

St Lawrence Primary School

Lower Road, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT24 5JP

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils do not make as much progress as they should in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because they make slower progress in some classes than in others.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement. Children do not make enough progress in the early years setting. Adults do not always intervene swiftly enough to develop their learning.
- Teaching is not consistently good. There are times when teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are too low. Pupils, particularly those who are more able, are not always provided with work that is hard enough to extend their learning.
- Although teachers mark pupils' work regularly, pupils do not always respond to their comments by correcting and improving their work.
- Pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work, although improving, are not as good as they should be.
- Some subject leaders are new to their roles and have not had sufficient time to make an impact on improving teaching and learning.
- Although senior leaders have introduced actions to improve teaching, these have not yet led to sustained improvements for all pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- New leadership, supported by experienced and knowledgeable governors, is improving teaching and raising expectations for pupils' achievement. The executive headteacher has made a rapid start in addressing previous areas of weakness.
- School leaders have an accurate view of what the school does well. Their plans for improvement are specifically focused on aspects of the school's work most in need of development. They are well placed to improve further.
- Good partnerships with the Howard Partnership Trust and local schools have provided a wealth of training opportunities, which are already beginning to raise standards.
- Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their improved rates of attendance. They feel safe in school and know that adults care for them. Pupils' behaviour is good.
- The role of teaching assistants has been strengthened and they now make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively through the well-planned curriculum.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils working in 12 lessons or parts of lessons, eight of which were observed jointly with senior leaders. They attended an assembly and listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reading. They looked at work in pupils' books, including a sample from the previous academic year. They visited the canteen at lunchtime and observed pupils as they moved around the school and in the playground.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, teaching assistants, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. A telephone discussion took place with a representative from the local authority and with the Chief Executive Officer of the Howard Partnership Trust that the school is set to join in November 2014.
- Among the documents scrutinised were plans showing how the school is to improve, records relating to teacher performance, information regarding pupils' progress and curriculum plans. Inspectors also considered documentation showing how the school ensures that staff and pupils are safe.
- There were insufficient responses to the online survey, Parent View, to consider. The views of parents were taken into account by analysing the 39 responses to the parents' questionnaire distributed by the school. Inspectors spoke informally to parents during the inspection and took into account five responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Joy Considine, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Howley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school and the majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is lower than average. This is additional funding provided by the government to provide support for disadvantaged pupils.
- A higher than average proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, supported with a statement or the new education and health plan, attend the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception class.
- There have been substantial changes to the leadership team and the teaching team since the previous inspection. A new executive headteacher joined the school in April 2014 and the head of school joined the school in September 2014. The school works in close partnership with The Howard Partnership Trust in preparation for becoming an academy under that trust in November 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that a higher proportion is good or better by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve by always setting work that is hard enough for them, particularly those who are more able
 - providing more suitable help to pupils in lessons, for example by demonstrating the particular skills that teachers want them to learn
 - making more use of good-quality reading books to show pupils different writing styles to help them to improve their own writing
 - ensuring adults intervene swiftly to develop the learning of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Raise pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - pupils respond to teachers' marking by correcting and improving their work
 - pupils have more opportunities to show their understanding of what they have read
 - pupils develop their basic skills of handwriting, punctuation and spelling securely by the end of Year 2.
- Improve leadership and management by developing the roles of subject leaders so that they can effectively check and evaluate their subjects and accelerate rates of progress for all pupils.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management **require improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because teaching has not been good enough to secure rapid progress for all pupils. The most recent results show that, although pupils' progress is improving, it remains variable across the school.
- The executive headteacher is ambitious and has high expectations for staff and pupils. He carried out a thorough review of the school and, together with senior staff and governors, created ambitious plans for the future development of the school.
- The school is developing the role of subject leaders. However, some are at the early stages of development and they have not had time to reverse the legacy of underachievement by making effective checks on their subjects to accelerate rates of progress.
- New senior leaders have acted decisively to halt the decline in standards. They have recruited new staff and undertaken a review of roles and responsibilities. Consequently, all staff, including teaching assistants, have a better understanding of their roles and are better able to support pupils' learning.
- New systems to manage the performance of staff have been introduced. All staff now have performance targets linked to pupils' achievement and they know that their progression on the salary scale is dependent on their performance in the classroom. Previously inadequate teaching has been addressed.
- School leaders have capitalised on links with partner schools and the local academy to provide specialist support to develop teachers' skills. This has included subject training, coaching and mentoring. This has led to an increased proportion of good teaching.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, and prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. It promotes core values of honesty, respect, diversity and confidence. Following the removal of National Curriculum levels, the school is working towards developing its own approach to assessment based on the skills and knowledge it expects pupils to gain.
- Extra activities add to pupils' enjoyment of school. They visit local places of interest as well as taking part in residential visits to places further afield. This promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Additional sports funding has been used to purchase new equipment and to train teachers. Consequently, pupils enjoy a variety of sporting activities that help to keep them fit and healthy. During the inspection, pupils were excited at the prospect of taking part in an inter-school cross-country competition later that afternoon.
- The school ensures that all statutory requirements for keeping pupils and staff safe are fully met.
- The local authority provides an appropriate level of support, especially to the governing body.

