

# Saint Lawrence's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121607
<b>Local Authority</b>	York
<b>Inspection number</b>	292175
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Elizabeth Charlesworth

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	237
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Alan Reed
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Helen Dumville (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 March 2001
<b>School address</b>	Heslington Road York North Yorkshire YO10 5BW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01904 625131
<b>Fax number</b>	01904 651477

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized school whose pupils come from diverse social, economic and ethnic backgrounds, including several Traveller families. The proportion of pupils who have free school meals is above average. Although many pupils come from the immediate area a significant proportion travel across the City to attend this popular school. There are an average number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, though there are more with statements of special educational needs than average. Fourteen languages are spoken by the pupils, and the number with English as an additional language is above the national average. The headteacher left at the end of last school year and the school is currently led by the deputy headteacher as acting headteacher, pending the arrival of a new headteacher in April. The school has won many awards for its work including arts, sport and for being a healthy school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school where every child is nurtured and valued, summarised in the display in the entrance where photographs of pupils are linked to where their families are on a map of the world. The excellent care for children and their families begins before they start in Nursery with home visits which enable staff to plan for the educational and welfare needs of the children. Language and communication skills are weak when children start school, but a firm focus on developing language through a specialised programme means that they quickly gain the skills they need to put them on the ladder of learning. Progress is excellent because of the high quality of teaching and pupils reach average standards by the time they leave in Year 6. Early recognition of individual learning needs leads to prompt intervention, so that as they progress through school pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make exceptional progress. The same level of remarkable care and liaison takes place with Traveller families who have become thoroughly integrated into the school and who enrich its culture. It is this total concern for children and their families that is the bedrock of the school's successful bid to establish a Children's Centre, due to be opened in June.

St Lawrence's puts the child at the centre of everything it does and there are many things that make it a special place in the hearts of pupils, staff, governors and families. Underpinned by a strong Christian ethos, pupils readily celebrate joy and sorrow in art. Vibrant displays all over school show what high standards pupils can reach when they are inspired and motivated by working with experts. There is everything from ceramics to poetry to design as well as photographs of dance and opera workshops, projects for which the school was specially chosen by the City of York because of their high reputation in performing arts. Part of the excellent curriculum is a dedicated time every week for personal, social and health education. Developing self-esteem is central to the programme and though staff know it impacts positively on behaviour and attitudes, they do not yet make enough use of the wealth of information they hold on pupils to see its true value.

The many languages spoken by the pupils give the school an international flavour, which has sparked off involvement in the Comenius project. There are links with several European schools and during the inspection day pupils in Year 6 were trying out a game introduced to them by video of a traditional Polish game, and one that required a great deal of skill. Pupils take part in special themes such as international food week and arts with an international flavour. French is taught in Key Stage 2 and some children learn Mandarin Chinese at an after school club.

A powerful and influential school council is very active in pursuit of healthy and safe living. They insist that everyone who cycles to school wears a helmet and that includes staff as well as pupils. Members take their duties seriously and consult with their classmates before council meetings. They are adamant that there is no bullying in school and they attribute this to the fact that, following school-wide consultation, what most pupils and families describe as bullying is actually 'bugging' and as a school they have devised the 'debugging' procedures. Pupils take it in turns to wear 'the bug', just to remind themselves of what to do. The result is a harmonious community that knows how to sort out its differences. Recently a group of older pupils, including three who had recently left, went before 'The Dragon's Den' and were successful in their bid for funds for an outdoor classroom, shortly to be installed in the grounds.

