

St Lawrence Church of England Primary School

Manor Lane, Wymington, Rushden, Northamptonshire NN10 9LL

Inspection dates

28–29 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The school is not improving quickly enough. The senior leadership team is new. Systems to monitor the quality of teaching and check pupils' progress are not making enough difference to the achievement of pupils.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are not consistently good. Teachers do not use assessment information well to plan learning that fully meets the needs of pupils.
- Work in science, topic work and computing lack depth. Pupils underachieve in these subjects. Teachers have not ensured that pupils make rapid progress across subjects.
- Curriculum time is not used to the full. Some activities do not accelerate pupils' learning.
- The provision and teaching of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are not effective. Teaching assistants are not sufficiently well briefed on how best to meet pupils' needs.
- Early years provision has improved but progress is not yet good. Routines are not well established and some children are not well prepared for Year 1.
- Governors are highly committed. However, until very recently, they have not used detailed performance information to check the progress of pupils who receive additional funding.

The school has the following strengths

- The interim headteacher has made a good start. She knows exactly what needs to be done to improve the school. Staff are positive about their work. Morale is high.
- The large majority of parents like the school. Many praised the nurturing and caring environment. They said that staff work very hard and that their children love the school.
- Pupils, including children in the early years, are well cared for. Staff meet their behavioural and emotional needs very well.
- The school's ethos and the many extra-curricular opportunities contribute to pupils' good physical, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - clarifying the responsibilities and developing the skills of senior leaders so that there is sufficient continuity to accelerate improvement
 - making sure that systems to evaluate the quality of teaching are effective
 - checking that the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged makes a real difference to pupils' progress
 - ensuring that governors hold leaders to account more rigorously about the progress of different groups of pupils across subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - making effective use of curriculum time to accelerate learning across subjects
 - planning more demanding work in science and topic work
 - improving the way teachers communicate with other adults to guide the work in class
 - ensuring that the support plans for pupils who receive additional help have clear targets and are reviewed frequently to accelerate their progress.
- Improve provision and outcomes in the early years by:
 - developing children's numeracy skills
 - assessing and recording children's work more precisely
 - consolidating classroom routines so that all children can concentrate on their work.

An external review of the use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The way staff are adapting to the new leadership is positive but senior leaders are not yet contributing enough to improving the school. Teachers have had insufficient detailed feedback on the quality of their teaching across subjects. Leaders are beginning to monitor their areas of responsibilities but this is too recent to have accelerated pupils' progress.
- At the beginning of this academic year, the new headteacher quickly evaluated the school's strengths and weaknesses. Some provision is getting better, such as in the early years and the teaching of phonics, but her strategies are not yet having the intended impact across all classes and subjects.
- The curriculum, especially at key stage 2, does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their skills and understanding. Some subjects are not covered with sufficient depth because curriculum time is not used well. Work has not been planned with rapid progression in mind. For example, some topics, such as the work in geography on the British Isles, are repeated in different years with little increased challenge. Consequently, pupils' outcomes are not as high as they should be.
- The effectiveness of the leadership of the early years is inconsistent. The Nursery provision is well managed and the youngest children in the school settle quickly. They enjoy the activities planned for them. This positive start is not built upon quickly enough in Reception and some children underachieve. The management of behaviour and daily routines are not well established.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and pupils who are disadvantaged is not making enough difference to pupils' progress. The assessment and tracking systems are too new for performance information to be sufficiently reliable. The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, have been identified at key stage 2 but not at key stage 1.
- The headteacher is providing the school with the stable leadership it needs. Successes include a more reliable system to track pupils' progress, effective communication with parents, robust procedures to manage the performance of staff and a determined effort to improve provision. However, only one member of the senior leadership team is in school full time. This limits the frequency leaders have to check the school's work.
- The large majority of parents support the new leadership. Several parents said that staff were highly committed and that the new headteacher acted on parents' views whenever possible. They also said that communication was good.
- A few parents who completed the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, or sent additional comments to the lead inspector, are concerned about the progress their children are making. Inspectors found that some groups of pupils are not making rapid progress in a range of subjects. The headteacher is starting to gather better performance information on pupils' achievements. She has the necessary skills to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively.

