

St Lawrence's Church of England Primary School

School Hill, Westbury-sub-Mendip, Wells, Somerset BA5 1HL

Inspection dates

28–29 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has built a climate of collaboration across the federation, which has widened opportunities for pupils. This collaboration has also contributed positively to improving teaching and the quality of the curriculum.
- Leaders at all levels have a clear understanding of the school's strengths. Their plans for improvement accurately target areas in need of further development.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers' specialist skills are used well. As a result, pupils make good progress across the curriculum, particularly in science and technology.
- Pupils, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged, are making rapid progress in writing. Teachers have raised their expectations of what all pupils can achieve.
- Pupils read frequently and fluently. However, teachers are not encouraging pupils to read widely enough to reach the higher standard of which some are capable.
- Strong teaching enables pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make rapid progress.
- Governors are strongly involved in the life of the school. They are well informed about pupils' learning and hold leaders to account for pupils' achievement.
- Pupils show great commitment to their learning, behave well and work hard. They enjoy the wider sporting opportunities that are now available to them.
- Calculation skills are taught consistently well. However, some pupils do not achieve the standards they are capable of in mathematics because they are given too few opportunities to apply their mathematical skills.
- Everyone who works at the school ensures that pupils are kept safe. Parents value the care their children are given and the warm relationships that help children to flourish.
- Teaching in the early years requires improvement. Planning and assessment are not precise enough to ensure that children make sufficient progress in writing and number.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop teaching and assessment in the early years by teachers:
 - assessing children’s skills in writing more precisely, and planning tasks which move children on securely to the next stage of their development
 - building children’s skills in using number through activities which challenge children’s thinking, particularly for the most able.
- Increase the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards in reading and mathematics by:
 - teachers more systematically guiding pupils in their choice of books so that all pupils read widely
 - leaders ensuring that the school’s approach to consolidating and practising skills of comprehension is fully implemented
 - teachers strengthening pupils’ mathematical knowledge by enabling them to solve problems and explain their thinking.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership and has built a cohesive and effective team across the federation of the two schools. Staff are proud to be working in the school.
- Since the previous inspection, classes have been restructured to take account of varying pupil numbers, year on year. During this time of change, partnership working across the federation and within other strong professional networks has enabled the school to continue to improve. There is now a strong model of leadership to take the school forward.
- Senior and subject leaders have skills and knowledge which enable them to build secure improvements to the quality of teaching and the curriculum. Leaders are outward-looking and use advice and support effectively to research and implement the best practice. For example, they have worked with local authority advisers to improve the quality of teaching in writing and there has been a subsequent rapid improvement in pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders' evaluation of pupils' achievement is accurate. They acknowledge that more pupils should be reaching higher standards in reading and mathematics. Improvement plans show that actions have been well chosen and are being implemented effectively to achieve this. Recent improvements to the curriculum and teaching are beginning to deepen pupils' learning but leaders recognise that the best practice is not fully implemented across the school.
- All leaders evaluate the performance of the school by regularly reviewing pupils' workbooks and assessment information with teachers. The headteacher makes regular checks on the quality of teaching and her feedback to teachers is incisive, professional and swiftly acted on.
- The special needs leader is highly effective. She expertly assesses the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and monitors the support they get. This happens through regular checks on their progress in class as well as in their well-designed programmes. As a result, funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is used well and their achievement is good.
- Leaders are committed to ensuring that all pupils have equality of opportunity and ensure that additional support is provided where needed. The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively and this small group of pupils achieve well.
- The quality of the curriculum for English and mathematics has improved significantly over the past year. Pupils receive a well-rounded experience in science, technology and religious education in particular. For example, pupils regularly carry out practical experiments and develop good skills of scientific enquiry. During the inspection, pupils were seen to use their understanding of mechanics to design a model of a fairground ride. The curriculum design for music and art is currently under review but, over time, pupils are given access to the national curriculum programmes of study.

- Parents value the broad range of after-school clubs which extend the curriculum. Leaders use the primary physical education and sport funding effectively to extend pupils' access to different activities. During the inspection, pupils talked enthusiastically about lessons in archery.
- Pupils, in their kindness to each other and their respect for others' beliefs, show their increasing understanding of British values. Leaders have recognised the importance of pupils learning about life in Britain which contrasts with their rural environment. Now more activities and residential visits take place, for example to British cities. Leaders have ensured that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported.

