

Inspection of St Lawrence Church of England Primary School

Church Road, Stone Street, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 0LN

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 September 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

St Lawrence Church of England Primary School is a small school where adults know every pupil well. Staff are patient, caring and reassuring. They give pupils the support they need, both for their learning and their well-being. As one parent described the school: 'This is a little school with a huge heart'.

Pupils love coming to school. They rise to the challenges of the school's rich and interesting curriculum. Pupils relish learning, showing high levels of motivation and curiosity. They achieve well. When pupils leave, they are ready for the challenges of secondary school.

Pupils particularly enjoy playing and learning in the school's extensive grounds. Carefully planned activities and resources enable pupils to safely explore their surroundings, whatever the weather. Pupils are encouraged and supported to take risks safely. They build their confidence and resilience as they do so.

The relationships between pupils of all ages are positive. Pupils are kind and polite. They get along well and rarely fall out. Bullying is exceptionally rare. Pupils know who to talk to if they do ever have any worries. They are confident that staff will be there to support them if they need help. This helps them to feel safe.

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

Leaders have established a team of skilled, knowledgeable staff. Together they are committed to delivering a high-quality curriculum for all children and pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All staff share the same high expectations of all pupils.

Leaders plan a wide variety of experiences that promote pupils' personal development well. Every pupil performs in a concert and a play. They read aloud in church and take part in a range of sporting events. This helps pupils to build their confidence and prepares them well for the future. Clubs, such as mountain biking and bellringing, also contribute to pupils' broader development.

In most subjects, leaders have clearly identified the crucial knowledge that pupils will learn. They have carefully thought about the order in which content will be learnt in the mixed year group classes, starting in the early years. In a small number of subjects, however, this information is not quite as precise. This is because, in these subjects, leaders do not have a clear oversight of the full curriculum. Consequently, when pupils start a new topic in these subjects, it is not always clear that pupils have the prior knowledge they need.

Leaders are passionate about reading. They foster a love of reading in all pupils. Teachers select books that will capture pupils' interest and open their minds to the lives of people from a wide diversity of backgrounds. Staff teach phonics well.

Children in the early years get off to a good start learning the basics of reading. As pupils move into Year 1, their phonics knowledge continues to develop well. Pupils are confident to apply their phonics knowledge when reading unknown words. Those who struggle to read are given the support they need to catch up quickly, including those with SEND. Older pupils tackle increasingly challenging texts. They talk about the books they have read with understanding and confidence.

Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. They explain new concepts clearly and accurately, using appropriate technical vocabulary. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to regularly revisit and practise their learning. Consequently, pupils remember lots of the important knowledge they have learned over time. Teachers adapt the curriculum well to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. They provide additional resources and arrange extra help for these pupils. This enables pupils with SEND to access the same curriculum as their peers.

Incidents of poor behaviour are rare. Pupils respond quickly and positively to any gentle reminders that are needed to correct their behaviour. When staff do need to respond to any poor behaviour, they manage this well. Staff do not always record their response to, and the outcome of, such incidents in enough detail. This means that, when leaders monitor the effectiveness of behaviour management across the school, they are not as thorough as they could be.

Children in the early years benefit from a vibrant, well-equipped setting. They learn and play happily with their peers. Children enjoy engaging activities that support their learning well, both inside and outdoors. They are also very well supported by their Year 6 buddies when they start school. Children quickly learn the rules and routines of the school and settle in well. Older pupils also benefit from taking on this extra role of responsibility.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established policies and procedures to keep pupils safe. Governors monitor this important aspect of the school's work.

Leaders have trained staff so that they have a good understanding of different safeguarding issues. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a child. Leaders take all concerns seriously. They make sure that pupils and their families get the help and support they need.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when online. They are confident about what to do if they are ever worried or feel unsafe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few aspects of their work, leaders do not have enough clear, strategic oversight, and at times the records they keep are not detailed enough. This means that occasionally leaders' monitoring and evaluation are not as effective as they could be. Leaders need to establish clear oversight of all aspects of their work and to strengthen their record-keeping so that they are clearer about the strengths and any relative weaknesses in the school.
- In a small number of foundation subjects, leaders have not identified the crucial knowledge that pupils will learn, and the order in which they will learn it. Leaders need to review the subject content in these subjects, taking into account the mixed year group classes, so that pupils' learning builds effectively on their prior knowledge.

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.

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	118704
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10242193
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Martin
Headteacher	Alison Saunders
Website	www.st-lawrence-sevenoaks.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Lawrence Church of England Primary School is located in the diocese of Rochester. Its last section 48 inspection took place in June 2017.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They also spoke to staff and pupils.

- The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing body and spoke to representatives from the local authority and the diocese of Rochester.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: computing, early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also listened to pupils read. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To inspect the school's safeguarding arrangements, inspectors met with leaders responsible for safeguarding and looked at relevant documentation, staff recruitment checks and training records. Inspectors also talked to a range of staff and pupils.
- Inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views of the school. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally during playtime, lunchtime and lessons.
- The views of staff and parents were gathered through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Leah Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Andrea Carter

Ofsted Inspector

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