

# Inspection of Lydeard St Lawrence Community Primary School

Lydeard St Lawrence, Taunton, Somerset TA4 3SF

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Inspection date: 9 November 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Previous inspection grade

Good

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

Leaders' expectations have not been high enough. They have allowed poor behaviour to spread. Too many pupils do not respect polite requests from adults. Pupils say that there are good and bad days in class. Sometimes, learning opportunities are cut short or cancelled so that staff can respond to behaviour incidents.

Pupils do not feel safe in school due to the poor, often aggressive, behaviour of a small minority of pupils. Teachers reassure and protect pupils, but in doing so, put themselves in harm's way. Several members of staff have chosen to leave the school.

The needs of some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have not been met over time. These pupils enjoy school, but they do not have beneficial experiences. They do not develop the skills they need to learn successfully alongside their peers.

The school needs a lot of support from the local authority to function day to day. This is an unsettling time for pupils and their parents and carers. Despite the circumstances, staff make sure that most pupils learn essential curriculum content and have opportunities to develop into responsible, considerate young people.

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

Leaders and governors are being supported by the local authority to improve safeguarding practice and behaviour management in the school. Recently, it has become necessary for the local authority to provide on-site leadership.

The atmosphere in the school is unruly. This has caused staff to lower their expectations of how pupils should behave. Consequently, pupils' behaviour in lessons is disorderly. Teachers work hard to present the curriculum clearly, but frequent interruptions mean that pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Leaders have begun to address pupils' poor behaviour. Staff have received behaviour management training. A new provision called 'the nest' has been developed. This is a space where pupils who struggle with their behaviour receive support to improve. Nonetheless, leaders are still managing serious incidents arising from extremely poor behaviour. It is too early to tell, therefore, whether the new arrangements will be effective.

Leaders have not adapted the curriculum to meet the needs of many pupils with SEND. The curriculum makes little impression on those with a greater level of need. These pupils do not develop the social skills they need to learn successfully in a group situation.

Pupils in the early stages of reading follow an appropriate programme. Pupils who need extra help have regular reading practice. However, leaders have not provided key staff with the training they need to teach phonics effectively. Occasionally, pupils come across sounds they have not learned in the books they read. This reduces their enjoyment of reading and their fluency.

The impact of the rest of the curriculum is mixed due to weak subject leadership. For example, pupils gain mathematical knowledge and use it with some confidence. However, teachers do not use assessment effectively and therefore do not fully understand what pupils should learn next. In addition, the way in which the curriculum is currently constructed means that pupils do not learn well in subjects such as French and computing.

In some subjects, pupils benefit from a broad curriculum. In science, for example, pupils gain a wide vocabulary, which helps them to build a sound knowledge of scientific concepts.

Pupils are involved in the full life of the school. They take up leadership opportunities, such as membership of the school council, and house and sports leadership roles. Pupils develop a sense of responsibility by becoming school librarians or providing care to the school's guinea pigs, for example. There is a new curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE), which teachers are in the process of adapting for the different ages and needs of pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Pupils and staff are at risk of physical harm. Leaders have allowed poor behaviour to escalate to the degree that violent outbursts are frequent. Parents report that their children are fearful and suffering poor mental health. The local authority is providing on-site support to ensure that pupils are safe.

The arrangements for the leadership of safeguarding are not adequate. The role of designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is being fulfilled by external parties on a temporary basis. The local authority is supporting leaders and governors to improve several aspects of safeguarding practice.

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

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

- The school is overly reliant on external parties to fulfil key functions of senior leadership. There is insufficient capacity for both the strategic leadership and the day-to-day management of the school. Governors should continue to work with the local authority to ensure that the leadership arrangements are sufficient to enable the school to address the areas identified for rapid improvement.

- A small minority of pupils behave dangerously in school. Leaders have allowed poor behaviour to escalate over time. As a result, pupils and staff are at risk of harm. They do not feel safe in school. Leaders must take urgent action to protect pupils and staff from harm. They must ensure that the behaviour of pupils is managed safely.
- The atmosphere in lessons is not conducive to learning. Too many pupils engage in low-level disruption. This makes it difficult for teachers to present curriculum content clearly. Leaders should raise staff expectations of how pupils can behave respectfully and ensure that behaviour policies support teachers to address low-level disruption effectively.
- The curriculum is not adapted to meet the needs of some pupils with SEND well enough. Consequently, some pupils with SEND place little value on what they learn. These pupils do not remember the curriculum well. They do not develop the personal and social skills they need to relate to, and learn alongside, others. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum meets the academic and personal needs of every pupil with SEND.
- Staff do not teach early reading as effectively as they could. They have not developed sufficient expertise to teach phonics precisely. Although the curriculum is well resourced, staff do not organise the resources so that pupils practise reading fully decodable books. Leaders should make sure that teaching staff have the training they need to teach early reading effectively.
- There is a lack of clarity about who is leading different subjects. As a result, pupils' experiences in different subjects are variable. Leaders should ensure that teachers receive clear guidance on how to teach the curriculum in each subject.

## 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>	123702
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10206972
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	72
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	John Wattam
<b>Headteacher</b>	Leah Challis
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.lydeardstlawrenceprimary.co.uk">www.lydeardstlawrenceprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 and 13 October 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is in receipt of on-site support from Somerset local authority. An officer of the local authority is working with two additional school improvement partners drawn from local schools, to provide senior leadership in the school.
- The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is above average.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of SEND support is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below average.
- The school uses one registered and one unregistered alternative provider.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

This was the first routine inspection the school had 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.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- Inspectors held discussions with the school improvement adviser from the local authority, the chair of governors, the governor with responsibility for safeguarding and the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders where possible, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, listened to pupils read and considered samples of pupils' work. Inspectors spoke to teachers and pupils about other subjects.
- The lead inspector scrutinised records and held discussions with leaders about their work to safeguard pupils.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils in classrooms and around school, including in 'the nest', which is a space used to support the behaviour of pupils.
- In addition, the lead inspector met with staff and pupils to discuss opportunities for personal development.
- Inspectors considered 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 27 free-text responses from parents, alongside 42 responses to the pupil, and four responses to the staff surveys respectively.

### **Inspection team**

Lydia Pride, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Leanne Thirlby

Her Majesty's Inspector

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