

Inspection of a good school: St Lawrence CofE (Voluntary Aided) Primary School

Dog Lane, Napton-on-the-Hill, Southam, Warwickshire CV47 8LU

Inspection dates:

28–29 January 2020

Outcome

St Lawrence CofE (Voluntary Aided) Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Lawrence is a happy school where Christian values and beliefs are at the heart of everything. Pupils feel safe and valued. They say, 'Teachers believe in us and want us to succeed.'

Parents hold the school in high regard. Parents' comments include: 'St Lawrence is everything we could want for our children. Strong leadership, excellent teaching, well-behaved children. Lots of clubs and cultural activities.'

Staff set high expectations for all pupils. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are polite and courteous and respect each other's views. This is a result of the school's strong emphasis on the values of respect and tolerance. Pupils know that bullying and unkind behaviour is not acceptable.

Pupils love the many trips and experiences provided. They enjoy taking part in the wide variety of after school clubs including school orchestra and choir. Every pupil has the chance to learn to play a musical instrument. Many visitors come into school to talk to and work with pupils. This includes authors, illustrators and even an opera singer. This brings learning to life and helps pupils to find out about life beyond their local community.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders, governors and staff have planned an ambitious curriculum. They provide a wealth of opportunities for pupils to flourish. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in every aspect of school life. Teaching assistants are well trained and caring. They provide good support for individual pupils to help them to overcome any challenges that they face. These pupils achieve well and enjoy school.

Leaders and staff make sure that children learn and develop well in the Nursery and in Reception. Relationships are warm and trusting. Children feel safe and secure. They enjoy

learning nursery rhymes and joining in with favourite stories and songs. They love the familiar routines such as Music Mondays and rhyme time. This helps them to develop strong language and communication skills. Children make a very good start to their education.

Overall, staff help pupils to learn to read well. Phonics lessons start quickly and carry on every day in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2. Leaders identify those pupils who are falling behind and provide additional support. However, the support these pupils receive is not always sufficiently finely tuned to their needs. This is because leaders have not made sure that all staff have had recent, high-quality training in teaching phonics and early reading. Some reading books are not closely matched to the sounds that these pupils have learned. As a result, a very small number of children struggle to become fluent readers quickly.

Most subject leaders have identified the key knowledge and skills that they want pupils to have mastered and by when. Science is a particularly strong example of this. The leader has set clear expectations for all year groups. Planning follows a logical order, from early years to Year 6. Assessment systems are easy and useful for teachers. This helps teachers to check that pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding so that they can tackle more challenging subject content.

For example, during the inspection, Year 6 pupils were learning about the theory of evolution. They were building on what they had already learned about fossils to find out more about how living things on earth have changed over time. As one Year 6 pupil said, 'One of my best lessons ever was in Year 3 when we went to the quarry to dig for fossils. That's how we know what a fossil actually is and how we can learn about life millions of years ago.' As a result of this well-planned curriculum, pupils learn well. They are excited and curious about science. Leaders recognise this and are continually striving to improve the quality of education even further. Work to further refine curriculum planning in history and geography is underway.

Mathematics is well led. Reception children use mathematical language to talk about their thinking. They confidently choose mathematical equipment to help them to work things out. All staff value the continuing professional development and guidance from the mathematics leaders. Leaders and teachers work with and learn from other schools. As a result, mathematics teaching is strong. Pupils love the short sessions that help them to recall mathematical knowledge quickly and accurately. One pupil said, 'We never know what's coming next. It's fun. It helps us to get faster and grow confident.' Almost all pupils achieve very well as a result.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's approach to keeping pupils safe starts from the care that all staff show for the pupils and their families. A dedicated team of people share responsibility for safeguarding. They are highly skilled and have the trust of staff and the local community.

They work effectively with governors, leaders and staff to make sure that everyone follows agreed procedures diligently.

The curriculum ensures that pupils learn about any risks that they may face beyond school. Assemblies, visiting speakers and regular teaching sessions make sure that safety is kept high on everyone's agenda.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, such as history and geography, subject-specific knowledge and skills are not planned and sequenced effectively. This results in pupils having gaps in what they know and remember. Leaders need to continue their work to make sure that all foundation subjects are equally well planned. This will help teachers to keep a close eye on any gaps in pupils' knowledge. It is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken that they are well on the way with this work.
- Staff are not as precise as they could be when teaching the weakest readers. Books are not always well matched to the sounds that these pupils know. As a result, a small number of pupils do not become confident, fluent readers as quickly as they could. Further training for staff is necessary. A closer match is needed between the sounds that pupils know and the books that they read. This will help pupils to grow in confidence and gain greater fluency in their reading.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged St Lawrence CofE (Voluntary Aided) Primary School to be good on 2–3 March 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	130884
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10111811
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jan Sanchez and Mark Ivey
Headteacher	John Brine
Website	www.stlawrenceprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 March 2016

Information about this school

- This school is designated as having a religious character. It received its section 48 inspection in May 2016 when this aspect of the school's work was judged as outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- I held meetings with the headteacher, two senior teachers, the special educational needs coordinator and all teaching staff. I met with the chair of the local governing body and four other governors and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the diocese.
- I looked in depth at early reading and reading across the school, mathematics and science. In each subject, inspection activities included discussions with the subject leader, visits to lessons, discussions with teachers, a review of pupils' work and discussions with pupils.
- I listened to eight pupils read and talked to them about their reading. I also spoke to groups of key stage 2 pupils about their reading.

- I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtime. I spoke formally with two groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- I met with leaders about the school's safeguarding procedures. I reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation, including the checks that leaders make on staff prior to employment. I checked safeguarding policies and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. I spoke to pupils and staff about how safe pupils are at school.
- I reviewed the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and information on the school's website. I took account of the 12 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- I took into consideration the 77 responses to Parent View, including 77 free-text responses. I spoke to parents at the beginning and end of the school day.

Inspection team

Marilyn Mottram, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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