

St Lawrence Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124951
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315097
Inspection dates	11–12 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Lily Evans

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Roy Campbell
Headteacher	Mr David Gibbs
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2004
School address	Lower Road Effingham Leatherhead KT24 5JP
Telephone number	01372 452870
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small school in the heart of the village community close to the town of Leatherhead. Pupils join Reception in the year of their fifth birthday. The proportion of pupils with speech and language and moderate learning difficulties is below average but the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is above average. Five percent of all pupils come from Traveller and Gypsy/ Romany families, which is well above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Lawrence is a good school where children are happy, safe and well cared for. The school has forged strong links with parents and the local community. The headteacher and staff are welcoming and approachable and encourage families to participate in school life. Since the last inspection, parents and governors have worked tirelessly to support the school in acquiring a new playing field and funding for a much needed extension is now near to completion.

Parents are pleased with the school and what it provides for their children. They feel it provides a good balance of work and play, homework and extra activities. The quality of teaching is good and teachers work hard to ensure pupils enjoy learning. Pupils behave well in and out of school. They have many opportunities to learn at first hand and develop independence skills. The strengths of the good curriculum derive from a rich diet of residential and day visits, visitors and themed weeks. During the inspection, all year groups gained knowledge and understanding of the lifestyles of Traveller and Gypsy/ Romany families by participating in workshops about their cultures. Pupils are well aware of the importance of healthy living through diet and exercise as the school is working towards the Healthy Schools Award.

Standards from entry to Year 1 to the end of Year 6 are above average. Children of all backgrounds and abilities make good progress in the Foundation Stage from their starting points. By the time pupils enter Year 1 they have progressed well and are at the expected levels in reading, writing and numeracy, a few pupils working securely within the early stages of the National Curriculum. By the end of Year 2, teachers' assessments show that standards are consistently above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has increased the proportions of pupils reaching the higher level in reading (this is one level above that expected for Year 2) over the last year. By the end of Year 6, standards are well above average in English, and above average in science and mathematics. In Years 3 to 6, the pupils continue to make good progress in English but they make slower progress in mathematics although this is satisfactory. For several reasons, work to address and accelerate pupils' development of numeracy skills is at an early stage. In Year 6, teacher assessment shows that progress has improved slightly on last year. It remains overall satisfactory, with a likely increase in the proportion reaching the higher level 5 (which is one level above that expected for Year 6). Most pupils are on course to reach more challenging targets.

Throughout the school, teachers have clear learning objectives for lessons and they review them with pupils at the end of each lesson. In Years 3 to 6, teachers and pupils set individual targets such as learning tables or using capital letters and full stops in mathematics and writing. Because these targets are kept separately in their target books pupils often forget what they are. Teachers rarely refer to them in marking work. Consequently, pupils are unaware of how to reach the next level in their work.

The headteacher and two managers have a clear vision for the school. They know its strengths and areas for development. As a team they have the determination to bring about changes and therefore have a good capacity to improve. They value the contributions of all staff by recognising and encouraging them to share their talents and expertise with others. The school assesses pupils extensively, tracks and collects data on their standards and progress reached each term. The presentation of this data lacks uniformity and clarity, making it difficult to determine the progress of individuals over time and against their achievement targets.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Reception children have fun learning through well-planned play activities which enable them to make good progress. The children start school with skills and abilities that are in line with those expected for their age. However, this varies each year as an increasing number of children are joining the school with moderate learning difficulties, especially in language and communication. By the time they enter Year 1, they are at broadly expected levels for their age in reading, writing and number. Children of higher abilities are able to identify rhyming words and to write simple sentences whilst lower attainers can write legible words. Their curriculum ensures they have stimulating first hand experiences that promote enquiry and builds confidence.

The quality of learning is good because teachers plan lessons thoroughly, concentrating effectively on encouraging speaking and listening skills. For example, they practise using prepositions to describe the positions of dolls and furniture. In this well managed department, teachers track progress carefully and ensure a smooth transition to Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers and pupils use individual learning targets effectively to plan and mark work so that pupils know what they need to do to move on to the next step in their learning.
- Create a more effective whole school system for displaying assessment and tracking information that is easy to use in order to enable quick identification of the progress of individuals.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils progress well from expected levels on entry to Year 1 to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average by the end of Year 2. Even though standards are above those expected in mathematics, there are proportionally more pupils with learning difficulties compared to last year when standards were high. Through a range of strategies, teachers have increased the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in reading to match the high standards reached last year in writing and mathematics. Since the last inspection, in Years 3 to 6 standards in science have improved from below to above average. The impact of the school's initiative to improve standards in mathematics has been hampered by midyear staff changes which have delayed staff training and the adoption of the new curriculum for mathematics. Pupils of all backgrounds, including those from Traveller and Gypsy/ Romany families and pupils on the register of special educational needs, make good rates of progress and a few make exceptional gains in their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school because, as one child said, 'St Lawrence is cosy and friendly.' Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, are polite and behave well. They like learning through experiments and practical activities. Membership of the school choir adds to pupils' enjoyment. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They understand right from wrong. Relationships are good and pupils feel safe and secure in school. They report very little bullying and readily speak to staff if they have a problem. They say swift action is taken to

