

St Lawrence CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126058
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	293451
Inspection dates	1–2 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Rowena Onions

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	412
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Joyce
Headteacher	Paul Dyer
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2005
School address	Trinity Road Hurstpierpoint Hassocks BN6 9UY
Telephone number	01273 833229
Fax number	01273 835796

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average school serves the large village of Hurstpierpoint and the surrounding area. Children enter the school with above average levels of knowledge and skills. The school has a below average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, but an average proportion with statements of special educational needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Lawrence provides an outstanding quality of education for its pupils. The school places great emphasis on helping pupils to develop a range of personal and educational skills that will stand them in good stead for the future. Pupils, from Reception up, are learning how to learn and how to enjoy their learning, and progress has accelerated as a result. Achievement is outstanding from Reception to Year 6. Over the last three years, pupils have left the school with well above average attainments in English, mathematics and science, and school development work has ensured that standards continue to rise. Pupils also achieve well in art, physical education and information and communication technology (ICT).

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils are thoughtful of each other, polite and articulate. They enjoy school and make efforts to benefit from being there. Pupils' social, moral and spiritual development is excellent, as are many elements of their cultural development. They do not, however, have a wide enough knowledge and understanding of multicultural Britain. Much work has gone into developing the curriculum to provide a vibrant programme that is playing its part in assisting the acceleration of progress. Physical education, along with very successful personal, social and health education, plays an important part in ensuring pupils know how to keep themselves happy, safe and well. Curricular provision in the Reception Year is outstandingly good. Pupils are appreciative of the work that is set for them. In the words of one pupil, 'It's fun being here. Nearly every day we learn something new or do something we couldn't do before'. The combination of these factors makes the curriculum outstanding.

Pupils' increased progress is underpinned by outstanding teaching. Successful development work has ensured a consistency in approach which means that key skills are systematically developed. Lessons are very well planned and thought is given to providing pupils with a varied diet in each lesson, successfully motivating them to work hard. Pupils are being assisted to develop skills of self-assessment through careful explanations of what they are learning in a lesson, but they are not always helped to know how to recognise that they have met this learning objective. The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding, ensuring that they are supported and guided both personally and educationally. Outstanding leadership and management have meant that improvements are well planned, executed and successfully maintained. The school knows itself well. It has come a huge way since its last inspection. Its outstanding track record in making improvements, together with the determination of the headteacher and staff to provide the best for the pupils, means there is excellent capacity for further improvement. Therefore, in accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer has serious weaknesses.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that, in each lesson, pupils know how to judge exactly whether they have met the learning objective they have been set.
- Extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of multicultural Great Britain.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils come to the school with the skills and knowledge generally expected of children of their age. By the time they leave in Year 6, standards are high. In the Reception classes, progress has accelerated over the last three years and is now outstanding, enabling the children to reach

well above average levels by the end of the year. This good start, together with work done to improve teaching and learning, has assisted the raising of standards in Year 2, which are currently high in all aspects of English, mathematics and science. Standards in Year 6 have been rising steadily and the progress made over Years 2 to 6 placed the school in the top 20% of schools nationally in 2006. Current work shows that the present Year 6 pupils have made even better progress. Achievement in mathematics and science has been stronger than that in English, but work to improve provision in English has been very effective and achievement in all three subjects is now very strong. Pupils of differing prior attainment, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and the gifted and talented, are all helped to make excellent progress. The school realises the importance of achievement in other subjects and promotes this well. The numerous trophies and awards won in physical education demonstrate that standards are high. Pupils make good progress in art and ICT.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and concentrate well. Because they are self-disciplined, their behaviour is excellent both in lessons and around the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils show great care and consideration for each other and contribute to the school community in a wide variety of ways. They have an excellent knowledge of society around the world but their awareness of life in multicultural Britain is more limited. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy eating and take advantage of the wide range of sporting activities. Their high standards in basic skills, together with their very good work ethic and teamwork, prepare them well for the next stage of their education. Pupils actively influence what happens in school through, for example, discussions in the school council and completing questionnaires. The level of attendance remains higher than the national average, but there is still room for improvement as some parents take their children on holiday in term-time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

