Lawford Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115297
Local Authority	ESSEX
Inspection number	290194
Inspection date	9 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Godfrey Bancroft

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Angela Heath
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Leveridge
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2003
School address	Long Road Lawford Manningtree Essex CO11 2EF
Telephone number	01206 393585
Fax number	01206 397364

Age group	5-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector in one day.

Description of the school

This is an averaged sized primary school. The socio-economic circumstances of the community are broadly favourable with a below-average percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are of White British origin with only a very low percentage coming from minority ethnic groups and very few for whom English is not their first language. Children's attainment on entry is representative of a wide range of abilities. Whilst in the current year it exceeds expectations it is usually close to that found in the majority of schools. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average. The school has Artsmark and Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Lawford Primary is an exceptional school. The school's evaluation of its own performance, while largely accurate, tends to be a little modest. The headteacher sums up the school very well when she says, 'At Lawford we love it when pupils have Eureka moments'. One parent, in responding to the inspection questionnaire said, 'It's an amazing school. We are very happy parents who have complete confidence and faith in the headteacher and staff', echoing the thoughts expressed by many others. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is outstanding and their attainment far exceeds that expected for their age. In all parts of the school standards are frequently well above average and pupils often achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are exemplary, enabling them to become articulate, confident and mature individuals. They are very well informed about how to stay healthy and safe. Pupils are very sensitive and helpful towards one another and subscribe wholeheartedly to the expectation that they will always do their best. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are outstanding. Pupils love learning and are invariably inspired by teachers who have very high expectations and provide them with excitement and challenge. The curriculum meets pupils' learning needs very effectively and they have access to a superb range of additional activities and specialist expertise. However, the outdoor environment is not used sufficiently as a vehicle to enhance pupils' learning. Care, guidance and support are exceptional. As one pupil said, 'No one is ever lonely at Lawford'. Pupils are also very knowledgeable about how to make their work even better.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership with a clear focus that enables all pupils to achieve their full potential. This approach is also a key factor in the maintenance of high standards. Governors are tremendously supportive of the school's work and have a very well developed knowledge of its good features and of what it needs to do to become even better. The school provides exceptionally good value for money. The issues for improvement identified by the last inspection have been addressed very successfully. This is not a school that is in any way complacent about its successes and is extremely well placed to maintain the current very high quality of provision in all aspects of its work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Look at ways of developing the outdoor environment to make learning even more exciting.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Throughout their time in the school pupils achieve very well and make exceptional progress. Children's attainment on entry currently exceeds that expected for their age, although this is not the case in every year. Standards at the end of the Foundation Stage far exceed expectations in all areas of children's learning. By the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average and, by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, a similar picture is evident in English, mathematics and science. Standards in science are often very high. In many years girls attain slightly higher standards than boys, reflecting the national pattern for this age group. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities make exceptional progress. The school is invariably successful in meeting the very challenging targets its sets for

attainment. High standards are evident in many other subjects, including information and communication technology (ICT), music and physical education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are polite and their behaviour is exemplary. They work exceptionally hard in lessons and are very good at helping each other. They are also mature and independent and are able to sustain their effort and interest, often without needing adult intervention or direct support. They clearly enjoy school. This is illustrated by their well above average attendance. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, being firmly founded on the school's very strong Christian ethos and links with the church. Pupils are very well informed about the importance of eating healthily and embrace the frequent opportunities to take regular exercise with great enthusiasm. They make an excellent contribution to their community and are very supportive of those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils love to take responsibility. For example, the older ones are very proud of their role as 'buddies' to the youngest children and of the support they provide in helping them to read. The exceptional development of teamwork and basic skills ensures that pupils are prepared very well for the next stages of their education and to be self-sufficient in later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupils are often inspired by the teaching they receive which is outstanding and promotes exceptional achievement for pupils of all abilities. Teachers plan lessons carefully to meet the needs of the full range of abilities in each class. The highest attaining pupils and those who have special talents are challenged very effectively. At the same time teaching enables those pupils who sometimes find learning hard to achieve their full potential. Teachers have high expectations that pupils will work hard and do well. In their response pupils do not disappoint. One pupil explained with great enthusiasm how their writing had improved during their time in Year 5. Teachers use ICT very successfully to support learning and make lessons interesting. Pupils' attainment and progress is assessed accurately and frequently. Teachers use the information they gain from assessments very effectively to plan the next stages of learning and to keep pupils well informed about how well they are getting on.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding, meeting the needs of all pupils very well. Meaningful links are made between subjects that help pupils to make sense of what they are learning. All subjects are used very well to create opportunities for pupils to extend their speaking and listening and their reading and writing skills. By comparison, the use made of the school grounds to support pupils' learning is relatively limited. There are also very good opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge of ICT in a wide range of subjects. The introduction of strategies such as 'Film into Literacy' using the visual arts as a stimulus, are proving to be successful in inspiring boys to write, and resulting in improved standards.