resolve any incidents. Pupils understand healthy lifestyles and, during the inspection, many were seen enjoying eating the fruit contained in their packed lunches. They have good links locally and with a school in Uganda which helps their awareness of the wider community. They raise funds for charities because they say 'it is important to help those less fortunate than themselves.' They willingly take on responsibilities such as school council or as a member of the 'Green Tribe' they are involved planting the gardens areas belonging to each class. Year 6 pupils rise to personal challenges when working towards the Young Citizens Awards.

Attendance is broadly average. However, too many parents take children out of school for holidays and important work is missed. Thanks to their good basic and social skills, pupils are well prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and create calm and purposeful working environments. They plan interesting activities and, as a result, pupils apply themselves well and generally make good gains in their learning. Teachers place a strong emphasis on learning key vocabulary associated with each subject and encourage pupils to use this when talking and answering questions. They mostly use resources, demonstration and discussion effectively to help pupils learn and to ensure understanding.

Although they plan tasks at different levels of difficulty, at times, for example, in mathematics in Years 3 to 6, they are mismatched to individuals' levels of understanding. This is because teachers are omitting to use information from pupils' learning targets to plan tasks that fully meet their needs and capabilities. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and most interact well with the pupils to help them extend their learning. They provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum offers a good balance of basic skills, personal development, creative and practical activities. Visitors and visits, clubs and community events link well to pupils' learning and extend their interests and enjoyment. In Years 1 and 2, the staff have improved the range of books available to encourage pupils to read more widely. This has been successful in helping more pupils to reach higher levels in reading and foster a love of reading. They have introduced a similar drive to improve the curriculum for mathematics and the mathematical skills of older pupils with limited impact because of very recent staff changes.

Special themed weeks give pupils opportunities to try out and extend their skills in different contexts. For example, 'Wow Week' provided the chance for pupils to take part in an exciting programme of dance, drama, art and singing. However, the school recognises that there are insufficient links made between subjects so that pupils do not have the confidence to apply the skills learned in one subject to other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school is a caring community where pupils' welfare is an important priority and pupils feel secure and happy. Regular risk assessments are carried out and child protection procedures are in place. All staff have received training for child protection. Arrangements for vetting staff are secure. Good support from teaching assistants and good supervision at break and lunchtimes help contribute to the safe and happy ethos of the school. The school uses good links with outside agencies, such as the local partnership of schools, to enhance support such as with the Travellers and Gypsy/Romany families.

Academic care, guidance and support are not yet good because pupils are not given clear enough academic guidance on what exactly they need to do to improve their work. Although pupils have targets for writing and mathematics they do not remember what they are, and teachers' marking of work does not give them a clear indication of how best to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Since the last inspection the school has made many improvements including raising standards in science, improving the monitoring of teaching and learning, extending the school buildings and outside areas. Coordinators' roles are clear and they are involved in observing teaching and in reviewing planning. The headteacher also monitors the quality of teaching and learning and identifies how teachers can improve pupils' progress. He recognises that teachers' next steps in their professional development as observing aspects of each others teaching. The headteacher makes best use of the expertise of specialists on the staff for sharing expertise such as music and physical education. Learning support assistants have appropriate training from the manager responsible for pupils with special educational needs and their contributions are valued. Although the school is collecting tracking data, it is underused, for example, as a tool for planning the learning of individuals. Because it is collected and presented in different ways by teachers it is often difficult to extract information that will help to evaluate the progress pupils make and set challenging targets.

As the school accommodation is cramped, the long awaited extension due for completion in September will provide a much needed kitchen, hall and further classroom. Overall governors give good support to the school in many practical ways and ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

25 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Lawrence Primary School, Leatherhead, KT24 5JP

I would like to thank you all for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed seeing you working hard in your lessons, and enjoyed talking with you about your work. We were especially interested to join you at the 'Travellers, Gypsies and Romany' workshop.

- We think St Lawrence is a good school and that you make good progress in your learning because your teachers make lessons interesting and fun.
- We agree with you that it is a cosy and friendly place to be and we think that you behave well.
- We agree with you that the visits and visitors as well as clubs at your school are some of the best features.
- It is clear to us that you really understand about healthy living and we noticed you had lots of fruit in your packed lunches.
- We believe your school helps you to prepare well for your next stage in your education.
- We think that your teachers could give you more help with setting targets for each of you to make progress especially in writing and mathematics. They could tell you in their marking how you are progressing towards your targets.
- We think your headteacher and teachers could keep clearer records of your progress so that they can see easily how well you are doing.

You could all help your teachers by trying to have good attendance so that you do not miss school. You could work hard to achieve the targets they set for you.

With best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Lily Evans

Lead Inspector