Opportunities to reflect upon fundamental British values and prepare pupils for life in modern Britain are highlighted throughout the curriculum. The teaching of British values, such as tolerance and respect, is reinforced through the school's own set of values and ethos, which pupils understand. Pupils are taught about right and wrong, and about the value of caring for others, such as through their support for charities and special events where they learn about the local community.

- The school provides a good range of sporting activities and clubs beyond the school day. The physical education (PE) and sport premium for primary schools is used effectively. Pupils' participation in sporting activities and competitive sports is increasing. The clubs on offer cater for different interests. Staff and governors willingly give their time to running these initiatives. Links with other schools and providers, such as the Bedfordshire Sports Festival, further enhance opportunities for pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governors ensure that resources are used wisely but, until recently, they have not monitored well enough the impact of the pupil premium and SEN funding on the progress of eligible pupils. The lack of comprehensive performance information limited their ability to hold leaders to account.
- Governors bring a range of expertise to the school. They are highly committed to its success and know the local community well. Some governors have had children at the school and have direct experience of its work.
- Governors are clear that teachers' pay progression depends on how effective staff are in helping pupils make good progress. However, there are areas that governors have not checked carefully enough.
- Governors ensure that arrangements for safeguarding are effective, including their own training, completing all pre-employment checks and liaising with the local authority as required.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding lead is improving procedures further, such as ensuring that chronologies of significant events are clear in pupils' records. Her own training and the action taken following a safeguarding audit are used well to make effective practice even better.
- The right pupils are identified when external support is required. The school is consistently represented at key meetings, such as the 'team around the family' meetings. Information is shared, as required, with relevant agencies to improve pupils' well-being and keep them safe.
- Concerns for pupils known to social care services are recorded in sufficient detail. The inclusion lead and the designated safeguarding lead are rightly improving the filing system so that records are more easily accessible and kept in one single secured place.
- The designated safeguarding lead knows how and when to access early help services. Contact with the early help teams of Bedford Borough and Northamptonshire local

authority is prompt and the thresholds to access social care services are understood. Leaders are making good links between safeguarding, behaviour and children missing education.

- The safeguarding policy meets requirement. It is updated at least annually and staff know exactly what they have to do should they have a concern about a pupil. Expectations of staff and pupils, to ensure everyone's safety, are high. All staff have had relevant training in a range of areas, such as bullying, e-safety and preventing radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is not effective enough across years and subjects. Over time, senior leaders have not coordinated training well enough to support staff who need it most and those who are new to the school. The inappropriate use of curriculum time and an underdeveloped assessment system affect the progress of pupils.
- Significant variation in the quality of planning and the assessment of work for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and those who are disadvantaged, mean that these pupils are not doing as well as they could. Insufficient information is shared between the inclusion lead, the class teachers and other adults who support pupils' learning. In some cases, teaching assistants are not deployed effectively. Inspectors saw a few examples where pupils who had additional needs received no support. This led to pupils' frustration and some poor behaviour.
- In several subjects, pupils are capable of achieving far more than they currently do. Limited formal assessment exists to measure pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics. Opportunities to explore complex technical vocabulary or solve problems are not offered often enough across the key stage 2 curriculum. Teachers' expectations are too low and the work seen in the books of older pupils is far too easy for pupils of this age.
- The headteacher and lead inspector jointly scrutinised work done in computing, science and humanities. They found that little had been done, and some work was repeated at the same low level when pupils moved up a year. Work, such as the use of presentations in computing, had been started but not completed.
- Insufficient challenge for the most able pupils means that these pupils conscientiously complete their work but not at the level they are capable of. Some parents find that homework lacks clarity. Inspectors found that half-termly projects enable most-able pupils to be creative and apply their skills at a higher level. However, in general, the school's policy on homework is not used well enough to reinforce the day-to-day learning done in class.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in the Reception class is not precise enough to help children make rapid progress, especially in numeracy. Staff work hard but the planning and management of pupils' learning are not effective enough. Teaching is supported by a good range of resources in the Nursery.
- Improving the teaching of phonics remains a key priority for the school. Staff have received training but consolidation is required because a proportion of children enter Year 1 with gaps in their knowledge. Current teaching at key stage 1 is not sufficiently

precise to help pupils to catch up, especially those who need additional help.