The range of additional activities and educational visits is exceptional. Extra-curricular clubs are very popular amongst pupils. These include dance, French, gardening, maths and tag rugby.

Many activities are led by staff, but exceptional use is made of the expertise that exists within the community, especially in the leadership of musical and sporting activities. Members of the choir sing superbly. In recent years the school has been highly successful in competition against other schools, particularly in 'kwik' cricket, football and tag rugby.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Teachers and support staff are very knowledgeable about the academic and personal needs of all their pupils. Requirements to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of pupils are fully in place. Arrangements for accurately tracking the progress of all pupils are outstanding. The information provided by these arrangements ensures that any pupils who fall behind are quickly identified and provided with the help they require to catch up. This applies particularly to pupils who sometimes find learning hard. Links with partner organisations are very strong. These links are particularly effective in ensuring that pupils who have learning difficulties make exceptional progress. Pupils are exceedingly knowledgeable about the progress they are making and about how to make further improvements. This knowledge makes a very positive contribution to the excellent progress they make. Arrangements to gain and respond to the views of parents and carers and to those of pupils are very effective. The home/school books are greatly valued by pupils and help to keep parents and carers well informed about their children's progress and about school activities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school's development plan sets out very clearly what it intends to do to improve and how it will build on the existing outstanding provision. Initiatives listed in the plan are very clearly linked to making sure that every pupil can fulfil their potential. For example, the school's plans for making standards in mathematics even better is laid out clearly, along with details about how the improvements will be evaluated. Subject leaders and other staff with additional responsibilities perform their duties very well and provide excellent support for their colleagues. In the same way that teachers have high expectations of the pupils the headteacher expects that all staff will aspire to be excellent. Arrangements for the professional development of staff and to maintain the high quality of teaching and learning are exceptionally effective.

At all levels, arrangements to evaluate the quality of provision and identify areas for improvement are exceptional and work very effectively. Governors use 'rainbow sheets' to record their evaluations of the quality of provision and to share information. They are described in the school's self-evaluation as 'forward thinking'. This is an accurate description. They fulfil their duties exceedingly well and are meticulous at holding the school to account for the quality of its work. Parents and carers express very positive views about the work of the school and are very supportive of its activities. They are particularly appreciative of the very high quality dramatic and musical presentations.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	**School Overall**

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards[1] reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

[1] Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

9 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lawford Church of England Primary, Essex CO11 2EF

Thank you for making me so very welcome when I visited your school for its inspection. I think you are right to feel proud of your school, but you should also be very proud of the progress you make.

You are truly fortunate to go to an exceptional school that makes sure you are safe and are able to do your very best. I was particularly impressed by the enthusiasm and pride of the older pupils when they act as buddies and reading partners for the younger ones. Listening to your choir singing was a special treat and your rugby skills are developing brilliantly. Catherine Jenkins and Johnny Wilkinson had better watch out! Your teachers are exceptionally good at making lessons exciting and challenging. I am very impressed by the ways in which they make the work for those of you with special talents very interesting. They also manage to make sure that those of you who sometimes find learning hard get all the help you need.

Mrs Leveridge and your school governors are superb at making sure that you have all you need to learn successfully. They are also very skilful at checking how well the school is doing and at finding out what needs to be done to make it even better. With this in mind and to make your learning even more exciting Mrs Leveridge, the staff and governors are going to look at ways of making even more use of the school grounds during lessons and for other activities.

I am delighted to wish you all the very best for your future education.

Yours sincerely

Godfrey Bancroft

Lead Inspector