

St Laurence CofE Primary School

Jockeyfield, Ludlow, SY8 1TP

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Teaching ranges from outstanding to inadequate which results in uneven progress throughout the school.
- Teaching does not take enough account of pupils' prior knowledge and skills to move them on to the next steps in their learning.
- Marking and feedback are not used well enough to involve all pupils in their learning.
- Senior leaders do not check regularly enough that all pupils are making sufficient progress term-by-term and the monitoring of the work in pupils' books is too infrequent.
- Observations of teaching do not focus sufficiently on the impact of teaching on learning.
- Governors are supportive but do not have enough information to enable them fulfil their role of challenging the leadership about variations in pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Children get a good start to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where achievement is good.
- Pupils are happy and well looked after. They feel safe, typically behave well and have positive attitudes towards learning.
- Attendance is above average.
- Pupils have clear values of honesty and integrity. They are respectful of each other and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Senior leaders have responded purposefully to address recent dips in performance and the school is improving.
- Almost all parents and carers are pleased with the quality of education the school provides.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons of which three were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, two members of the governing body, middle managers, parents and groups of pupils.
- A telephone discussion took place between the local authority’s school improvement adviser and the lead inspector.
- Account was taken of the 33 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection as well as considering the responses by parents and carers to the school’s own website survey. Staff did not complete the Ofsted questionnaire on this inspection.
- A number of documents were analysed including the school development plan, its summary of self-evaluation, governors’ minutes, the school’s data on the current progress of pupils, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Lois Furness, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Terence Payne

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Laurence C of E is an average sized primary school where most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language is well below average.
- An average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. A below average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus and through a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided in a part-time Nursery class and a Reception class.
- Over the last two years there has been significant disruption to staffing.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all teaching is at least good and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - checking that teachers use assessment information to plan exactly the right activities which will accelerate the learning of all pupils
 - raising teachers' expectations of the quality and the quantity of pupils' work and ensuring that they support pupils application of basic skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar in subjects such as science, history and geography
 - ensuring that marking provides pupils with clear guidance about the strengths and areas to improve in their work and giving them time to respond to the comments made.
- Strengthen monitoring and evaluating procedures by:
 - refining the existing target and tracking systems to check pupils' progress in all year groups each term
 - establishing a rigorous cycle of monitoring which includes an evaluation of teachers' planning, a review of the quality of work in pupils' books and an analysis of termly assessment information so that pupils' progress can be constantly evaluated
 - ensuring that lesson observations focus on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress
 - sharing detailed data on pupils' attainment and progress and the quality of teaching more regularly with the governing body to improve their ability to hold the school to account.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery) with skills and abilities that broadly match those expected for their age. As a result of good teaching, attainment on entry to Year 1 is above average reflecting the good progress children have made.
- This good progress is not always built upon well enough in Years 1 to 2 and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has fluctuated over the last three years, being above average in 2011 but broadly average in 2010 and 2012.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6 was average in 2012, having been above average in 2010. Although the proportion of pupils making expected progress in English was below national figures in 2012, the school's own data provides clear evidence that there is now an improving trend in achievement across the school. In mathematics, the proportion of pupils making expected progress has generally compared favourably with all schools nationally although it declined in 2012 to be below the national figure.
- Pupils' work shows that although the majority of teachers have high expectations which are improving achievement, this is not consistently the case in all classes. Clear progress in knowledge and skills is not evident in all pupils' books and some teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of work are not high enough.
- Children's early reading skills are developed appropriately and by the end of Year 1 a slightly above average proportion of pupils have a secure understanding of how to link together letters and the sounds they make to read simple words. By Year 6, pupils read widely and use research skills effectively in a range of topics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress similar to that of their peers. This is also the case for pupils who are learning English as an additional language, and those pupils who receive additional government funding. At times, the progress of these groups of pupils accelerates to good when they receive additional one-to-one support or work in small groups.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- There is not enough consistently good or outstanding teaching. Teaching has some strong features in almost all year groups, including good subject knowledge and good questioning skills. However, information about what pupils know already is not always used precisely enough to ensure that they make good progress and achieve well over time.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes teaching is consistently good. Teachers provide children with a wide range of interesting activities, which capture their imagination and provoke their curiosity. Staff ask probing questions and use children's responses effectively to promote further learning. Assessment information is used well in this key stage to ensure good achievement.
- In good lessons pupils listen carefully and are engaged in their learning. They welcome opportunities to work together and share ideas. This was seen in Year 5 when pupils eagerly identified the three-dimensional shapes they could see in a photograph of the New York skyline.
- In the weaker lessons, expectations of pupils are too low and the work given to them neither

