

St Lawrence CofE Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125168
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	328304
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Janet Sinclair

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	143
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lady Gillian Randall
Headteacher	Mrs Catherine Reynolds
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bagshot Road Chobham Woking GU24 8AB

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2009
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Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school. The proportion of pupils with moderate learning and communication difficulties, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. The proportion, however, varies significantly between year groups. Pupils are mainly from White British heritage. Few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a small number are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The school has more pupils from the traveller community than is normally found. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises one Reception class. More children than is typical nationally join or leave the school at other than customary times of the year.

There have been several changes of leadership over the last few years. The current headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post for approximately two years. A significant reduction in support staff has also taken place in the last three years due to over-staffing in this area. The school has the Eco Bronze Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that is improving rapidly under the positive leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Together, they have ensured a very caring ethos through a thoughtful and considered response to the varying needs of the many groups of pupils represented within the school. As a result, pupils' personal development is outstanding and this is evident in their positive attitudes to work and enthusiastic response to all that is on offer. Parents are very pleased with the way staff have worked to improve the school since the last inspection. In particular they mention the efforts made to transform the fabric of the building, and the excellent catering and school meals. As one parent commented, 'I think we are very privileged to have this excellent team of staff to look after and educate our children.'

Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. They are more variable at the end of Year 2. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Although there has been a legacy of underachievement in writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2, the school has worked hard to address this through the introduction of effective tracking, greater emphasis in English on spelling and punctuation and local authority support for both writing and mathematics. These initiatives are showing positive outcomes in terms of pupils' progress at Key Stage 2 with only a few small pockets of underachievement remaining. However, in mathematics pupils do not have enough opportunities to solve problems through open-ended tasks and investigations and this hampers their progress. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, some good teaching was seen during the inspection. Teachers plan and organise lessons well and use a range of resources that engage pupils in their learning. As a result, pupils behave well and thoroughly enjoy their lessons. However, teachers do not always match work closely enough to pupils' needs or use questioning effectively to develop understanding, so pupils are sometimes insufficiently challenged. Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning through their work with small groups of pupils, particularly those with moderate learning difficulties.

There are many visits, outside speakers and special events that enhance the school's good curriculum and make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. During the inspection Arts Week was taking place and pupils were involved in a variety of activities such as a visiting an art gallery, working with an artist to paint spring flowers and with a sculptor to make a large wooden structure. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community through, for example, their recent 'St Lawrence has Talent' show, which they organised and managed themselves in order to raise funds for the school. Pupils spoke of the great fun and enjoyment they experienced and were very proud of what they had done. All pupils work and play harmoniously due to the very supportive atmosphere in the school. Their progress is monitored thoroughly and regularly, with effective support given where needed. This is helping to accelerate rates of progress. Additionally, pupils have individual targets for their learning and marking is consistent, so enabling pupils' involvement in improving their work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, but steadily improving. There is a strong commitment to moving the school forward by all staff and particularly the headteacher and deputy headteacher, as seen in their self-evaluation, the clear systems for tracking progress and the determined way they have tackled underachievement. They have created a secure platform for future development, demonstrating that the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children start in Reception with a wide range of skills and abilities that are broadly in line with expectations. This varies from year to year. The effective induction and friendly, caring atmosphere helps children settle well into school routines and supports their good personal development. They make good progress in developing their skills in sounds and letters due to the strong emphasis given to these areas, so that most reach their expected goals on entry to Year 1. They make satisfactory progress across all other aspects of their learning by the time they leave Reception. The teacher organises a range of direct teaching and play activities that engage children in their learning. Planning takes account of all areas of learning, but is not always precise enough to ensure children are fully challenged in their learning, and this slows progress. Staff are developing provision so that children have greater freedom to choose. Children's welfare is promoted satisfactorily in a safe and secure learning environment. Although the outside area is quite restricted, children particularly enjoyed the opportunities to paint outside as part of Arts Week. The school is aware of this and has plans in place to develop the outdoors learning area. The teacher regularly monitors children's progress and uses this information well to provide targeted work in writing and letters and sounds. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in mathematics at Key Stage 2, by ensuring pupils have more opportunities for problem-solving and investigative work.
- Ensure teachers continue to fully involve pupils in improving their writing through their targets and marking.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring a more consistent match of work to pupils' needs and more effective questioning to ensure all pupils are fully challenged.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Over time, standards in Year 2 have fluctuated from above to below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in 2008 were above average. This represents satisfactory progress for these pupils based on their prior attainment. Progress in Year 2 currently is accelerating due to the continuing improvements in provision.

At Key Stage 2, although standards have remained broadly average at the end of Year 6, there has been a declining picture in pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics over several years. This legacy of underachievement is now being successfully addressed. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to achieve satisfactorily. This is due to the many improvements taking place across the school, but particularly the small ability groupings for English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6 and the consistently good teaching within these. However, the school is aware of the need to develop pupils' investigative and problem-solving skills in mathematics in order to further accelerate progress. Pupils with moderate speech and language difficulties make good progress towards the specific targets set for them due to the regular monitoring of their

progress and the additional support they get. In all other aspects of their work their progress is satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and develop excellent personal qualities. Their spiritual, moral, and social development is outstanding, as shown in their excellent relationships and their thoughtful and considerate behaviour towards each other. Their cultural development is good. Pupils feel very safe in school, clearly stating that 'although there are incidents, there is no bullying because any issues are resolved quickly by staff'. They feel very confident of adult support should they have any worries.

