



St Lawrence's CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123779
LEA Somerset
Inspection number 281558
Inspection dates 24 November 2005 to 24 November 2005
Reporting inspector Ian Hancock RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Westbury-sub-Mendip
School category	Voluntary controlled		Wells
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Somerset BA5 1HL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01749 870437
Number on roll	76	Fax number	01749 870318
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Alistair Glanville
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2000	Headteacher	Miss Clare Rice

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

In this small school, almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and there is only a small proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. A new headteacher was appointed last year and has had to reduce staffing levels due to falling school roll.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school judges itself to be good. Inspection findings are this is a satisfactory school that provides sound value for money. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and governors are strongly committed to moving the school forward and have made a good start in raising standards and laying foundations for further improvement. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and all issues raised have been addressed. Provision for children in the reception class is good, helping them to progress well in their first year in school. In Years 1-6, pupils make satisfactory progress overall with significant improvement made since 2004. The average standards attained in most recent tests at the end of Key Stage 2 are an improvement but pupils are still capable of achieving better results. Mainly good teaching and positive management are pushing up standards but teaching is only satisfactory overall because of some weaknesses. In some lessons, the lack of challenge and match of work to individual needs holds back pupils' learning, particularly higher attainers. Pupils' personal development is good, they are happy, well cared for and love coming to school. They feel secure and valued and enjoy the imaginative way the school enriches the curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise standards in writing, mathematics and science.
- Ensure that pupils of different abilities, particularly higher attainers, are always challenged in lessons.
- Make more rigorous and consistent use of assessment to check that pupils are making sufficient progress.
- Give more responsibility to subject leaders to monitor the quality of teaching in order to raise standards more uniformly across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children start school with good basic skills. They achieve well in the Foundation Stage and by the end of the Reception Year, children's attainment is clearly above that found nationally. They are confident and happy and show good levels of independence for their age. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading and mathematics. Progress is good overall but less marked for more able pupils in writing. Progress has been less satisfactory for pupils in Key Stage 2. Test results in 2004 showed that pupils underachieved in mathematics and science as results were well below average. Results improved significantly in 2005 and standards were average in English, mathematics and science, although English test results were much higher in reading than in writing. Targets set for 2005 were mainly met but they were not challenging enough. Although the 2005 results showed that pupils were still not doing as well as they should at Key Stage 2, there is an improving trend. As a result of positive steps taken by management, evidence at the inspection showed a continuation of that upward trend. Progress is now satisfactory overall, including for pupils with learning difficulties. There is still, however, too great a variety in progress made depending on

