

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Lawrence Church of England Primary School, Rowhedge

Rectory Road, Rowhedge, Colchester, Essex CO5 7HR

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 November 2024

Outcome

St Lawrence Church of England Primary School, Rowhedge has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a nurturing community where pupils flourish. The school's values of courage, community and compassion underpin staff approaches. Staff prioritise the well-being of pupils, providing timely and tenacious support for them. Staff ensure that pupils are happy, respectful and very well cared for.

Pupils rise to leaders' high expectations about what they can achieve. Pupils are enthusiastic. They are keen to talk about their learning, show their work to visitors and proudly display it around the school. They develop a thorough understanding across a range of subjects. Most pupils achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils value the importance of kind behaviour. The youngest children settle quickly, learn to share, listen to others and take turns. Older pupils act as 'buddies' and excellent role models. Pupils behave very well, and any rare issues of unkindness are dealt with quickly and effectively.

Pupils access a range of trips, visiting speakers and extra-curricular clubs. The school's own 'agents of change' programme provides pupils with lots of opportunities to think about the needs of others. Pupils undertake a vast array of challenges and wear their badges with pride. They are active advocates for those in the wider community and world.

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

Pupils access a well-planned curriculum and high-quality resources across a broad range of subjects. Leaders work closely with teachers to ensure that they are confident and

competent to teach these subjects. Teachers select well-chosen activities that enthuse and engage pupils in their learning. Pupils develop a thorough understanding of the topics that they study and how these subjects interrelate. Pupils particularly enjoy how the different subjects overlap. For example, in sequences of work such as habitats, weather and climate and when studying Antarctica. As a result, pupils are motivated and eager to learn and to achieve their best.

Pupils, including those in the Reception Year, are well supported to learn to read. Staff are well trained in the delivery of the phonics programme. They are adept at identifying and supporting pupils who find reading a challenge. Pupils access a wide range of songs, rhymes, poetry and stories. They enjoy the reading corners in their classrooms, the small but well-planned library space and the wider array of reading material that they access across subjects. As a result, pupils read fluently and gain a strong understanding about what they are reading.

The school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) very effectively. The school communicates tenaciously with external agencies and families. Leaders seek specialist support to further enhance their understanding of pupils' needs and the best way to support them. Leaders provide precise guidance to adults, who in turn support pupils to learn alongside their peers. Most pupils with SEND develop high levels of resilience and enjoy their lessons. They learn and achieve well from their various starting points.

Most pupils learn and attain well. However, sometimes adults do not identify and support a small number of pupils as well in their writing. They focus on the completion of activities, rather than how well pupils are understanding and applying writing and spelling techniques. These few pupils are not developing their independent writing skills as well as they are developing their reading and mathematics skills.

Leaders work closely with families to remove any issues that hinder pupils attending or accessing learning. Where a small number of pupils need help to manage their emotions, staff and other pupils support them incredibly well.

Pupils access an exceptionally well-thought-out programme of activities that help them to understand diverse cultures, faiths, lifestyles and beliefs. They are particularly proud of what they achieve through the school's own 'agents of change' programme, whether raising funds to save areas of rainforest, supporting refugee charities or writing to local officials about cleaning their village. Over time, pupils become energetic, confident advocates for the school, the local community and for different people across the world. They develop into considerate young citizens.

Leaders and governors work tenaciously to secure improvements in the daily experience of pupils. They have an insightful understanding of the strengths and areas for development. The actions they take are always in the best interests of pupils. However, leaders' and governors' oversight of some documentation, including policies, lacks precision. For example, at the time of the inspection, several policies that were available to parents were not reflective of the school's current practice. The up-to-date policies that

existed in the school had not been shared. This had not been identified by leaders or governors.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, staff focus on the completion of activities rather than how well pupils are understanding and applying writing and spelling techniques. A small number of pupils are not developing their independent writing skills as well as they are developing their reading and mathematics skills. The school should ensure that the writing provision for these pupils is delivered and monitored more adeptly so that all pupils learn and achieve as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.
- Leaders' and governors' quality assurance of some policies and documentation lacks precision. For example, some documentation available to parents at the time of the inspection was not reflective of the school's current approaches. The up-to-date policies that existed in the school had not been widely shared. Leaders and governors had not identified this. Leaders and governors should establish processes to ensure that their documentation reflects the up-to-date practice in the school.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in November 2014.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	115077
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10323619
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Austin Dalby
Headteacher	Kerry Malcolm
Website	www.st-lawrence-pri.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Church of England Diocese of Chelmsford. The school's last Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools under section 48 was carried out on 17 January 2020. The next section 28 inspection is likely to occur in 2025.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, staff and pupils.

- The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also held telephone meetings with a representative from the Diocese of Chelmsford and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To gather evidence about pupils' experiences, the inspector observed pupils at different times during the school day, spoke to them during social times and met with groups of pupils.
- The inspector considered the views of parents submitted via Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. She reviewed the responses to Ofsted's surveys for school staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Kim Pigram, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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