

St Lawrence's CofE Primary School

School Inspection report

Unique reference number	123779
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	380728
Inspection dates	12–13 July 2012
Lead inspector	John Laver

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	66
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Greet
Headteacher	Sue Lidgey
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

John Laver

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector spent nearly four hours observing teaching, visiting nine lessons, taught by three teachers and support staff. Some of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, the governing body minutes, school policies and samples of pupils' work. The inspector held discussions with pupils, a member of the governing body and members of staff. The inspector analysed 20 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as those returned by 29 pupils and five staff.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller-than-average village primary school in which all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. There are no pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. Currently, there are two classes, one of which includes children in Reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2, while the other contains Key Stage 2 pupils. Because of a rising school roll, a third class is about to be established. Eighteen months ago, the school federated with another small local school, both under the leadership of the headteacher and supported by one governing body. The school has the Activemark 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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding, because teaching does not always challenge more-able pupils to achieve as well as they could, and there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Achievement overall is good. Children make outstanding progress in Reception, and so do pupils who receive additional support to cope with learning difficulties. Many pupils make outstanding progress in reading and mathematics. Progress in writing is not yet outstanding, because although strategies for improving it are beginning to have a positive effect, they are not yet embedded enough to demonstrate outstanding achievement.
- Most teaching is good or better and is characterised by pace and challenge in learning. However, expectations are not always high enough. Teachers' marking does not always convey useful guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.
- Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school. Pupils enjoy school and feel very safe. The school provides many opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A typical parental compliment was, 'St Lawrence's is much more than a school; it is a family which cares and looks out for each other.'
- Leaders evaluate the school's performance accurately and plan appropriately for further improvement. They monitor teaching and manage performance well to ensure good achievement and an outstanding level of support for pupils' well-being, as parents and carers recognise. The leadership has managed the process of federation remarkably well, and this has had a positive impact on both staff expertise and pupils' learning and curriculum opportunities.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching always presents sufficient challenge and high expectations to enable more-able pupils to reach their potential, by:
 - raising the expectations of teachers so that more lessons show evidence of the outstanding teaching sometimes demonstrated in the school
 - improving the impact of marking of pupils' work so that pupils are always given a clear understanding of how well they have achieved and how they can proceed effectively to the next steps in their learning.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their improving skills in writing by providing more challenging opportunities to develop them in subjects other than literacy.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children's attainment on entry to Reception varies year on year, although usually is broadly in line with age-related expectations. Children make outstanding progress in Reception in all areas of skills, knowledge and personal development, as the result of outstanding teaching. They join Year 1 with above-average attainment. The outstanding progress in Reception was observed, for example, when children were volunteering information and answering questions about shapes, as they were shown various objects, such as tins and pieces of fruit. Children were fully engaged and knew how to sit and listen to each other constructively, as well as showing enthusiasm to be actively involved.

Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress overall, and it is sometimes outstanding in mathematics and reading. Attainment is usually above or well above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and when pupils leave the school. Attainment in reading at the end of Years 2 and 6 is well above average. Pupils talk confidently about their reading and are encouraged to reflect upon what they read. The inspector saw good progress in lessons, for example when older pupils learned actively in studying the qualities of poetry by discussing together constructively. Progress in writing is good, and improving, especially where pupils are encouraged to write in a variety of genres. Pupils achieve less well when writing in subjects other than literacy, because more-able pupils in particular are not always given appropriately challenging writing tasks. The previous gap in attainment and progress in writing between boys and girls is narrowing, and pupils, overall, are on track to meet appropriately challenging targets. They are well prepared in basic skills for the next phase of education.

Support staff work very effectively with disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and, as a result, these pupils make outstanding progress. The very positive attitude of pupils towards learning is also an important factor in their progress. Pupils speak of lessons as 'fun', and they enjoy challenge. This was

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very evident in a lesson where younger pupils were learning how to construct and interpret a block graph, and they were taught how to reflect carefully about what they were learning before responding to the teacher's questioning. The inspector agreed with the opinions of most parents, carers and pupils that progress over time is good and improving.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers believe that teaching is good, and the teaching observed during the inspection was generally so, and occasionally outstanding. This profile is typical over time and matched the leadership's own perception of teaching, based on extensive monitoring, and indicates an improvement since the previous inspection. Particularly effective has been the impact of the federation in encouraging teachers in the two schools to jointly plan teaching and learning, and in providing for teachers' professional development. This has enabled, for example, the school to utilise a particular expertise in mathematics, a major factor in many pupils' outstanding progress in that subject.

Teachers deploy learning support assistants very effectively, as seen in lessons, and this enables disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to make very rapid gains in learning. There is some outstanding teaching in Reception, mostly because staff have high expectations of the children. Characteristics of the good teaching observed in other lessons included good planning for the needs of pupils of mixed ages and abilities, good questioning to consolidate and extend pupils' understanding, and good use of resources. These qualities were observed, for example, when younger pupils were learning how to use data, and the teacher provided activities involving addition and subtraction which were challenging enough for them to demonstrate above-average attainment in numeracy. Outstanding teaching was observed in a French lesson when younger pupils were experiencing the subject for the first time. The teacher's lively and challenging pace, high expectations, and use of a variety of games and songs in a short space of time completely enthused the pupils, held their concentration and made the process of learning great fun. Pupils agree that many of their lessons are interesting and pitched at the right level.

