improvement planning so that it is clear how and when the impact of actions will be measured, reported and reviewed
 - developing the rigour and accuracy of the school's self-evaluation
 - raising governors' expectations of all staff but especially the senior leaders and holding them to account more rigorously for the outcomes for all pupils in all subjects
 - building stronger relationships with parents and increasing their confidence in the school to support their children's education.

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils, including children in the early years, achieve more, by:
 - ensuring that teachers assess pupils' progress accurately and use assessment information to plan work that matches the needs of all pupils, especially the most able
 - improving teachers' questioning skills so that they know how well pupils understand their learning and that pupils are confident in applying what they have done previously when undertaking new work
 - ensuring that teachers follow the school's policies on teaching including those related to planning, marking and feedback, and behaviour management
 - making sure that teachers have higher expectations of all pupils, including children in the early years, and that they ensure pupils produce their best work in all subjects
 - making sure that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work and that they apply their basic skills of literacy and numeracy accurately in their work in all subjects
 - checking that teachers give sufficient time to the teaching of all subjects, so that pupils develop their knowledge and skills in all subjects equally well in preparation for secondary school.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

It is recommended that this school does not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Leaders and managers have not managed to bring about sufficient improvement since the previous inspection. Standards at the end of both key stages have declined over the last two years and are below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Current leaders are not demonstrating the capacity to bring about the sustained and rapid improvement required to ensure that all pupils achieve well.
- The school's self-evaluation is overgenerous. It does not reflect the evidence in pupils' workbooks and the school's assessment data. Evaluation is largely based on the actions the school has taken to improve, rather than the impact of these actions on securing higher outcomes for pupils. A high turnover of staff has not helped the school in its efforts to improve. The decline in standards in July 2015 has not been arrested this year.
- Without a strong steer from the top, the school is unable to improve quickly. The local authority raised its concerns about the school in its warning letter in January 2016. Too little has happened since that time to indicate that the school is now better placed to move forward.
- The school has identified the right priorities for urgent action and leaders know what they want to achieve. However, without rigorous procedures to check the impact of the actions taken to improve and timely modifications if actions are found to be ineffective, the school has failed to move forward.
- The monitoring of teaching is weak. While senior leaders know what good teaching looks like and offer strategies to help teachers improve their practice, they do not check closely enough that these improvements are made and sustained. Not all teachers adhere to the policies related to teaching and learning and so, over time, inconsistent practices and weaknesses in planning result in pupils failing to achieve all that they should. The focus of monitoring has largely been a check to make sure that pupils are kept busy and behave well, rather than how effectively they are extending their knowledge and skills.
- Senior, middle and subject leaders are unable to explain the impact of their work on pupils' outcomes. Leaders have provided staff with good opportunities for training and coaching support but the impact has been minimal. Middle leaders and subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in monitoring teaching and learning and some do not have the skills to undertake these responsibilities successfully.
- Some teachers have weak subject knowledge and so they fail to plan work at the levels required to challenge all pupils appropriately. This is not picked up and addressed as urgently as it should be, so, for example in science, pupils are working at very low levels for their age in key stage 2.
- Teachers know they have targets to meet as part of the management of their performance and senior leaders are effective in applying the agreed procedures when considering increments. However, despite this, the quality of teaching remains inadequate.
- The local authority has provided effective support through the appointment of a consultant last year and through staff training. However, due to weak leadership in the school, the support has had minimal impact. The diocese has also supported the school well, but acknowledges that leadership is inadequate.
- Leaders provide a broad curriculum but it is not balanced. Pupils spend too little time on subjects other than English and mathematics and so their knowledge and skills, for example in history, geography and science are poor. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to conduct investigations to deepen their understanding. The time given to PE and religious education is more generous. In these subjects, pupils are working at age-related expectations. Effective use is made of the primary schools sports premium to widen pupils' opportunities to compete in sporting activities.
- The school provides a number of clubs and other activities, including visits, to enrich pupils' experiences. The breakfast club is also a valuable time for pupils to socialise and appreciate a healthy start to the day.
- The school promotes British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. In a school where there are 16 home languages, the harmony among pupils is very good. Pupils have a good awareness of the need to respect others and treat differences with tolerance.
- Leaders have made effective use of pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils and their families where appropriate. As a result, the attendance of these pupils has improved and the gap between their attainment and that of their peers is closed. These pupils generally achieve well.
- The leadership of the early years is stronger. The leader supports staff in the early years effectively. Hence, children make more rapid progress here; an increasing number are reaching good levels of development.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also effective in making sure these pupils are supported well and make good progress from their starting points.

