

Lydeard St Lawrence Community Primary School

Lydeard St Lawrence, Taunton, Somerset TA4 3SF

Inspection dates

12–13 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The drive and determination of the headteacher and governors have ensured that standards have improved rapidly since the previous inspection.
- Pupils' achievement has risen quickly. Across the school, pupils achieve close to, and often above, the nationally expected standards for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils throughout the school, including those who are the most able, are making good progress. By the end of key stage 2, the progress of many pupils is better than the national average, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged and the most able disadvantaged pupils achieve very well.
- Pupils enjoy learning, are keen to improve their work and behave well. They feel safe at school because they are listened to by adults. They know that if they have a worry or concern, adults will help them. Their parents agree with this view overwhelmingly.
- Children in the early years foundation stage make an excellent start to their education because of high-quality teaching, learning and assessment.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong, sometimes exceptional, progress. This is because their needs are identified well and supported effectively.
- The curriculum supports the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils extremely well. However, in a few subjects, the curriculum is not yet stretching pupils' thinking to deepen understanding.
- Across the school, the standards of pupils' spelling, punctuation, handwriting and presentation have improved vastly. However, feedback to pupils about their writing needs to be sharpened so that more pupils reach the highest levels.
- In mathematics, pupils have a good grasp of calculation skills. Their skills in articulating and recording their understanding and reasoning are not yet at the same level.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should further strengthen outcomes for pupils by:
 - improving the quality of teachers' feedback for writing to enable more pupils to achieve at the highest level
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to explore and record their reasoning and understanding in mathematics.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that the curriculum is developed so that there are increasing opportunities for pupils to explore and deepen their thinking in every subject.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher's commitment and high aspiration for all pupils shine through all that she does. With governors, she has been successful in raising the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This means that pupils, including the most able, achieve higher standards and make good progress from their different starting points.
- Teachers and other staff value the opportunities they have to develop their practice through the professional development and support the school offers. Coaching and mentoring from leaders encourages a culture where teachers reflect on their practice and are eager to improve. Staff at an early point in their careers value the support they receive.
- Staff who were at the school at the time of the previous inspection indicate that the school has improved a great deal since then. They say that achieving the best outcomes for pupils is at the centre of decisions the school makes. Parents say that the school has 'massively improved in recent years' under the headteacher.
- Leaders, including governors, have improved the way they communicate information to parents, including about the progress pupils make. Parents say that communication is excellent. They praise the quality of information they receive about their children's progress at different times in the school year.
- The visible presence of the headteacher and the availability of staff mean that parents feel that their concerns will be heard. Parents play an active part in the school community. They have organised and raised funds for the school library and for the refurbished early years outdoor learning area.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least good progress from their starting points. This is because pupils' needs are identified well. Pupils' additional support is monitored carefully by the highly skilled leader for special educational needs and/or disabilities. The leader's exemplary practice includes reviews with pupils, parents and professionals, which are based firmly around the needs of the pupils. The pupils feel highly regarded. Rightly, her practice has been shared more widely with other leaders.
- Leaders of the early years foundation stage have ensured that standards have risen quickly by monitoring, evaluating and adapting the curriculum. The needs of children are met very well.
- The curriculum provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The provision for pupils' social and emotional needs is particularly strong and is appreciated by parents and pupils. One parent said, 'Children are treated holistically here.' Another said, 'The nurture and support we receive is unbelievable.'
- The example of leaders and other adults establishes a culture where modern British values are promoted well. Through a range of activities, such as the school council, pupils have opportunities to make a difference to the life of the school. The curriculum provides them with occasions to learn about values such as equality. One example was learning about the civil rights activist, Rosa Parks.
- The school provides many physical, artistic and musical opportunities, including extra-curricular activities. Here, pupils refine the skills they have learned in English and

mathematics. Leaders and governors are aware that there are some areas of the curriculum where pupils have had less opportunity to practise their skills, particularly in history and geography.

- Leaders and governors have made sure that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has been spent appropriately. As a result, disadvantaged pupils, including those who are the most able, make similar or better progress than other pupils nationally. In particular, this happens at the end of key stage 2. Leaders have identified the barriers to learning for pupils accurately and have a sound rationale for the allocation of funds.
- The sports premium additional funding is used well. The variety of the extra-curricular activities available means that the rate of pupils' participation has increased. Almost three quarters of pupils take part in an after-school sporting activity. At lunchtimes, pupils are more active because of the high-quality opportunities provided by a specialist in physical education employed by the school. The increase in competitive sporting events means that almost two thirds of pupils have represented the school. Recently, the school received a gold award for its sporting involvement. However, a full evaluation of the impact of this specific funding has yet to be shared with parents on the school's website.