interests nor challenges them. Simple spelling, grammar and punctuation errors are left uncorrected and at times worksheets are used unnecessarily.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, pupils who are learning English as an additional language, and those pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium often receive additional support. Some of this is good, as was seen in Year 3, when a teaching assistant worked with a small group of pupils during a writing session. On occasions, during whole-class activities, support staff are insufficiently utilised in maximising pupils' progress.
- Although marking is regular and positive comments are evident, especially in writing, its impact is variable. There are examples of good marking, but this does not consistently provide pupils with enough information to improve their progress or focus enough on their basic skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation. There is not always sufficient time given for pupils to respond to the comments made.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school provides a welcoming and friendly environment. Pupils are well-known and cared for as individuals and, in turn, show care and support for each other. They are polite, willing and helpful, and express pride in their school. Attendance is above average.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning and want to succeed. They approach tasks with interest and express enjoyment when successful as was seen in Year 4 when pupils effectively used words to describe a character's mood. In Year 6 also, pupils were justifiably proud of themselves when they accurately converted different units of measurement in a good mathematics lesson.
- The good behaviour of the vast majority of pupils, their respect for others, their courteous manners and the open views they express about other cultures and religions all indicate good levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. An additional adult has been recently employed to support the small number of younger pupils who have difficulty managing their behaviour and this is already proving effective.
- Most parents and carers think behaviour is good and that their children are kept safe. Pupils confirm that they feel safe in school knowing adults will always help them.
- Pupils are aware of most forms of bullying and know why it is wrong to be unkind to someone because of the way they look, their dress, or their culture. Pupils are also aware of how to stay safe while using the internet and can define various forms of bullying including racism and cyber-bullying.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The school's leaders including governors have accurately identified areas of weaknesses, taken action to address them and are now ensuring clear improvements in the achievement of pupils across the school. They are also starting to have an impact on the quality of teaching through more effective management of teaching and greater accountability of staff. This confirms that leadership has the capacity to improve provision and that it is determined to offer all pupils an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Observations of teaching, while now much more systematic, do not sufficiently focus on the impact of teaching on learning. The disruption to staffing over the last two years has slowed

significantly the progress of school improvement. However, a period of sustained stability is now providing a secure base for rapidly improving provision and more effective leadership and management.

- Parents have positive views of the school's work and a weekly newsletter ensures parents are kept fully aware of things that have happened in school and forthcoming events. Almost all parents say they would recommend this school to others and are particularly supportive of the quality of care their children receive.
- The existing tracking and target setting system provides a useful year-on-year analysis of pupils' attainment and progress. However it does not show progress on a termly basis so that any underachievement can be picked up immediately and actions implemented. Pupils are not set a termly target to ensure that an increasing number makes better than expected progress.
- The funding used to support pupils receiving the pupil premium has been identified and there is a good evaluation of its impact on improving progress for these pupils. This evaluation shows the good impact of intervention programmes and one-to-one support.
- Teaching programmes are suitably broad and balanced with good enrichment experiences. Pupils speak enthusiastically about activities such as visits to the forest school, swimming, netball, football, cross country, cycling and the school choir performing in Shrewsbury.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted through a wide range of visits and visitors to school backed up by careful attention to pupils' personal, social and health education. Good links with a school in Tanzania help to promote pupils' broad understanding of global differences.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is committed to seeing the school improve and governors are keen to access further training to support their own development
 - ensures systems to keep pupils safe and free from harm are effective and revised regularly
 - does not receive sufficiently detailed information of attainment, progress and the quality of teaching to hold senior leaders to account for the achievement of pupils.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for this school although the school improvement adviser visits the school termly to discuss self-evaluation and pupils' achievement.

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	123529
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	403533

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

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	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Duck
Headteacher	Kevin Bryant
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2008
Telephone number	01584 872766
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