- Leaders have been successful in improving attendance to above the national average. Persistent absence has decreased, although it is still above the national average.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors know the school’s weaknesses and accept that the school has not improved sufficiently since the previous inspection. They receive information from the headteacher regularly and have relied on her judgement that improvements have the impact they should. Following the decline in test results in 2015, the school improvement plan was revised and milestones identified to check impact. However, monitoring has not been effective in arresting this decline. Governors have not had the quality of information they needed to hold leaders to account more rigorously.
 - Governors have also not checked rigorously that all the information required on the school website is up to date and that all policies are reviewed appropriately, including those regarding safeguarding.
 - Governors are very committed to the school and support its caring ethos. They are regular visitors in school; for example, they listen to children reading and support other school activities and events.
 - Governors have a secure understanding of how teachers’ pay is linked to their performance targets.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The safeguarding policy is up to date and meets current requirements, including those relating to protecting pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Child protection training for all staff is up to date. The school’s procedures to protect pupils are made known to parents. Staff know what to do if they have concerns about the safety of a child and record-keeping procedures are secure. External agencies are involved wherever necessary to support children and their families. Risk assessments, including for school trips, are thorough and the school buildings are secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- Teaching over time has not enabled pupils to make enough progress. Too much of the teaching fails to meet the pupils’ needs and consequently most pupils underachieve in both key stages. Year 6 pupils are not well prepared for their secondary education.
- Questioning is not used effectively in most classes for teachers to check pupils’ understanding and deepen their knowledge. Some teachers’ insecure subject knowledge, for example in science and geography, means that pupils’ misconceptions are not corrected. As a result, pupils glean a very superficial level of knowledge on how to plan investigations or what constitutes a continent or a country.
- Teachers’ expectations of pupils are not often high enough. The work teachers plan lacks challenge, particularly for the most able who frequently repeat work they have already mastered well; they become frustrated at having to do more of the same. Teachers fail to make effective use of assessment to inform their planning. The most able pupils, who complete the tasks they are set quickly, frequently have nothing more demanding to progress to and so lose interest, disengage and achieve too little.
- In cases where weaknesses in teaching outweigh strengths, pupils do not understand what they are learning or why and so become restless and chatty. They struggle to maintain concentration and lapses in behaviour slow progress. Most teachers manage such lapses according to the school’s guidelines but, overall, practice is inconsistent.
- Inconsistent implementation of the marking and feedback policy means that some pupils are not given appropriate guidance on how to improve their work. Frequently, pupils fail to apply their literacy skills accurately in other subjects and this goes unchecked. Errors persist and over time, pupils’ work becomes untidy, careless and far from their best.
- The accuracy of teachers’ assessments of pupils’ work is inconsistent. Where assessment is inaccurate, the quality of the work seen in pupils’ books does not accord with assessment data. Teachers are beginning to apply the revised assessment procedures but practice is far from consistent. This does not help in measuring pupils’ progress accurately over time.
- The teaching of mathematics is weak in that pupils, particularly less confident learners, often complete tasks but do not really understand what they are doing or why. Too little time is given to explain methodology step by step or to check understanding. This results in errors that pupils cannot hope to correct. Only the most able, who grasp new learning quickly, make expected progress; they are not challenged enough to achieve more.
- Reading is not taught effectively as pupils progress through the school. Letters and the sounds they make (phonics), are effectively introduced in the early years but by the end of Year 2 many pupils fall short of age-related expectations in their reading. Older pupils, particularly less confident readers, say they do not get enough time to read at school. They say they do not like reading because it is ‘boring’.

