

# Inspection of St Lawrence CofE Primary School

Trinity Road, Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks, West Sussex BN6 9UY

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Inspection dates: 2 and 3 November 2021

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
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Ofsted has not previously inspected St Lawrence CofE Primary School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged St Lawrence CofE Primary School to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy. From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened in St Lawrence CofE Primary School's effectiveness before and after it converted to academy status.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at this school are full of enthusiasm. They are proud of their school and enjoy their lessons. One pupil told inspectors that coming to this school felt like being part of 'a big community, where you make lots of friends and the staff look after you'. Pupils feel very safe at this school.

Leaders have high expectations for every child. They have introduced new approaches to the teaching of reading and mathematics. This means that all pupils are now experiencing more success in their learning in these subjects.

Behaviour in the school has improved dramatically since the new headteacher was appointed. Pupils now behave impeccably in class and as they move about the school. Pupils need very few reminders about behaviour from staff because they have developed a real love of learning and they value what their teachers say. Pupils told inspectors that unkind behaviour was rare, and that adults would intervene quickly to stop it.

Parents recognise the positive change in the school that has taken place since the new headteacher was appointed. For example, under her leadership, the education and support that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive are rapidly improving.

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

The new headteacher arrived in January 2021. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the new headteacher quickly got to grips with the quality of the education that pupils were receiving. A key strength of the school is the passion and drive shared by leaders, staff and governors. They are determined that all the school's pupils receive an excellent education. They know that their work to realise this vision is further developed in certain subjects. For example, the curriculum in mathematics has been carefully planned. What pupils need to learn from Reception to Year 6 has been mapped out in detail. Staff have been trained well so they are expert in the teaching of mathematics. As a result, pupils, including pupils with SEND, become confident and fluent mathematicians as they progress through the school.

Leaders know that reading is essential. To ensure that all pupils become confident and fluent readers, leaders have recently introduced a new phonics curriculum. Leaders have planned this transition carefully. This includes an ongoing programme of training for staff. Pupils in Reception and key stage 1 are learning to read well. There are a small number of pupils in key stage 2 who are not yet fluent and confident readers. There is support in place for these readers. However, leaders know that they now need to ensure that the staff who plan for and work with these pupils have additional training, so that the extra help provided is as effective as possible. From the start of Reception, staff work to develop the children's love of reading. This work is very successful. Pupils of all ages can talk about their favourite authors and genres with confidence. At present, however, leaders have not

established a consistent approach that enables them to understand how widely and frequently pupils are reading independently.

A new curriculum for physical education (PE) has recently been introduced. It is a well-designed and well-sequenced curriculum. It carefully takes the needs of pupils with SEND into account. It is designed to enable all pupils to develop the knowledge needed to engage in a broad range of physical activities, including competitive sporting activities, and to lead healthy, active lives. The curriculum for swimming is particularly well developed. Pupils also benefit from having regular access to the swimming pool on the school's site.

Leaders have identified that other foundation subjects are not yet as well planned as they need to be. This means that pupils do not consistently transfer what they learn to their long-term memories, and meaningfully connect new knowledge to existing knowledge. Leaders are in the process of addressing this. Senior leaders have prioritised training for subject leaders. Subject leaders now have the knowledge and understanding that they need in order to design and implement a curriculum for their subject, and this work is in progress.

When she arrived in January, the new headteacher identified that behaviour at the school needed to improve. New systems and approaches were introduced. At the time of the inspection, pupils were seen to be highly engaged in their learning. They were polite and respectful. Classrooms were exceptionally calm and purposeful.

There is a strong personal development programme for pupils, with four key pillars: relationship and sex education, physical health, mental health and digital literacy. There is a diverse range of clubs on offer that pupils enjoy attending. The pupils who inspectors spoke with were particularly proud of newspaper club, where pupils write for, edit and publish a school newspaper.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Governors and senior leaders described safeguarding as their utmost priority. Actions taken by the new headteacher have further strengthened safeguarding arrangements. For example, staff and visitors now all wear colour-coded lanyards so that it is clear, for example, if a visitor can be unaccompanied. Pupils understand the system and feel it helps to keep them safe. All staff are well trained to identify if a pupil is in need of early help, or might be at risk of harm. Safeguarding leaders are rigorous in following up any concerns to ensure that pupils get the right help.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At present, in some foundation subjects, the curriculum does not set out the knowledge that pupils need to learn in a precise enough sequence. Leaders need to continue their work to set out a clearly sequenced curriculum in all foundation subjects. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is designed to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND, so that it develops their knowledge, skills and abilities to apply what they know with increasing fluency and independence. The transition arrangements have been applied.
- A small number of pupils in key stage 2 have been negatively affected by weaker teaching of reading and handwriting in the past. They are receiving regular and carefully planned support to help them catch up. However, the staff who provide this support do not always have the expertise they need in order to provide the most effective support. Leaders need to ensure that staff who support these pupils to catch up are prioritised for additional phonics and handwriting training, so that this legacy is addressed quickly and effectively.
- Pupils of all ages are developing positive attitudes towards reading. Staff have carefully selected the texts that pupils will read in their English and reading lessons. However, by the beginning of Year 5, pupils should be independently reading a wide range of books, including myths, legends, traditional stories, modern fiction, fiction from our literary heritage and books from other cultures and traditions. They should read a variety of stories, plays, poetry, non-fiction and textbooks. While many pupils do independently read widely, staff do not monitor this in a systematic way in order to identify and support those pupils who do not read so widely. Leaders need to introduce systems which help staff to carefully monitor pupils' independent reading and ensure that staff know how to work with pupils who might have narrower reading preferences, so as to broaden these out.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139879
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199413
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	618
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Ian McBain
<b>Headteacher</b>	Marianne Brand
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stlawrencehurst.co.uk">www.stlawrencehurst.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 and 2 May 2007, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed in January 2021.
- The school is not currently using any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and staff. Inspectors spoke with governors and a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, PE, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors listened to pupils reading in key stage 1 and key stage 2.

- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors met with leaders responsible for safeguarding, reviewed safeguarding records, checked the single central register and spoke to leaders, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including school improvement plans.
- Inspectors talked to pupils formally and informally about their learning, what behaviour is like at school and whether they felt safe at school.
- Inspectors reviewed pupil, staff and parent surveys, and also spoke to parents and carers at the school gate.

### **Inspection team**

Alice Roberts, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Liz McIntosh	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Redman	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Martin-O'Donoghue	Ofsted Inspector

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