- Staff say that many pupils do not read at home. While priority is given to hearing these pupils read, not all do this frequently enough, and this slows their progress. Across both key stages, the quality of teacher-led group reading varies. Some of it helps pupils to read with confidence, but some of it does not do this well enough. Improving writing is a key priority for the school and teachers check carefully the quality of writing in English.
- The teaching of mathematics was identified as an issue at the time of the previous inspection. Since then, staffing has changed and a new leader has taken responsibility for the subject. Some planning lacks balance. Teachers give pupils a lot of practice in calculation at the expense of other areas, such as geometry and problem solving. Subjects are not used well to consolidate pupils' numeracy skills. For example, in science, pupils are not doing enough investigations to deepen their thinking and make genuine scientific enquiries.
- There are some aspects of effective teaching in all classes. Practical resources and fun activities support pupils' learning well. For example, in mathematics, pupils were involved in a number chase in the hall and they loved working in pairs. This activity stimulated their interest in mental mathematics. In geography, the effective use of sticky notes helped pupils separate 'what I know' and 'what I'd like to know'. This made pupils curious about what they would learn next. Most teachers are diligently applying the school's marking and feedback policy. Work shows that probing questions encourage pupils to explain their thinking and ideas.
- The large majority of parents who responded to Parent View were positive about the quality of teaching. They said that teachers work hard and are approachable. Relationships between pupils and adults are very positive. Pupils are praised frequently. This develops pupils' confidence and their commitment to doing well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' respond well in class. They enjoy their work and often try their best.
- Pupils are happy because they feel safe and are well cared for. Staff have received relevant training and follow correct procedures in response to concerns they may have about individual pupils. Pupils were observed behaving very safely. They understand how to stay safe, including when using social media and the internet.
- Pupils respect the views of others and have a good understanding of the school's and British values. The oldest pupils like to volunteer for jobs and help younger children. Members of the school council enjoy the responsibilities that they are given.
- A number of pupils are keen to do well but some low-attaining pupils and pupils with SEN and/or disabilities rely heavily on the support of additional adults. These pupils are not self-assured learners.
- Pupils are very active. Many excel in PE and sports. Displays around the school show

pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about different faiths and willingly take part in whole-school events and charity work. Pupils' role as good citizens is well evidenced and they often join their parents to raise money and get involved in their local community.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils listen attentively to adults and to each other. The school is a calm and orderly environment. In the Nursery, children quickly learn how to share toys, respond to instructions and stop outdoor play to get back to learning. The behaviour of the youngest children during the worship assembly was exemplary.
- Pupils are well behaved, even when they complete their work quickly because teaching is less demanding than it could be. In a few cases, however, pupils who have additional needs are not helped promptly enough in class. They become frustrated and lack self-control.
- Pupils were observed playing together well on the playground. They understand the school's rules about behaviour. They told the inspectors that they were very happy at the school and that they made friends quickly.
- Pupils are aware of different types of bullying and incidents are rare. Pupils say that they have no hesitation telling an adult if they need help. A very small number of parents who responded to Parent View are concerned about a few cases of bullying. Inspectors found that incidents are investigated quickly. Bullying is not tolerated.
- The very large majority of pupils want to attend school. Attendance is average. Punctuality is good. The school is continuing its effort to reduce persistent absence because, for some pupils, particularly those who have additional needs, attendance is below average. Holidays taken in term time are also affecting the overall attendance figure.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress that pupils are making given their different starting points is uneven and requires improvement. Some pupils do well but too many underachieve. The headteacher recognises that progress is insufficient in science, topic work and computing.
- The school does not have a Year 6 class. The first Year 6 pupils will take the national tests in 2019. Some parents think that their children are not being well prepared for secondary education. Inspectors agree that more rapid progress is required at key stage 2. Expectations of what older pupils should achieve across subjects are currently too low.
- In 2017, outcomes by the end of key stage 1 broadly matched the national averages, although a lower proportion of pupils than the national average achieved highly in reading and mathematics. A complete overhaul for the teaching of phonics is accelerating pupils' progress, and more pupils are meeting the expected standard.
- Staff changes have had a negative impact on progress. Staffing is now stabilising but

outcomes have not caught up to where they should be. Outcomes are improving in the early years. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception now matches the national average.