- The basic skills of writing are taught effectively in key stage 1 and pupils know the rules of grammar, punctuation and spelling. However, through key stage 2, pupils do not write enough to practise and perfect their skills and so errors prevail, thus limiting the overall standards they attain.
- In science, history and geography, too little work is completed and pupils have a very poor grasp of basic skills such as investigation, research and hypotheses. Frequently, all pupils do the same tasks regardless of their starting points. Much of the learning is superficial and at a very low level. Evidence in pupils' workbooks indicates that they do not cover enough ground over time to achieve well.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for those who are disadvantaged, or who speak English as an additional language, is more consistent in its effectiveness. Pupils' needs are identified early and staff support their learning well. Individual guidance and small-group work helps pupils gain the confidence to join in everything on offer. They achieve well.
- The teaching of PE and sports is good. Expectations of pupils are higher here and the sports coaches engage pupils well in developing their skills, for example in running and sprinting. Pupils are keen to learn and to compete and they all respond well to the disciplined nature of PE.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are keen to learn and confidently ask for help if they need it and for harder work if what they are set is too easy. They try hard, but lose interest when the work is not explained clearly or when it lacks challenge. Most work effectively with others and participate well during discussions. While some are resourceful in keeping themselves busy when they finish work, others lose interest and disengage.
- Pupils develop their understanding of responsibility through roles as play leaders and monitors. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Through assemblies and discussions about global issues including refugees in war zones and pollution, pupils learn to understand problems in the wider world. Pupils support charitable causes through fund raising activities and develop a good understanding of fundamental British values including tolerance and respect. They know that many pupils come from other countries and have different faiths and traditions and this diversity is to be celebrated.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know that staff would deal with any concerns or worries pupils might raise. Pupils know how to keep safe, including online, where staff have explained that some websites are not suitable for them to access and that they should be wary of social media sites and posting personal information. Younger pupils know not to go with strangers and to 'scream loudly' if they are in trouble.
- Pupils' physical and emotional well-being is promoted well because the school's caring ethos is strong. Pupils are cared for well and if staff have any concerns regarding pupils' well-being, they take appropriate action, alert relevant agencies and consult with parents. Most parents say class teachers are generally very approachable but the headteacher is not always as readily available.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying and say that instances do occur but not frequently. They say a few pupils are sometimes unkind and 'call you names', but if staff are aware they deal with this quickly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around school, in the playground and at lunchtimes. They know what is expected of their behaviour; most respond accordingly. It is only when teaching fails to engage them that a few pupils become noisy and go off task. Most teachers manage these lapses effectively, but on occasions a small number of pupils disrupt learning and do not respond quickly enough when disciplined.
- The school's actions to reduce persistent absence have been successful in that fewer pupils are now absent regularly. The rate of persistent absence is still higher than the national average. Attendance is currently above the national average, reflecting pupils' generally positive views about school.
- Most parents who spoke with inspectors or who responded to the online questionnaire feel that their children are safe, happy and well cared for in school. A few expressed concerns about bullying and behaviour, but said this was mainly one or two pupils who had difficulties managing their emotions.

Outcomes for pupils

are inadequate

- Outcomes for pupils are inadequate because over time pupils underachieve considerably due to weak leadership and poor teaching. The majority of pupils do not do as well as they should.
- In the tests and assessments in 2015, the school did not meet the government's minimum standards for attainment and progress. This reflected a decline in pupils' performance in 2014. The proportions of pupils reaching the expected standards for their age were well below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Despite the school's efforts to improve teaching, the picture is no better this year. Current pupils are working at well below age-related expectations in Year 2 and Year 6.
- The current picture for pupils' progress identifies inconsistencies across classes and subjects. In Year 6, pupils have made stronger progress this year, but have not been able to make up lost ground from previous years. Throughout, too few pupils exceed age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make inadequate progress in many foundation subjects because teaching here is poor. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in history, geography and science are well below expectations.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the national phonics screening check in Year 1 was higher than the national average. The teaching of early phonics was clearly effective. However, the results for the reading tests in 2015 for Year 2 pupils were well below the national average, reflecting inadequate teaching of reading and, more specifically, comprehension.
- The most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently in their learning. They are capable of more and some request harder work, but this is not always planned for them. Expectations of all pupils are too low.
- In 2015, at both key stages, the performance of boys was much better than that of the girls. Current school assessment data does not identify this as an issue, because the school has tried to focus on this gap and all pupils generally are not making the progress they should.
- Disadvantaged pupils make better progress than their classmates because planning for their needs is more effective than general planning. These pupils are doing as well as their classmates by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics and the gap is virtually closed by Year 6. However, because pupils overall are underachieving in these subjects, disadvantaged pupils are two terms behind pupils nationally in reading and writing and three terms behind in mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities currently in school generally make good progress from their starting points. The individual support they receive is effective in helping them achieve well.
- The school has a significant proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Many are new to English when they start school. Careful planning and specialist support helps them to make good progress. A good number exceed the performance of other pupils in the school.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- The leader for the early years knows that more needs to be done to improve outcomes for children in the Nursery and Reception classes and that more of the teaching needs to be good or better. Staff have made inroads in improving provision this year. In 2015, the proportion of children attaining good levels of development was below average. It is average this year. Children are now prepared effectively for Year 1.
- The early years leader has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in current provision and effective teamwork has resulted in improved outcomes this year. Children's needs are identified early, including through home visits before children start school. This gives staff a clear starting point from which to plan effective learning.
- Children enter the early years with knowledge and skills that are generally below those expected for their age. Their speaking skills, physical development and social skills are often the weakest aspects. Children make at least expected progress from their starting points because of the quality of teaching they receive. Some make good progress because they are more confident in their learning and grasp ideas quickly.
- The introduction of phonics in the Nursery is effective in supporting children's love of reading. Children recount familiar stories enthusiastically and were eager to talk about their current book, 'The Queen's knickers'. One child indicated knowledgeably that it was 'not a real story – just a made up one'.
- Children of all ages frequently work alongside each other. The more advanced and confident Reception children set good examples for younger ones to follow. The teaching, while sometimes good, is consistently effective in helping children build on previous learning, for example in phonics and number. Many chose these activities in free choice time because they want to learn.