Pupils are very clear about what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, eagerly quoting 'a balanced diet and lots of exercise as well as fruit or cheese only snacks at playtime' as important factors. They make an excellent contribution to the community. For example, the effective school council has initiated regular discussions with all pupils to elicit their views and opinions. They have organised successful fund-raising events, set up support groups for looking after younger pupils at play times and organised their own dance clubs at lunchtime. Pupils' sound progress in acquiring basic skills, as well as the willingness with which they embrace the opportunities to take on responsibility and use their initiative, prepares them well for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers plan and organise lessons well and manage pupils in a supportive and friendly manner. Consequently, pupils enjoy lessons and are keen to participate in all activities. A strength of the teaching is the consistent approach to marking and target-setting which helps pupils improve their work. Good use is made of the interactive whiteboards to support learning. Effective questioning and challenging work helped a group of Year 5 and 6 pupils to make good progress in developing their ability to estimate the size of angles in mathematics. However, this is not consistent practice across the school, nor is there always a good match of work to pupils' abilities and this hinders progress. Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning through their effective work with small groups of pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties. This was clearly seen in a lesson for pupils with moderate language difficulties who were being successfully helped to improve their spelling skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides a broad range of well-planned experiences. Provision for literacy and numeracy has recently been strengthened and as a result, pupils make better progress. Literacy has been enhanced through the opportunities pupils have to develop their writing skills in history and geography. However, there is insufficient emphasis on problem-solving in mathematics. There is good attention to health and safety through, for example, the personal, social and health education programme and road safety training. The computer suite, which has recently been refurbished, ensures skills are learnt in discrete lessons. Pupils are also very pleased with the 'Mathletics' on-line resource that they can access through the school website.

Pupils enjoy the excellent curricular enrichment activities. They particularly like netball, football and choir as well as Book Week. The visit to Butser Ancient Farm and, for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, their very recent trip to Devon were particular highlights of the year.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Teachers know their pupils extremely well and are caring and supportive. As a result, pupils are very happy to be in school and say that almost everyone is kind and considerate. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and health and safety procedures are robust. The school takes good care of its vulnerable pupils and makes effective use of outside agencies to ensure they receive the help they need. Very good support for pupils from the traveller community and the provision of daily transport has ensured they now thoroughly enjoy school and attend regularly. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties have clear individual education plans and a good level of support, particularly from teaching assistants, to ensure their specific needs are well met.

Very careful tracking of pupils' attainment is now enabling the school to monitor pupils' progress carefully across Key Stage 1 and 2. This allows teachers to quickly identify and support pupils who are not making enough progress. As a result, all pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language, are now making satisfactory progress. However, tracking of progress in the Reception class is not used well enough to set clear learning expectations for different groups.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Although leadership and management are satisfactory overall, there is a clearly improving picture with much in place but not yet showing the full impact. The excellent work undertaken by the headteacher and her deputy headteacher to ensure effective systems are in place has enabled the school to make rapid progress in securing excellent personal development for pupils. It has also ensured a more consistent approach to planning, effective tracking of pupils' progress and satisfactory achievement across the school. Subject leaders are developing their roles and are beginning to impact positively on the work of the school through monitoring the provision in their subject areas.

Regular and detailed monitoring of teaching and learning has ensured practice is improving. The school development plan has been used well to rigorously implement improvements in English and mathematics, with clear measurable targets and indicators of success. Governors are enthusiastic supporters of the school. Through their committees and regular involvement in the work of the school, they are developing their role. However, they are not sufficiently rigorous in evaluating the work of the school to act fully as critical friends. Community cohesion is promoted through the school's close involvement in the church, local events and the Eco Bronze Award. Links with the wider community are developing through, for example, a fund-raising event to raise awareness of education in Banjul.

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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
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

30 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Lawrence CofE Aided Primary School, Woking, GU24 8AB

I am writing to tell you how much I enjoyed my visit to your school, especially as you were so polite and made me feel very welcome. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and listening as you enthusiastically described your school and the many exciting things that are happening in it. I hope the rest of your Arts Week activities went well.

Your school is a satisfactory school overall, but it is improving and has some strong features.

Here are some things the school does well.

- Your headteacher, deputy headteacher and all the staff take extremely good care of you and this ensures your personal development is excellent.
- You enjoy taking on responsibilities and make a very good contribution to the school and wider community through your many thoughtful actions.
- Your school provides an excellent range of visits, visitors, after school clubs and special events that you thoroughly enjoy.
- All staff carefully check your progress to ensure you are doing well enough.

Every school has something it could do better, so this is what I have asked your school to do to help you learn even more.

- Ensure that you do more problem-solving and investigative work in mathematics.
- Continue with your work in writing so you make better progress.
- Ensure teachers always match work to what you need to learn and challenge you fully through their questioning, so that you do even better.

With very best wishes.

Yours faithfully

Janet Sinclair

Lead Inspector