Occasionally, pupils are not given the opportunity to achieve their potential, for example when they are given writing tasks which are too low-level for more-able pupils. Some of the marking of work is constructive but, as some pupils recognise themselves, the quality of marking is not consistently helpful, and comments do not always show them how to improve their work, or encourage them to correct errors or improve presentation. All pupils benefit from teaching by specialists in music, physical education and French, all of which are taught to a high standard. Teachers provide many opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, for example getting pupils to write about their visits to the Nothe Fort in Weymouth and a Bristol mosque.

The teaching of reading is effective and enables pupils to progress well with this skill.

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The school has a well-developed programme for teaching younger pupils how to link letters and sounds.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The inspector confirmed the leaders' evaluation that behaviour is outstanding and is one of the strengths of the school. Most pupils, parents and carers believe that behaviour is exemplary. There are no exclusions, and the response of parents and carers to the questionnaire was unanimous in emphasising that pupils feel very safe in school. Pupils confirm this. Pupils are aware that bullying can take various forms, such as verbal and cyber-bullying, but they told the inspector that there were no such issues in the school. The harmonious and welcoming ethos of the school is very noticeable to visitors. Pupils enjoy helping each other and taking on responsibility, for example in the school council. Pupils play and work together very well, and listen to each other considerately in lessons. Attendance has improved, except for a very small number of pupils whose parents do not get them to school regularly. Parents' and carers' confidence in the school is demonstrated by comments such as, 'My child has grown massively in confidence since starting at St Lawrence's and really loves coming to school.'

Leadership and management

The school's leadership is highly respected in the local community. The headteacher has been very well supported by other staff and an active and knowledgeable governing body in making the federation a success during the last 18 months. Pupils themselves attest to this success, enthusing about their links with the 'other' school and opportunities such as joint visits out of school. Staff benefit from shared expertise, and the federation has had a marked impact upon learning, for example through the opportunity for pupils to share the Forest School experience on the other site. Leadership at all levels has high expectations. School leaders have worked successfully to improve the school since its previous inspection, for example in improving teaching and the standard of boys' writing.

Leaders have developed a rigorous system of tracking and assessing pupils' progress. Close analysis of progress ensures that all pupils have equal opportunity, and any individual falling behind is well supported. There is rigorous monitoring of teaching, and improvement planning is focused on appropriate priorities such as further developing writing skills. Staff have very good opportunities for professional development. These strengths, combined with pupils' keenness to learn and their above-average levels of attainment, show that the school has the capacity to improve further and aim for excellence.

The federation's jointly developed curriculum offers topics such as 'toys', which incorporate subjects such as design and technology, and history, and which pupils enjoy. There is a good range of enrichment activities such as clubs and visits. The leadership provides many opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, during the inspection, an assembly encouraged

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pupils to reflect on the importance of caring for others, and a large group of pupils visited Wells Cathedral. Pupils engage in charity work and fundraising, and there is a developing link with a Kenyan school. St Lawrence's is a very inclusive school with no discrimination and a strong sense of community. Pupils are regularly engaged in shaping their own rules and behaviour policies.

Arrangements for safeguarding are secure and regularly monitored. All safeguarding requirements are met. All staff receive appropriate training and know their responsibilities, as do pupils, in key aspects, such as safe use of the internet. Relationships with other schools, parents and carers are very productive. Parents and carers value the regular 'open' afternoons when they come into school to celebrate the work of children and younger pupils.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



14 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Lawrence's CofE Primary School, Wells BA5 1HL

Thank you for making me very welcome when I inspected your school recently. You were very polite and friendly when you talked to me about what you did in school and what you liked about it.

- Your school gives you a good education. Children in Reception make outstanding progress, and pupils in Years 1 to 6 do really well in reading and mathematics, better than pupils do in many other schools. In the past, some of you have not done quite as well in writing, although you are catching up with other subjects.
- Teaching is good. Your teachers work hard to make your lessons interesting. Other staff give excellent help to those of you who find learning difficult. Occasionally, the cleverest of you do not do as well as you can, usually when the writing tasks are too easy. Sometimes you do not get enough information in your books to show you exactly how you could improve your work.
- You behave excellently and you told me how safe you feel in school. You get on very well together and enjoy helping each other.
- The leadership provides very good opportunities for you within the federation to go on trips and do well in all your subjects, including sports and music.

To make your good school even better, I have asked the leaders to do the following.

- Help your teachers teach you even better, by making sure that the cleverest among you always get the work that suits you best, and making sure that the marking always helps all of you learn from mistakes in your work and know exactly what you have to do to improve your work to the next level.
- Give you more opportunities in subjects other than literacy to write at a level best suited to your ability and so help you improve your writing even more.

All of you can help your teachers achieve these things by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

John Laver
Lead inspector

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