- The progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged is inconsistent across the school. Pupils' social and emotional needs are met well because pupils receive a lot of care and attention. However, staff do not tackle pupils' academic difficulties well enough. This is often because the targets and plans to support their learning are not precise enough.
- The school has not placed enough emphasis on developing pupils' skills and depth of understanding across all subjects of the curriculum. Many topics are 'one-offs', with pupils moving on before having completed the tasks in hand. Pupils are not practising their numeracy, scientific and technological skills in contexts of increasing difficulty. Curriculum time is not exploited to the full to accelerate pupils' progress.
- The school is successfully improving pupils' writing, that of boys in particular. In English, work seen in pupils' books shows that pupils are becoming increasingly secure in spelling words correctly and understanding how to use grammar and punctuation accurately. In mathematics, pupils make steady progress in calculation. More impetus is required to develop mathematical reasoning and problem solving.
- Some specific projects inspire pupils to do well. Pupils enjoy music and singing. During this inspection, pupils were eager to do well when practising the Christmas carols. The activities in PE develop pupils' motor and coordination skills. The art compositions, linked to the Great Fire of London topic, and the writing about inspirational people, such as Mother Teresa and Martin Luther king, were of a high standard. Specific curriculum events, led by specialist staff, also raise pupils' expectations and outcomes.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- In 2016, less than half of all children achieved a good level of development by the end of Reception. The school took part in a local authority project and advisers helped staff to improve provision. This was effective and, in 2017, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development was slightly better than the national average. Although some improvement is still required, children are increasingly better prepared for Year 1.
- Outcomes for current children are showing improvement but they are not yet good. Staff's expectation of what some children can achieve are still too low. Almost all children have experience of pre-school education. Starting points are not checked carefully enough and, in Reception, some activities do not meet children's needs because assessment is not precise enough. Challenge for the most able children is lacking.
- Staff plan many activities. This makes the management of learning complicated and some work has not been carefully checked or recorded. Work on numeracy is insufficient and opportunities are missed to develop this important skill.
- The teaching of phonics is systematic and adults help children identify letters and repeat sounds carefully. One child was very proud to say, 'I know this is a "d" because it is in my name'. Children in the Nursery and Reception have a happy and positive

experience. Children's personal and emotional development is improved quickly because staff provide a high level of care to each child.

- Children quickly learn to share resources and toys. In some cases, high standards of behaviour are not reinforced enough. For example, some boisterous boys still run in the class unchallenged. During some group activities, staff do not insist on children waiting for their turn to talk. This leads to a high level of noise. Nonetheless, the way children walked calmly all the way to the school hall and waited patiently for the start of morning worship was exemplary.
- Children learn in a safe environment. Statutory welfare, safeguarding and safety needs are met fully. The parents who spoke to the inspectors appreciate the opportunity to talk to staff at the beginning and end of the day. Parents said that they can express their views and they value the information they receive about their children's learning. One parent said that her child preferred to be at school than at home.

School details

Unique reference number	109628
Local authority	Bedford Borough
Inspection number	10031429

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	143
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Lewis
Interim headteacher	Kate Lawrence
Telephone number	01933 353530
Website	www.st-lawrenceschool.co.uk
Email address	klawrence@st-lawrenceschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 September 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than most primary schools. The growth of the school, from a lower school to a full primary school, is almost complete. The current Year 5 will stay in the school to form the first Year 6 class in September 2018.
- The early years consists of a Nursery where children attend part time and one Reception class.
- Almost all of the pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is smaller than in most schools.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- In September 2017, a new interim headteacher joined the school. She works part time for three days per week. A senior teacher was appointed to the senior leadership team.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes and several sessions were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Throughout the two days of the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils, individually and in groups, about their learning and safety.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' work in lessons and analysed work in books and on display in classrooms and around the school.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of the governing body and several other governors. She spoke to a representative of the Diocese of St Albans and to the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders and other staff, including teaching assistants and the office secretary.
- Inspectors looked at the school's review of its own performance. They reviewed a number of key school policies and the minutes of governing body meetings. They considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors analysed 23 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View). They considered the views of eight staff who completed the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Marianick Ellender-Gelé, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lynn Lowery

Ofsted Inspector

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