

# St Lawrence's C of E VC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115077
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	338506
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 December 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Judi Bedawi

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	110
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bob Coote
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kerry Malcolm
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 July 2007
<b>School address</b>	Rectory Road Rowhedge Colchester
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, displays, a range of school documentation and policies, monitoring records and data on pupils' achievement. Inspectors received and analysed 96 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

pupils' behaviour, particularly at break and lunchtimes

- the school's efforts to raise the achievement and attainment of higher attaining pupils, especially at Key Stage 2
- provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the development of community cohesion
- the quality of leadership and management in raising ambition and driving the school forwards.

## Information about the school

St Lawrence's is smaller than most other village primary schools. Pupils mainly come from the local community. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds but above average proportions are from minority ethnic groups. A few of them are at an early stage of learning English. Although there is a below average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, there is an above average number with statements of special educational needs. From September 2009, the governors appointed a temporary acting headteacher and an acting deputy, pending the appointment of substantive senior leaders in 2010. The school has just opened a community meeting room to facilitate school and community groups. The school has the Healthy Schools award.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

St Lawrence's is a good school. It has moved on well since the last inspection and provides pupils with a good quality education. Pupils benefit from the positive environment of a school that is well-focused on enabling them to make good progress from their broadly average starting points although increasing numbers of pupils arrive with less well developed skills. The good teamwork and openness of both the acting headteacher and her deputy inspire the confidence of parents, staff and governors alike, so that the school is moving on at a good pace. Pupils thrive academically and emotionally, because all staff want them to achieve to the best of their varying abilities. Parents typically say, 'We are particularly impressed by the quality of teaching and the leadership of the school and see many improvements in the last few years', and 'My child is doing well and making good progress.'

Pupils are eager for new facts and skills and really enjoy learning. They appreciate lessons that stimulate their imagination and interest. As a result, class behaviour is consistently good, but at playtimes sensible behaviour is not always remembered by a small minority of pupils, racing about unaware of others. At such times, staff miss opportunities to capitalise on the use of pupils as play leaders and encourage pupils to learn how to play positively. Nonetheless, pupils say that behaviour is much better than it was and so they feel safe. Most of their parents agree with them and voice their satisfaction by saying, for instance, 'This year class behaviour has improved and the new procedures are working.'

Children happily get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, making exciting discoveries in their learning and play in their colourful and well planned environment. Children's attainment is mostly in line with age related expectations when they join the Reception class and move into Year 1. Standards are also average at the end of Key Stage 1, but with an increasing proportion of pupils performing above average. This continues into Key Stage 2. Although attainment is broadly average at the end of Key Stage 2, there is evidence of improvement with rising attainment particularly for lower and middle ability groups. Higher attainers performed less well in 2009, and this is identified as a focus by the school. Nonetheless, pupils make good progress including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or with home languages other than English. Although recent training has increased teachers' skills in the use of assessment to plan lessons, staff do not provide consistent challenge at Key Stage 2 to enable higher attaining pupils to reach their potential. There are also too few opportunities for these pupils to develop their independent learning skills.

Partnerships with parents are good, with easily accessible information. For example, the very recently introduced whole school 'learning together' files, with targets shared

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between school and home, are valued by parents, pupils and teachers. The governors are wise and skilled advocates for raising the school's profile within and beyond the village community. They have enabled the development of a community room already used by many groups as diverse as the local police to baby massage. Pupils' contribution to the local community is excellent. For example, they have designed an environmental area and 'bug hotel' to share with the local community. Community cohesion is excellent.

The acting headteacher and her team have identified the right priorities to move the school forward and further raise performance. Standards and attendance are improving. Teamwork at all levels, including that of teaching assistants, is good, closely focussed on raising achievement and driving school improvement. The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate and the capacity for continuous improvement is good.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise attainment and achievement for higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 by:
  - continued use and development of assessment strategies to inform planning and accelerate pupils' progress
  - increasing levels of challenge and expectation in teaching and learning in order to enrich pupils' interests across the curriculum and develop their skills in independent learning.
- Improve playground behaviour by:
  - further developing the use of pupils in Years 5 and 6 as play leaders, training them to resolve conflicts at break and lunchtimes
  - providing staff training on positive play skills to enable pupils to learn how to play.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils say they find learning exciting and fun. Some want to attend during holidays. They like their teachers because they explain well if there are points that they do not understand and this helps them to make good progress. Pupils relish challenges and even the youngest pupils give well thought out responses.

Pupils make good progress and some reach above average standards at Key Stage 1. Many pupils also make good progress at Key Stage 2, but standards are only average because higher attaining pupils do not attain as well as they could. The school has, rightly, identified this as an area for improvement. Pupils mostly show a good level of independence, especially when they work with computers. Behaviour is good in lessons but can be unruly at break times because a small proportion of pupils do not know how to play properly. Pupils sometimes try to sort out their differences, but know that the adults who care for them well are always ready to listen or help.