A key feature of the outstanding teaching and learning in the school is the relationships that are developed between pupils and their teachers, which enable pupils to learn within an ordered and stimulating environment. Expectations are high and pupils try hard to live up to them. Teachers make lessons interesting and varied and this very successfully promotes an ethos where learning is seen by the pupils as 'fun'. New concepts are taught clearly and good opportunity is provided for pupils to practise what they have learned. Teaching assistants use their good skills well to support teachers in a variety of ways but they are particularly valuable in providing additional support for lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Teachers use assessment information well when they plan work for pupils, ensuring that activities are suitably challenging. They take care to ensure that pupils are aware of what it is they are learning, but are not always as good at helping pupils target effort or evaluate their learning through assisting them to know how to judge whether they have met the learning objective for the lesson.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school's rich curriculum provides very well for all pupils and is enriched by the teaching of French and an impressive range of visits, visitors and out-of-class activities. In addition to the strong focus given to teaching and using basic skills, and to making learning fun, teachers successfully make purposeful links between subjects to enhance pupils' understanding of what is being taught. In the Reception Year, children benefit from an excellent range of interesting and purposeful activities in all areas of learning. The enthusiasm with which pupils speak about creative aspects of the curriculum reflects the school's success in gaining a national ArtsMark award. A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education, together with the school's wide-ranging and successful participation in sporting events, gives pupils a very clear understanding of the need for safety, exercise and healthy eating.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Great care is taken of the pupils, who say they feel safe and that they know they will be assisted if they have a problem. The school has very good child protection procedures and a range of risk assessments that promote the safety of the pupils very well. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities have individual learning plans that identify clear targets to ensure they make very good progress and there are very effective links with a range of support services to the great benefit of these pupils.

The school has very good systems for monitoring pupils' progress. Ongoing assessment enables staff to rapidly pinpoint potential underachievement and to provide extra support. All pupils understand the targets set for them and know what they need to do to improve their work. Parents receive good guidance on how to help their children.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and direction for the work of the school. With very good support from the leadership team, he has implemented very effective strategies to measure school performance. Significant improvements have been made to the quality of teaching, curriculum provision, accommodation and resources. These have led to pupils' consistently high standards and levels of achievement, together with their outstanding personal development. The leadership team is successful in its quest to ensure that all pupils are fully included and helped to learn equally well. The commitment to achieve the school's aims is shared by all staff.

The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and where improvements can be made, although the very high standards it now holds for itself mean that its overall judgements of its own effectiveness are currently a little harsh. Planning for improvement is thorough and the development plan is an effective tool to move the school forward. Subject leaders join the headteacher and other senior staff in monitoring the quality of teaching. This enables such leaders to play a full part in managing improvement. Improved assessment procedures enable the school to monitor and track pupil performance, modify curriculum provision and to set challenging targets.

The role of governors has strengthened. They manage finances prudently, play an effective part in strategic planning, and are purposeful in their role of critical friends in challenging the school to do its best.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

4th May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Lawrence CofE Primary School, Hurstpierpoint, BN6 9UY

Mr Thelwell, Mr Elam and I really enjoyed our visit to your school and would like to thank you for all your help and friendly conversations. Like you, we think yours is a very special school that is giving you an outstanding education.

The things we particularly liked were:

- the way your headteacher and senior staff get you all, adults and children, to work together as a team to make your school better and better
- the very good progress that you are making in English, mathematics and science
- that you are taught in a high quality way
- the wide variety of activities that is available to help you to learn and for you to enjoy
- the care that adults in the school take of you
- the way you all get on so well together and enjoy your time in school
- that you know how to work hard and that you have found out that learning can be fun.

To make things even better, this is what we have asked your school to do now:

- Make sure that you know how to judge exactly whether you have met the learning objective you have been given in each lesson.
- See what more your teachers can do to help you to know about the way different people in the United Kingdom live.

Once again, thank you. We know that you will carry on helping all the adults to make sure your school continues to improve by working hard and doing your very best.

Yours sincerely

Rowena Onions Lead inspector