

Inspection of St Laurence Church of England (A) School

16 Thame Road, St Laurence School, Warborough, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 7DX

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud and happy to attend this school where they feel happy and safe. They care for each other and know there are adults in school they can talk to if they have a problem. However, leaders have not ensured that there are effective systems for keeping children safe. When teachers have concerns about pupils' welfare, these are not recorded as they should be.

Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning in a wide range of subjects. They particularly enjoy opportunities to learn outdoors. Pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs which helps them to develop their individual talents. These clubs are well attended and include dance, choir, hockey, drawing and yoga. Pupils talk with excitement about educational visits such as a memorable trip to the Titanic Museum.

Pupils describe their school as one where 'everyone is kind and respectful to each other'. The vast majority of pupils behave well. They say that bullying is very rare and dealt with effectively by teachers if it does happen. Many parents told us how happy their children were at school. One parent said, 'St Laurence is a positive and friendly place for my child to grow.'

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

Leaders and governors have rightly identified the need to improve the teaching of reading in the school. They have introduced a new phonics programme to improve the teaching of early reading. This is not yet benefitting pupils because there is too much inconsistency in the way the new scheme is delivered. Leaders have not ensured that all staff teaching early reading have the required expertise. As a result, the teaching of reading in key stage 1 is not as effective as it should be. This is because learning is often too challenging for pupils, particularly those who already find reading difficult. The teaching of phonics is more effective in the early years. In all year groups, there has been a focus on reading for pleasure. Pupils talk with excitement about the books their teachers recommend or read to them.

Teachers responsible for leading subjects have put in place broad and appropriate curriculum plans. They have considered how they intend to develop pupils' knowledge from year to year. For example, pupils progressively build their locational knowledge and map skills in geography between lower and upper key stage 2. The sequencing of knowledge is sometimes less clear in key stage 1, including in mathematics.

The school's special educational needs coordinator carries out helpful assessments to determine the next steps for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants are well informed about how to support each pupil. In the early years, children receive prompt and effective help when needed.

There is a calm and orderly environment in school. Pupils play well together in the playground. Occasionally, pupils lose focus in lessons. When this happens, teachers take effective action to address behaviour so that it does not disrupt others' learning. Children's behaviour in the early years is well managed through the development of strong routines. Pupils' attendance is high, given the context of the pandemic. Leaders have regular contact with parents and effective systems to follow up on any absence.

Leaders have recently reviewed the curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils are taught to understand subjects such as healthy relationships, mental health and well-being. This begins in the early years, where children start to learn about healthy diet and hygiene. The development of the PSHE curriculum has been more effective in some areas than others. For example, pupils' knowledge of how to stay safe online is not always secure.

Leaders and governors care about the well-being of their staff. When leaders introduce new ideas, they consider the implications on workload. Staff recognise and appreciate this. There is a strong support network between staff.

Governors take an active interest in the school but have not been effective in holding leaders to account. Reading has been a priority in governors' work, but they have not identified weaknesses in the way phonics is taught. Although safeguarding is discussed regularly at governors' meetings, they have not identified serious failings in the school's procedures. Governors are in the process of developing their own knowledge of these areas to help them to provide a more robust and effective challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders have not made sure that there are robust safeguarding systems in place. Although staff receive training, they rarely report concerns and never do so formally. The school's safeguarding records are incomplete. There is not a vigilant culture where concerns are identified quickly. It is not clear from safeguarding records how pupils have been supported when concerns have arisen.

Leaders and governors have not performed their statutory duties or adhered to the school's own policy on safeguarding. Governors have not checked that the school has the right systems in place. Some governors are new to their roles and are in the early stages of developing their safeguarding knowledge.

Leaders have performed the necessary checks on new staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not maintained effective safeguarding procedures. Concerns about children's welfare have not been logged and acted on as they should have been. This has left children at risk of harm. Governors have not checked that the school's procedures are fit for purpose. Leaders and governors should conduct a thorough review of their safeguarding procedures to ensure that they meet statutory requirements. They should work with urgency to establish a positive and vigilant safeguarding culture.
- Leaders have chosen a new approach to deliver phonics, but this is not yet having its intended impact. This is because the programme is not being delivered as effectively as it should be. Leaders should provide training to ensure that the adults teaching early reading have the required expertise. This includes those responsible for supporting the weakest readers. This will help to ensure that all pupils become fluent and confident readers.

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

Unique reference number	123199
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10211277
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Amanda Rowse and Elaine Drury (Co-Chairs)
Headteacher	Nicole Cooper
Website	www.st-laurence.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a voluntary aided Church of England faith school.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

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.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at the 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 met with school leaders, pupils, governors and representatives of the diocese and local authority.
- Inspectors checked the school's single central record, scrutinised the school's safeguarding records and talked to teachers, pupils, leaders and governors about their role in keeping children safe.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and staff shared in response to our surveys. Inspectors spoke to a wide range of pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Chris Ellison, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Chris Parker

Ofsted Inspector

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