- The most able children are not challenged sufficiently to enable them to achieve more. One child asked for more sentences to make and painstakingly applied her phonics skills to spell unfamiliar words accurately. Several children competed with each other to write all the numbers to 100 and to sequence patterns using three colours.
- Assessment of children's learning has improved and is reliable to inform teachers' planning. Parents have opportunities to help with reading in school and observe how their children learn. Workshops to extend parents' skills further to support their children's learning at home are well attended. Partnership between home and school is good.
- The early years environment, including the attractive and extensive outdoor area, is a busy, happy place. Children settle in school quickly because they feel well looked after. Staff ensure that the standards relating to the welfare and safety of children are met and that children feel safe in school. Parents are very positive about the good start their children make in the early years.
- Children enjoy learning and follow routines that ensure they work safely and relate well with others. They are generally more engrossed when working with adults but happily try activities on their own. They work hard and have fun learning. For example, one child was determined to write a sentence on the computer and asked how she could do a 'capital "H" instead of a little "h"' for her name. Children enjoy arts and crafts; role play is popular as children re-enact stories. Adults intervene appropriately to extend children's speaking skills and talk to them about their learning without being too intrusive.
- Children take pride in helping staff. Those that are sometimes less enthusiastic, often because they do not want to stop what they are doing, are encouraged to join in 'to keep our classroom tidy for next time'.

School details

Unique reference number	121607
Local authority	York
Inspection number	10012059

This inspection 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	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Rundle
Headteacher	Jane Nellar
Telephone number	01904 625131
Website	www.stlawrencesschool.org
Email address	edlawrences@york.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 June 2014

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The school has provision for early years that starts from when children are aged three. Children attend part time from after their third birthday in the Nursery class. They attend full time in the Reception class.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including from Traveller families, is above the national average. A significant proportion of these pupils learn English as an additional language. Many are at an early stage of English language acquisition when they join the school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils deemed disadvantaged and supported through the pupil premium is well above average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding provided to support disadvantaged pupils including those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of pupils moving in and out of the school at times other than the start of the early years is above average.
- In 2015, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school operates a breakfast club and an after school club for pupils. Both facilities are managed by the governing body.
- Almost all staff are new to the school since the previous inspection.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching throughout the school; a number of observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and the two assistant headteachers. In addition, the inspectors and senior leaders scrutinised pupils' workbooks and inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the chair of the governing body, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and subject leaders. The inspectors also had a meeting with two representatives from the local authority and a representative from the York diocese.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, information on current pupils' progress, and planning and monitoring documentation.
- Inspectors scrutinised the spending of funding for disadvantaged pupils and primary school sports funding. Records relating to behaviour and attendance, as well as documents relating to safeguarding were also taken into consideration.
- Inspectors considered the 24 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View), and the 25 parents who expressed their views via text messages to Ofsted. Inspectors also listened to the views of a significant number of parents who spoke to inspectors during the inspection.
- The inspectors took account of the 19 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaires and talked to staff during the inspection about their views of the school.
- Inspectors took into account the views of the 19 pupils who submitted their views via the online pupil survey, and also considered the views expressed by a number of pupils during the inspection.

Inspection team

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