Governance of the school

- Governors know their school well and have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses. They have been resolute and uncompromising in their actions to improve the school.
- Detailed plans for the school's improvement provide a solid framework for the governing body. Their monitoring of these improvements supplies them with strong first-hand evidence with which to challenge school leaders and hold them to account for pupils' achievement. Already, they have detailed plans in place to further improve the quality of the curriculum.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Information on the school's website sets out the school's ethos that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff are trained appropriately and have a good understanding of what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. All new staff receive a thorough induction which emphasises the culture of safeguarding and equality that the school promotes.
- The school works well with outside agencies to support pupils and their families. Leaders challenge other professionals to ensure safe outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils, parents and staff are in strong agreement that pupils feel safe and are safe at this school.
- However, all the information the school holds to safeguard pupils needs to be organised more efficiently. This will help leaders respond swiftly if the designated safeguarding lead is absent.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved because of the unceasing resolve of the headteacher and governors. Regular and accurate monitoring means that leaders have a clear view of the strengths of teaching and areas to develop further. The coaching

and professional development that teachers receive, including from the leaders of English and mathematics, encourage teachers to reflect and develop their practice.

- Teachers know their pupils' learning needs well. They assess the progress pupils make in lessons and adapt their planning and teaching in the light of their findings. Practice is at its best in the early years where the groups in which children work are reorganised daily when teachers identify any children at risk of falling behind. Strategies are put in place that help pupils catch up rapidly.
- Teachers track the progress of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, and the most able pupils rigorously. Through effective approaches, such as the pupil passports, teachers know the barriers to learning that pupils have. The support pupils receive means that the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils are making good, sometimes stronger, progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school's motto of 'Mistakes are our friends' helps pupils to be resilient learners who want to find out more. Parents say that this attitude has been instilled into their children's lives. It informs the way pupils approach new challenges outside of school.
- Additional adults provide strong support for pupils across the school. For example, during a mathematics lesson, effective modelling provided pupils with the confidence to contribute their thinking aloud to the class.
- The solid grounding that pupils receive in phonics means that pupils spell and read well. Soon after entry into the early years, children become adept at using phonics to tackle unfamiliar words.
- Skills in reading, writing and mathematics are preparing pupils well for the next stage of their education. Parents comment on the strong start their children make to their secondary education because of the skills they have acquired.
- The feedback that pupils are given about their writing helps them to improve their spelling, grammar and punctuation effectively. It is less effective in developing the content of their writing. In particular, this is the case for the most able pupils in key stage 2.
- In mathematics, pupils have a sound grasp of key skills and understanding, especially in calculation. This helps pupils think about mathematical problems. However, pupils lack opportunities to write about mathematics and explore and explain their mathematical thinking.
- Parents agree that their children are taught well and make good progress. As one parent said, 'I am confident that my children are being taught well and are thriving in all aspects of their education.' Another said, 'My children are flourishing at this school. They love learning and enjoy every day.'

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are confident and self-assured. They speak accurately and with enthusiasm about their learning. Pupils take pride in themselves, their work and their school.
- Across all year groups, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. In particular, pupils have a love of reading and mathematics.

- The school's curriculum places a strong emphasis on the emotional development and well-being of pupils. Pupils comment on the benefits of the support they receive at difficult times in their lives. Pupils accept and support each other across ages, classes and differing types and levels of need.
- Parents, pupils and staff share the same belief that pupils are safe at school. The strong relationships between pupils and adults mean that pupils are very confident about whom to talk to if they have a concern; they know they will be heard.
- Pupils are clear about what bullying is and say that it happens rarely. Parents' comments support this view. Pupils and parents are confident that adults in school will deal swiftly with any issues of bullying.
- The school prepares pupils well to become active citizens in modern British society. Pupils respect the opportunities they have to influence developments in the life of their school. One example is through the school council. They take their responsibilities, such as being playground leaders and mentors for younger pupils in the lunch hall, very seriously. These pupils greet other pupils and adults on the playground at the start of the school day.
- Pupils are aware of how to stay safe online. There is useful information about e-safety available to parents on the school website. Through the curriculum, pupils are alerted to the wide range of views and information on the internet. They are encouraged to think about issues of equality and tolerance. Governors know that this is important for preparing pupils for life beyond school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is very good. Across the school, pupils live up to the high expectations placed on them by teachers and other adults. They behave well when moving around the school, for example at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Parents say that pupils behave well at school.
- During lessons, pupils respond quickly to the instructions of adults. Incidents of low-level disruption or distraction are not common. When this does happen, it is because teachers have not matched work well enough to the needs of a small number of pupils.
- Pupils understand and appreciate the reward systems, such as the house point system which helps pupils behave well. These systems and careful, skilful adult support help those pupils whose behaviour may be challenging to improve so that they are not at risk of exclusion.
- The attendance of pupils is better than that of other pupils nationally. Importantly, leaders work with pupils and their families to minimise persistent absence so that it is well below the national figure.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils are making good progress from a wide range of starting points. Many, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, are exceeding the progress expected of them.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work, observations in lessons and talking with pupils about their learning show that the progress pupils make has increased over time, particularly in English and mathematics.

- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, do well. Pupils say that they enjoy doing better and like the system which allows them to choose a more challenging level at which to begin their work. Many relish opportunities to extend their learning, particularly in mathematics. This is reflected in the large proportion of pupils who achieve highly in national tests at the end of key stage 2 in reading and mathematics.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. The majority of pupils achieve well in the Year 1 phonics screening check. By the end of Year 2, almost every pupil has achieved the standard. There is little difference between the achievement of boys and girls in this national assessment.
- In the early years, standards are good consistently with a much larger proportion of children reaching them than is the case nationally.
- By the end of key stage 1, standards have risen. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard for their age is above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2016, at the end of key stage 2, the number of pupils who reached the expected standard for their age in reading, writing and mathematics was well above the national figure.
- At the end of key stage 2, more pupils reached a higher level than the national average in reading and mathematics, but this is not the case for writing.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils has improved and is in line with other pupils nationally. The most able disadvantaged pupils are making better progress in reading and writing than other pupils nationally by the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well so that they make good progress from their starting points. They receive effective support from leaders, teachers and other adults.
- Pupils read fluently and well relative to their age and development. Many pupils speak with passion about their reading. The school's culture of reading has been enhanced by the purchase of high-quality texts. The refurbished school library provides an inspiring environment for reading.
- Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and those spoken to during the inspection were unanimous in their view that their children are making good progress and are well taught at the school.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children make an excellent start to their education in the early years. Standards have risen so that a very high proportion of children reach a good level of development every year. The learning and progress that children make in early years mean that they are well prepared for Year 1. This is because of the uncompromising drive to improve outcomes by successive leaders of the early years foundation stage.
- Children enter Reception Year with skills broadly typical for their age. Accurate assessment of children's learning and needs informs meticulous planning. This ensures high-quality provision across the areas of learning. Excellent and innovative use is made of the rich outdoor space which extends children's social and physical skills.

Teachers question, challenge and support children while allowing them to explore their learning. Parents contribute to their child's assessment by sharing information with early years staff.

- Children who are disadvantaged, including those who enter Reception Year at a higher level than typical for their age, make good progress.
- The challenge tasks weave the findings of assessment skilfully into children's learning. As a result, children show high levels of engagement and are deeply engrossed in their learning. Children at the mud kitchen area showed determination, resilience, sharing and turn-taking beyond their age.
- Children make a very smooth transition into school. Close links are developed between pre-school providers, parents, children and school staff. A carefully planned programme of visits and parent workshops means that children are familiar with the setting and arrive ready to learn. Innovative steps, such as the writing of a postcard to each child during the summer holidays, mean that children feel welcome and known on arrival. Their parents agree and say that children are happy, well settled and 'thriving' in the Reception Year.
- Phonics is taught well. Although early in the school year, children were reading confidently and writing simple blended words such as 'hat'. They added their writing to the working wall on Post-it notes. Teachers and other adults model good practice for children to hear and see consistently, including the use of cursive script. The solid grounding children receive contributes to the high achievement of pupils in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- The very good behaviour and the strong relationships with adults demonstrate the confidence and safety children feel at school. Their parents agree. 'Every child is valued and when you are in the school, you get a real sense of how confident and positive the children are.'
- Safeguarding is effective.

School details

Unique reference number	123702
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10019959

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	96
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Jo MacKenzie
Headteacher	Janine Donovan
Telephone number	01984 667287
Website	www.lydeardstlawrenceprimary.co.uk/
Email address	sch.218@educ.somerset.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about sports premium additional funding on its website.
- Lydeard St Lawrence is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes except in the Reception Year.
- The majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The number of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Pupils' learning was observed in 10 lessons or part-lessons, a number jointly with the headteacher. The work of pupils in all year groups was scrutinised. Many pupils were spoken to about their work during lessons and informally at breaktimes and around the school. The inspector listened to pupils from different year groups read and gathered views about their experiences at school.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other leaders, governors and members of the teaching and support staff. The views of staff were gathered from the school's staff survey.
- The inspector took account of the 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 28 comments. Discussions were held as parents dropped off and collected their children.
- A range of documentation was considered, including information on pupils' attainment and progress, the school's improvement planning, minutes of governing body meetings, records of the monitoring of teaching and information on the management of teachers' performance. Procedures for the safeguarding of pupils, including information relating to attendance, behaviour and the exclusion of pupils, were examined.

Inspection team

Sarah O'Donnell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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