the quality of teaching, particularly for higher attainers in some lessons. The school is taking appropriate action to ensure this improves.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school successfully promotes pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils are keen to learn and happy to come to school. They report that 'the school is good, lessons are fun and teachers are kind'. Rates of attendance are high and by Year 6 pupils are confident and eager learners taking pride in their work and the school. Pupils behave very well, work hard and are polite and courteous to visitors. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good but pupils' understanding and awareness of different cultures could be extended further. The school is an integral part of the community where pupils take part in a range of activities including putting on performances and willingly raising funds for those less fortunate than themselves. There is an active school council that helps pupils to make a positive contribution to school life and beyond. Their suggestions have led directly to many school improvements including the purchase of new play equipment. The school council also organised a written family quiz to raise money for a school in Sri Lanka. Children have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and they know what they need to do to stay safe. They talk confidently about how healthy food and exercise will help them to concentrate and do 'even better at school'. The pupils' self-confidence, good attitudes and positive social skills, including a keen awareness of the needs of others, stands them in good stead for their future economic well-being. Pupils can be enterprising too, as shown by a summer fete by Year 6 leavers where profits were donated to the school to purchase musical instruments.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There is much good teaching and learning but some is less effective and occasionally inadequate. The school is therefore accurate in its judgement that the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Where teaching is good both younger and older children in the same class progress equally well because of the teacher's high expectations, good preparation, and the increased attention being paid to improving writing skills. This means that, in the main, time is rarely wasted and pupils respond well. In contrast, there are lessons where pupils are not stretched enough and where pupils' concentration wanes. This is especially noticeable in mathematics and science where there is sometimes a lack of challenge for the more able pupils. The quality of assessment also varies and there are instances where information from assessment is not used well enough to check whether or not all pupils are making sufficient progress. Well trained and experienced teaching assistants give good support to pupils, including those with learning difficulties to ensure that they make at least satisfactory progress. They also contribute well to the wider life of the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Most teachers are successful in making learning fun by planning interesting and stimulating lessons, but the lack of challenge in some lessons detracts from the overall quality of the curriculum. Good progress has been made in the last year by updating planning in many subjects to make learning more meaningful to pupils. A particularly good feature of the curriculum is the way the school attempts to bring the curriculum alive and broaden pupils' experiences. Their immediate environment is tapped into and, for example, pupils have used fruit from the school orchard in making a food dish in lessons. All are encouraged to protect and preserve the environment through planting spring bulbs and the local Hawk and Owl Trust has helped in the building of bird boxes for trees in the school grounds. Wider issues are explored through a visit by a specialist 'insect man' and his talk on the importance of the rain forest. Older pupils speak positively about the residential visit to the outdoor centre at Kilve Court. A further strength of the curriculum is the good range of clubs, especially in sport, music and the arts, all of which have a positive impact on learning. Strong links with the secondary school have led to improvements in the provision of mathematics, science, information and communication (ICT) and physical education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Throughout the school, pupils are well cared for and they are constantly reminded by staff about the importance of adapting healthy lifestyles and staying safe. The school is very aware of the potential danger of roads near to the school and the importance of road safety is therefore given a high priority. Visits by the school nurse include talks on healthy hearts and hand washing. As a result, pupils' self-esteem is high, and they feel safe and have confidence in their teachers. Members of staff have a good knowledge of pupils' social and emotional needs and they generally provide good support and guidance. Child protection procedures are satisfactory and risk assessments are carried out conscientiously prior to any school visits. Parents are rightly pleased with the help children receive when they first start school and this is a key factor in the good progress they make in the reception year but similar progress has yet to show itself in later years in the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher provides a clear direction to the school. She has a perceptive understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. She realises that currently pupils' progress depends too much on the quality of teaching a year group receives. The headteacher has worked hard since her appointment to improve provision and standards with some success. Governors fully meet all their statutory responsibilities and under the guidance of the new headteacher are beginning to take a more proactive role in the strategic planning

and monitoring of the school. The constraints of the school building are well managed through some good use of outside premises and the school is bidding for better facilities. Good use has been made of test results and other data to identify areas for development such as writing in English and more investigations in mathematics, and subject leaders have been very much involved in guiding these improvements. However in other subjects, including science, there is less involvement by subject leaders. The headteacher has learned much from observing teachers in the classroom but subject leaders do not have a prominent enough role in monitoring the quality of teaching. A strength of the headteacher's leadership is the way she values all members of the community. Parents are regularly consulted about their views of the school and these are largely very positive. The school has the capacity to maintain its improvement because of the much better grounding pupils are receiving in the first years in the school, and the changes introduced elsewhere by the current headteacher.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

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

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

St Lawrence C of E Primary School Westbury-sub-Mendip Wells Somerset BA5 1HL

25 November 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work.

What we liked most about your school:

- You are kind and thoughtful, behave well and show good respect for others.
- There are lots of exciting activities for you to take part in, including visits and extra-curricular clubs.
- Your teachers and other adults help take good care of you and make sure that you feel safe and keep healthy.
- Your headteacher and governors are working hard to make your school even better.

What we think should be improved:

- We have asked your teachers to help you improve even more in writing, mathematics and science.
- We think that the work is sometimes not hard enough for some of you.

We hope you carry on helping your teachers and the adults in the school.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ian Hancock Lead Inspector