Governance

- Governors are enthusiastic and passionate about the school. They know the school well and effectively challenge and support leaders in a drive for continuous improvement.
- Governors bring a range of skills, experience and relevant knowledge to their role. They update their governance skills through regular training, including for safeguarding.
- Governors have supported school leaders in developing the federation as a key force for school improvement.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's performance information and a precise knowledge of the issues to be tackled. They update this knowledge regularly, in line with the school's assessment cycle, so that progress towards the school's targets can be tracked.
- All governors monitor the effectiveness of the school's action plans through regular and sharply focused school visits. Visit notes show that they understand their strategic role and measure improvement through the positive impact on pupils' progress.
- Governors are prudent in their management of school funding, and the additional funds to promote the achievement of disadvantaged pupils are used well.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff are committed to keeping pupils safe. Staff are confident in reporting concerns and their knowledge of pupils as individuals contributes to the school's culture of vigilance.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding training is up to date and covers all possible threats to pupils' safety. Equally, policies and procedures for supporting pupils' medical needs are of a high quality and implemented consistently well by all staff.
- Leaders conscientiously check on the suitability of staff and volunteers to work in school. Recent improvements have now ensured that all policies and procedures are robust.
- Teachers and governors meet regularly with pupils to develop ways of keeping pupils safe online. As a result, pupils are aware of the activities which could place them at risk and can explain the strategies they use to keep themselves safe.

- Pupils and parents are confident that the school is a safe place. Pupils value the school's actions to maintain the security of the site but recognise that they help to keep themselves safe with good behaviour and kindness to each other.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- In response to the high expectations of the headteacher, the quality of teaching is good and is continuing to improve. As a result, pupils, including those few who are disadvantaged, are making consistently rapid progress across the school.
- Teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve and now, for example, guide pupils to include the expected level of punctuation and sentence complexity in all their writing. Teachers challenge the most able pupils to include features in their writing which reflect greater depth. The teaching of spelling and handwriting has recently been improved to take account of the greater challenge of the curriculum. As a result, pupils more consistently join their handwriting and can edit their work to correct spelling errors.
- Leaders have improved the teaching of reading significantly over the past year. Teachers teach phonic skills well and develop pupils as fluent readers. An improved programme for systematically developing pupils' skills of comprehension is now used consistently well across the school. Currently, however, teachers do not give pupils opportunities to consolidate this learning independently. Equally, pupils are not receiving guidance on choosing challenging reading. As a result, some pupils are not making the progress they could towards reading at a higher standard.
- There is a consistent approach to the teaching of methods of calculation. Pupils work diligently and efficiently in mathematics lessons and check their own work for accuracy. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are given regular opportunities to apply their skills and mathematical understanding through challenging problems. The most able pupils are consequently working at greater depth. The leader for mathematics is supporting teachers effectively in implementing these opportunities for deeper learning in all classes.
- Teachers plan science lessons well which give pupils broad opportunities to build skills of scientific enquiry. Pupils write to record their experiments and apply their mathematical knowledge when they take measurements and record their findings.
- All staff question pupils well. In technology lessons, for example, teachers challenge pupils to think about their designs and this prompts pupils to consider changes and improvements to their models.
- Teachers frequently give pupils opportunities to work together on cooperative projects. Consequently, pupils have particularly good skills in reflecting on their learning and discussing their work productively with their classmates. They are able to correct mistakes themselves and improve their work.
- Teachers meet frequently with leaders to check on assessments of pupils' work to ensure that they are accurate. At these meetings, adjustments are made to teaching planned for individual pupils if there is any chance that they may be falling behind.

- Teaching assistants give consistently good support to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and ensure that they have access to the whole age-appropriate curriculum. They work closely with the leader for special educational needs to develop pupils' English and mathematical skills through well-structured programmes.
- While there is a good range of reading material available to pupils, teachers do not provide sufficient guidance to help pupils develop their reading repertoire.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school places good relationships at the heart of all it does and pupils' welfare is given the highest priority. Pupils and parents rightly believe that the school is a caring community, offering what a parent described as 'superb pastoral care'.
- Pupils value opportunities to be successful as part of a team and are stimulated to do their best, for example, by contributing to points for their team. They are very positive about the wide opportunities they now have to take part in sport and activities beyond the school day.
- The school helps pupils to develop a strong moral code built around its Christian values. Older pupils are beginning to recognise injustice and their writing on the life of Martin Luther King shows an understanding of respect for the rights of individuals and for the principles of democracy.
- Pupils of all ages plan and work together to produce thoughtful and well-presented work. They are prepared to listen to others' ideas and show persistence when they meet challenges. Staff give pupils time to reflect on their learning and pupils value this individual attention and opportunity to improve their work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In the playground, pupils behave well and play together energetically and harmoniously across the age range. Older pupils show a sense of responsibility towards younger ones and act as buddies on particular 'buddy days'.
- Pupils understand what bullying means and they are sure that it rarely happens. If it does, they have confidence that teachers will quickly and effectively intervene. They say that their friends help them to feel safe and 'if you are sad, they cheer you up'.
- The behaviour policy is understood by pupils and routinely applied by teachers if it is needed. In class, pupils are quick to engage in the tasks they are given and any disruption is very rare. They have respectful relationships with all staff and are courteous and confident with visitors.
- Pupils attend school regularly and rates of attendance are usually a little above national levels.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- As at the time of the previous inspection, pupils continue to make good progress. However, there have been dips in the progress that pupils make in particular subjects. New leadership and improved teaching have dealt with this dip well and pupils' progress is once again consistently good from Years 1 to 6.
- Current pupils are making accelerated progress in writing. They compose interesting pieces of writing across the curriculum. With the better guidance that they are receiving from teachers, their writing is increasingly technically accurate and progress is strong for pupils of all abilities.
- In recent years, pupils in key stage 1 have achieved well and, in 2016, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 were above national levels. By the end of Year 6, while attainment levels overall were higher than national averages, relatively few pupils reached the higher standard. Improved teaching and adjustments to the curriculum are beginning to give pupils the skills to reach the higher standard.
- In mathematics, pupils make consistently good progress in their calculation skills. They work accurately and use efficient methods to reach their answers. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are deepening their mathematical skills through problem solving and explaining their thinking. This is leading to better progress across the mathematics curriculum, particularly for the most able pupils. In other year groups, pupils have not had these opportunities frequently enough to show the same rate of progress.
- Pupils securely acquire phonic skills in the early years and across Year 1. They go on quickly to become competent, fluent and eager readers. In discussion with teachers, pupils show a good understanding of what they have read. However, pupils are not yet showing the depth of understanding necessary to reach a higher standard. This is because they do not always read books challenging enough for them. Systems to help pupils practise and consolidate the skills of comprehension are not fully embedded.
- Pupils develop good skills of scientific enquiry and work systematically to record their results and draw conclusions from their investigations. Pupils develop thoughtful designs in art and technology, and produce finished products that they are proud of. During the inspection, pupils in Years 3 and 4 chose harmonious colours and used careful cutting to produce a design based on the work of Henri Matisse.
- There are a very small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school and therefore no valid comparisons with national levels of achievement can be made. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of carefully designed programmes.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Teaching in the early years requires improvement because leaders do not ensure that teachers plan learning which systematically builds on children's starting points in writing and number.