■ The governance of the school:

- Following the retirement of the previous headteacher, the governors took decisive action to tackle what they rightly felt to be slow rates of improvement. They worked in cooperation with the local authority and The Howard Partnership Trust to accelerate the pace of change. Governors understand how well the school performs in comparison with other schools and that some teaching requires improvement. They have full confidence in current school leaders and hold them to account for the performance of the school. They know that only the best teaching is rewarded and that underperformance is not tolerated. They have reviewed their own practice to effectively provide the right balance of support and challenge to school leaders. They check the school budget carefully and know that the additional funding has been used effectively to raise the attainment of disadvantaged youngsters. Governors ensure they meet all statutory responsibilities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils **are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They have positive attitudes to learning, and they behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. They respect staff and respond to the high expectations staff set for their behaviour. Very occasionally, when the pace of the lesson slows, they become fidgety and start to chat among themselves. This is why behaviour is good rather than outstanding.
- Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their attendance, which has improved rapidly and is above average. School records show very few incidents relating to poor behaviour and there have been no

exclusions in recent years.

- Pupils are friendly and courteous at all times. They get on very well together in class and in the playground. They listen to each other in class and they readily help each other when needed. Older pupils enjoy helping younger ones at lunchtimes.
- Lunchtimes are happy occasions where pupils behave well, chatting together over lunch. The quality of food on offer is of a high standard and pupils return to class ready to learn.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All measures to keep staff and pupils safe comply with statutory requirements. Risk assessments are carried out for both in-school and off-site activities. All staff have been trained to identify and support the needs of pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable.
- Pupils know about different forms of bullying, including that relating to the use of computers. They are adamant that it does not occur, and staff and parents agree. Pupils say that they are treated equally and fairly, and that discrimination on any grounds is not tolerated. The pupils respond well to the positive ethos of care and support within the school community.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable across the school. While an increasing proportion is good, it requires improvement because there is not enough to secure good progress for pupils.
- Pupils enjoy learning and they have very positive attitudes to work. They listen well and answer teachers' questions enthusiastically. Classroom talk, for example, is a strong feature, and this helps pupils to share their ideas and develop their learning. However, teachers do not always challenge more-able pupils by asking harder questions to deepen their understanding.
- The quality of teachers' marking has improved. Teachers provide guidance to pupils about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work. However, they do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to respond to their comments by correcting and improving their work. Consequently, the pupils repeat the same mistakes.
- The support provided for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has improved and so they make good progress. Teaching assistants have been subject to a review of the way in which they work and they now provide more effective support to individuals and groups.
- Most teachers have good subject knowledge and they use this to plan learning that builds on what pupils already know and understand. Occasionally, they miss learning opportunities, for example to demonstrate to pupils the specific skills they want them to learn, and so pupils' progress slows.
- Most teachers use assessment information to check pupils' progress in lessons and this helps to increase the pace of learning. However, there are times when they do not act on this information quickly enough and pupils are provided with work that is too easy or too hard for them.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement. Although pupils reach standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics, they do not make consistently good progress from year to year. This is because there has been a legacy of weaker teaching that current leaders have begun to address.
- The most-able pupils are not always given work that challenges them to work hard and this slows their progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the effective support they are given both individually and in small groups. Improved systems to check their progress have been introduced and so teachers are better able to provide work that is at the right level for them.
- Historically, pupils eligible for additional funding have not done as well as other pupils. However, new leaders have made better use of the additional funding by providing specialist teaching for these pupils. In the national tests in 2014, they were about one term behind other pupils in reading and mathematics, and they were at a similar level in writing. This shows a rapidly improving picture as the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils has almost closed.
- The teaching of writing has improved and this has led to greater progress for pupils at the end of Year 6. However, across the school, pupils do not all write fluently and confidently. This is because they are not always shown high-quality books and written texts to illustrate how authors use different sentence

structures and interesting vocabulary to enhance their writing. Consequently, pupils do not always understand how to improve their own writing. Additionally, some pupils have not developed a secure grasp of spelling, punctuation and a neat, legible style of handwriting.

- Although reading is given a high priority within school, previous underachievement means that some pupils lack the necessary confidence and skills to read with full understanding. Pupils in Year 6 say they enjoy reading and read regularly in school both for pleasure and to find information. In Year 2, pupils use their knowledge of sounds and letters (phonics) to read unfamiliar words. However, some pupils have books that are too easy for them.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and now make better progress across the school than in previous years. They develop basic skills, which they use accurately to solve real-life problems. There are still too few occasions when they use mathematics while learning other subjects and this prevents them from progressing more quickly.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- The new leader knows what needs to be done and has plans in place to improve both teaching and pupils' achievement, but these have not had time to have an impact on children's learning and development.
- Children settle quickly because staff welcome them into a safe and secure environment. They get on well together, sharing and taking turns while working and playing. They are curious and were fascinated to discover a world of mini-beasts underneath a box in the garden area. This contributed well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Most children have skills broadly as expected for their age when they start school. They do not all progress as quickly as they should because there are times when adults do not intervene frequently enough to develop their learning.
- Occasionally, staff do not provide enough opportunities for children to select their own activities and this prevents them from developing perseverance, resilience and the ability to work by themselves.
- Children work and play indoors as well as outside. During the inspection, one group were making a water chute from pipes and tyres, and explored the different rates that water flowed down the pipes. This helped them to understand very simple principles of gravity.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124951
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	449028

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Louisa Winter
Headteacher	Jonathan Roddick (Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2012
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