All this comes about because all staff, under dedicated leadership, are committed to providing the best education for their pupils. The governing body is totally supportive and as new members

take up their roles is becoming more challenging. Overall the school was too modest in its self-evaluation but through discussing the provision during the inspection they can now see that all aspects are better than their initial judgement.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Use all available data on pupils' academic and personal development to judge the effectiveness given by all initiatives.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

From a very low starting point children make rapid progress in the Nursery. Learning programmes tailored to their needs enable all pupils to make excellent progress. Results at the end of Year 2 in 2006 were average and this solid foundation enables all pupils to reach the challenging targets set for them. By the end of Year 6 pupils have continued to make excellent progress and reach average standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils identified as gifted and talented make impressive gains in their learning to reach the higher levels in national tests. Pupils with English as an additional language have extra support with English and progress for these pupils, often arriving at school without any English, is quite exceptional. The school is especially successful with vulnerable children and by building their confidence and working with families these pupils are exceeding all expectations. However, it is in the arts that all pupils excel. The standard of pupils' visual art displayed in school is very high and the Key Stage 1 choir, 'Joyful Noise', delighted the whole school with their two-part singing in assembly.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Building self-esteem and teaching pupils to value themselves and others underpin excellent spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. When they sit round as a class they encourage one another by saying in which ways they are 'smart'. Enjoyment is palpable, resulting in exemplary behaviour and their making the best of every opportunity in preparing for the next stage of learning. Attendance is good and the school exceeded its target set by the Department for Education and Skills. Pupils' positive attitudes and sense of responsibility are central to their outstanding personal development and well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Pupils say that having an interactive whiteboard in every classroom has helped teachers to do things more quickly. Teachers themselves agree that having this excellent resource has revolutionised their teaching and they are able to bring topics much more alive. The school had judged teaching to be good but through discussion during the inspection came to the view that it is in fact outstanding. The collective knowledge and enthusiasm of staff means there is always an expert on hand to ensure all subjects are taught to the same high standard. In the view of the senior leadership team, endorsed by inspection evidence, all teaching is at least good with much that is outstanding and the cumulative effect of this results in high quality learning with a great deal of independence and responsibility on the part of pupils. Teaching

assistants and nursery nurses are also experts in their fields of specialism and all pupils benefit from their contribution to their learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

A rich and motivating curriculum celebrates the cultural diversity within school. There has been a major focus on writing, instilling into pupils a love of and a purpose for writing. Every pupil having an individual target, with the onus on them to prove to the teacher they have met it, has pushed improvement forward very well. Grammar and punctuation pyramids provide a ready visual reminder of how to make writing more interesting. Writing targets are proving so successful that the school is poised to introduce them in mathematics. Teachers make frequent use of the wealth of opportunities for studying that York affords and this gives added stimulus to learning and writing.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Assessment of pupils' academic progress is excellent and dovetails with the meticulous care taken of pupils' welfare, health and safety: all statutory procedures are in place. Using the information that comes from regular checks on progress the school knows that what it provides in the way of intervention and extra challenge is giving excellent value for money. Day to day marking enables pupils and teachers to set targets that keep pupils on track. The school is already well on the way to providing the all round care for children and families that it aspires to through the planned Children's Centre.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Excellent systems for monitoring performance and sharing responsibility, established under the previous headteacher, are firmly embedded, enabling the school to continue its pursuit of high standards. The very able acting headteacher and deputy headteacher are providing the continuity in the interim so that the school is in very good order ready for the new headteacher. Through prudent financial management an additional teacher without class responsibility has been appointed. This allows middle managers time to monitor their areas of responsibility, which they do with rigour. This arrangement also allows the school to have a physical education specialist so that sport and healthy living are promoted with as much vigour as the arts.

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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	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I know you think that yours is a very special school and I agree with you. There are so many excellent things about your school that it is hard to know where to begin. What really stands out for me are:

- the very high standard of the arts, especially the singing, which I saw and heard during my visit
- the way you all get on so well and help each other, and I think your 'debugging' is a terrific idea
- the way you celebrate all your many different cultures with each other
- the way all staff teach and care for you so very well.

There is not very much that I can ask your headteacher to do to make school even better, but I have asked that the school keeps a check on how your personal, social and health education is helping you to become such very good citizens. You can help by continuing to do your best always.