- Almost all children start school with skills and understanding at least typical for their age. Currently, the progress children are making in writing and number does not match the good progress they are making in other aspects of the curriculum.
- Children get off to a good start in developing the early skills of writing. However, current work shows that too many have still not fully mastered accurate letter formation and are not yet confident to write even a few common high-frequency words. This is because teachers are not accurate in identifying each child's stage of development in writing to be able to plan activities that develop their skills.
- A few children start school with knowledge of number which is above that usually seen for their age. Teachers accurately assess children's understanding of number and record where children have demonstrated their knowledge in their play or conversation with adults. However, at times, teachers do not use this information to plan suitably challenging activities to consolidate and deepen the most able children's skills.
- Children start their Reception Year in a combined Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 class. Over time, most children reach a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year. Leaders and teachers recognise the additional challenges that the mixed key stage class has brought to maintaining good teaching. Staff from both schools in the federation have begun to work together to bring about the necessary adjustments to teaching to improve outcomes.
- The teaching of knowledge of the world is a strength of the setting. The recent topic of transport has enthused and engaged the children. Teachers planned activities that developed children's communication, social and physical skills. Children built complex models and planned role play around land and air transport.
- Children behave and cooperate very well in the supportive and encouraging environment created by the early years staff. For example, in dance sessions, children listen attentively to the teacher and prepare their movements with great care to devise dance sequences with their partner. Children concentrate well and maintain their interest in activities for extended periods of time. This level of concentration prepares children well for Year 1.
- The teaching of phonic skills is good and all children, including those who are disadvantaged, are making good progress. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that children's progress in reading does not slow. If necessary, they quickly intervene with extra support in order to hasten progress. Teachers work closely with parents to develop children's reading skills.

School details

Unique reference number	123779
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10025017

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catherine Greet
Headteacher	Rosie Thorner
Telephone number	01749 870 437
Website	www.priddyandstlawrences.co.uk
Email address	office@st-lawrences.somerset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 July 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- St Lawrence’s Church of England Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- St Lawrence’s is federated with Priddy Primary School under the Federation of Priddy and St Lawrence’s. The two schools share the same executive headteacher and governing body.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below average.

- The organisation of year groups by class has changed this year. Children now experience early years provision in a combined Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 class. The other pupils are taught in two mixed-year group classes across Years 3 to 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector, accompanied by the headteacher, observed pupils' learning in all classes. She also observed pupils when they were working with visiting experts as part of the school's 'Creative week'.
- The inspector looked at examples of pupils' work in a range of subjects and listened to pupils from Years 2, 3, 4 and 5 read.
- In addition, the inspector scrutinised information about pupils' recent and current progress as well as the school's evaluation of how well it is doing.
- The inspector also looked at records of monitoring of the quality of teaching and the plans leaders have to improve the school.
- Meetings were held with senior and subject leaders and with members of the governing body. The inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone.
- Information, policies and procedures for safeguarding and attendance were also scrutinised. The inspector met with a group of pupils and spoke to others during their lessons and on the playground.
- The 23 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered alongside 13 responses to the staff questionnaire and eight to the online pupil questionnaire. The inspector also spoke to parents informally.

Inspection team

Wendy Marriott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017