Pupils' personal development is good and their attendance has improved in the last year so that it is now satisfactory. Pupils say they feel very safe because behaviour is

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improving. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and eat sensibly. Older pupils spoke animatedly of making non-alcoholic cocktails as a way of measuring in mathematics. They also enjoy sports like tag rugby. They make outstanding contributions to the life of the school and local community. They have organised pupil surveys and developed an enterprise activity to raise funds for Great Ormond Street Hospital, as well as managing the school council budget. They actively work with the local community, for example, in the environmental area. They write to a school in Nepal organising the translation of letters sent. They are eagerly awaiting replies. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils' particularly enjoy learning about multicultural life and diversity in Britain and globally. When asked what might make their school even better, pupils said they like learning French and want to learn more languages like Russian and Spanish.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Pupils' say of their teachers; 'They are really nice, if someone is worried they make them feel better' ....'they have really helped and pushed me'. Seamless teamwork between

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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teachers and teaching assistants allows learning to proceed at a good pace. Teaching assistants undertake good ongoing assessment. Learning targets are clear and pupils know how well they are doing. Subject knowledge is good so that questions lead to considered responses, extending the learning and independence of most pupils. Planned activities hold pupils' interest and imagination so they are eager for more. Marking is helpful in enabling pupils to improve their work, but planning, challenge and work expectations for higher attaining pupils are often set too low to really stretch them. Good specialist class support for pupils with special educational needs ensures learning is never disrupted. Pupils increasingly set their own challenging targets. Behaviour management and relationships are good, having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes and self-esteem. Recently established intervention groups already show signs of a clear impact for pupils needing very focussed help in acquiring English or other learning and social skills.

The curriculum meets individual needs well. It is increasingly topic based to enhance enjoyment and pupils readily recall favourite topics such as 'space' or 'the Tudors'. Practical activities and scientific experiments give less academic pupils opportunity to shine. Pupils especially enjoy residential trips, art, history and English research using computers. There is a well established programme of visits but take up of school clubs is relatively low and is being investigated by the school council.

Pastoral care and support are good because little escapes the staff, who know pupils and their families very well. Focussed support for vulnerable or needy pupils is promptly organised and underpinned by good links with outside agencies. Staff act promptly to address learning or personal concerns, and pupils' welfare is monitored closely.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The astute acting headteacher, working with her able acting deputy, has a keen eye for areas needing attention, honing in on raising outcomes for each pupil so that the school continues to sustain and build on its achievements. Staff are all involved in development and school improvement, and in self-evaluation, monitoring and review of the school's work. This has a positive impact on raising standards and increasing progress in all areas. Data analysis is thorough and used well to identify individual needs and any dips in pupil performance.

The governing body is greatly valued by the school and wider community and has the

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skills and understanding to challenge and question decisions very effectively. Safeguarding procedures and practice are good and meet current government requirements.

Partnerships with parents, local schools and support agencies are good. Community cohesion is excellent. The school is making a real difference to its local and wider community by holding an annual community week organised by governors and staff and involving many different groups, educationalists, parents and community members. The new school based community room already has many bookings and is considered as a great community asset. It can be accessed completely independently, during or after school hours. Pupils raise funds for many local national and international charities. The school is always looking for ways of developing its work in this area and has ideas for extending global links even further. Equality of opportunity is good, with racial harmony amongst pupils. Most parents feel that the quality of information has improved recently and the school's level of engagement with parents is good.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Provision is good and enriches children's learning and social development. The enthusiasm that children show for learning through play is fostered through skilled teaching and support that meets individual needs well. There is a strong focus on developing early language, reading and number skills. Most children already know each other due to the very good partnership with the pre-school that shares the early years outdoor environment for part of each day. Children settle happily into well known routines, gaining in self-esteem as they develop old skills and find new ones. They



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behave well and follow their teachers' instructions promptly. They are well supervised but encouraged to become independent in thought and actions. The new focus on letter sounds is enhancing children's enjoyment of communication and language, and they mostly express their views clearly. Children's attainment is broadly average by the time they move into Year 1. Learning is well planned, with individual assessment used to aid good progress. Outdoor provision is now good, well organised and used regularly. Teaching is good, with plenty of challenging questions and high expectations. There is a good balance between child-led and teacher-directed learning and play. Welfare and safeguarding arrangements meet current government requirements. All children are cherished. Behaviour is good and firmly managed. Children are very supportive of each other. Relationships with parents are valued with good two-way communication, home school books and accessible information. Good leadership and management ensure a lively start to formal education.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**Views of parents and carers**

The very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire are happy with their children's education. Almost all know their children enjoy school and how to stay healthy. Parents feel very well supported by the school in helping their children to learn. The very large majority feel that teaching is good, that the leadership and management of the school are good and that their children are safe and well cared for. They think that they get enough information about their children's progress. Although most parents feel that their children's needs are well met, a few are less positive. A few parents felt that behaviour could be better, and the inspectors agree with them about playground behaviour, but found that behaviour in lessons is good. Parents mostly felt that their children are well prepared for the next stage of learning - their children disagree and say that they are all well prepared and inspectors agree with the pupils. Inspection findings are, otherwise, mostly in agreement with parents' views.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Lawrence's C of E VC Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 96 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 110 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	54	42	44	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	54	57	34	35	5	5	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	44	46	47	49	5	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	41	51	53	5	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	42	44	50	52	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	47	50	52	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	50	47	49	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	29	30	50	52	8	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	34	53	55	7	7	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	38	45	47	9	9	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	43	46	48	6	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	57	59	35	36	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	50	52	40	42	6	6	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



6 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Lawrence's C of E VC Primary School, Rowhedge, CO5 7HR

We would like to say thank you for making our visit so enjoyable and being so friendly when we visited your welcoming school recently. You told us a lot about what you like doing, particularly art, history, using computers for English research, and sport. It is obvious that you enjoy school and think that your teachers make learning fun.

You make good progress in learning from your various starting points because teaching is good. Your school does a good job in helping you to learn. Your behaviour is good in lessons and inside school, but at playtimes you don't always behave well or play sensibly. You all need to work together to improve this. Your attainment is similar to that in other primary schools and you all make good progress, but we think that those of you older pupils who find learning easy need more challenges - perhaps you can talk to your teachers about this. Your attendance has improved - well done, keep it up! We are very impressed by how much you are doing for your local and wider community and we can see that this means a lot to you.

We are sure that you will all continue to work hard at St. Lawrence's.

Yours sincerely

Judi Bedawi

Lead Inspector

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