

St Lawrence's RC Primary School

Headlam Street, Byker, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE6 2JX

Inspection dates

13–14 December 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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Under the strong and determined leadership of the headteacher, well supported by the skilled deputy headteacher, an ethos of high expectations has been created. Leaders are committed to eradicating anything that is second best and ambitious to improve further.
- Leaders' continuing ambition to eliminate underperformance and to provide the best teaching, outcomes and experiences for all pupils is translated into action, and this means the school is continuing to improve.
- Outcomes for pupils are good. Current pupils are making strong progress from their individual starting points. Key stage 1 pupils' skills and attainment are much improved since the previous inspection.
- Children in the early years make a solid start to their learning. They work happily and cooperatively together, making strong progress to reach standards that are broadly average by the time they leave the Reception class.
- As a result of consistently good teaching and assessment, pupils learn quickly and apply their skills across all subjects.
- Teachers usually match work accurately to pupils' abilities, but occasionally work can lack challenge, especially for the most able pupils. Only a small number are working at a greater depth of understanding at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils write often and in a range of subjects, but their skills in handwriting, spelling and presentation vary in quality.
- Leaders' monitoring of the quality of provision in English and mathematics is rigorous and detailed. Subject leaders' skills across the wider curriculum still require further development.
- Leaders' effective use of the pupil premium funding has resulted in the difference between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers diminishing rapidly, especially in key stage 1.
- Leaders' tracking of pupils' and groups of pupils' progress in English and mathematics requires further refinement. The assessment and tracking of progress in creative and foundation subjects is not well developed.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They have respect and care for each other, displaying good manners. Pupils' personal development and welfare, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding.
- Governors share the leaders' passion and ambition to improve the school further. They play a key role in the school's ongoing success and keep a sharp eye on actions being taken to ensure further improvements. They are very well informed, and know the school inside out.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing current tracking systems to ensure that the school has accurate information on the rates of progress made by individuals and groups of pupils in their learning in every year group
 - enhancing the skills of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision within their area of responsibility, including developing and embedding systems for tracking the progress of pupils in subject-specific skills across the curriculum.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that work is well matched to pupils' needs and abilities and provides suitable challenge for all, especially for the most able pupils
 - making sure that an increased proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are working at a greater depth in all subjects
 - continuing the drive to improve pupils' skills in handwriting, spelling and presentation.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The determined and resilient headteacher has been unwavering in his determination to eradicate any underperformance and ensure an excellent standard of education for pupils in this school. Well supported by an experienced and skilled deputy headteacher, he has put into place actions which are continuing to transform and improve the quality of teaching across the school, especially in key stage 1 and the early years.
- The headteacher's implacable determination that all pupils will achieve their full potential, regardless of any difficulties they face, is reflected in the high expectations that teachers have for their pupils and that pupils have for themselves. As a consequence, pupils are now making rapid progress and developing a confident approach to learning. There is an ambition and determination to improve all aspects of school life, including from leaders, teachers and dedicated, knowledgeable governors.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of what the school does well and what it needs to do to be even more successful. Procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of the school's performance through checking the quality of teaching are incisive and detailed in English and mathematics. The skills of other subject leaders across the wider curriculum need to be improved further for leaders to be able to rigorously monitor and evaluate the quality of provision. This includes the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress in creative and foundation subjects, which are currently being developed.
- Leaders' plans for further improvements reflect a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, with which inspectors concur. The school improvement plan is very detailed and carefully monitors the effect of planned actions on outcomes for pupils in their learning. Regular evaluation and the tracking of actions ensure that no time is wasted to drive further improvements.
- The school's curriculum is rich and balanced and reviewed regularly to ensure that it meets pupils' needs and interests. The curriculum is designed to make sure that it provides many varied opportunities for pupils to benefit from visitors to school, such as a company to demonstrate scientific investigations, or re-enactors of history. Visits are made out of school to places of historic and cultural importance such as the Laing Art Gallery or the Great North Museum. The curriculum is enhanced by a suitably wide range of after-school clubs such as the choir, ukulele club and many sports' clubs.
- Leaders are managing pupil premium spending effectively to provide targeted support for disadvantaged pupils. This support is regularly evaluated for its impact on pupils' learning, and amended or changed as a result. The positive impact of this support is seen through the improving progress made by current disadvantaged pupils across the school. However, differences still exist between their achievement and those of other pupils nationally with the same starting points. The school acknowledges that further work is required to accelerate this group of pupils' progress, and especially that of the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- The good leadership of the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has resulted in effective provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or

disabilities. Their needs are identified early and their good progress, often in small steps, is tracked accurately. The SEN funding is used very effectively by leaders.

- The physical education and sport funding for schools has been used exceptionally well to raise the profile of sport and encourage fitness and healthy lifestyles in pupils. Pupils benefit from high-quality lessons, including from a specialist teacher. Pupils engage regularly in sports' activities, both competitively and for fun. Effective links are made with local sporting organisations, such as when pupils played basketball during the interval in a Newcastle Eagle's professional match. The school hired Gateshead International Stadium's long-jump pit to experience a real-life competitive arena, going on to win the Newcastle-East Schools' Athletics championship. The new fixed 'outdoor gym' is used daily for exercise and fun, and is part of the daily life in school.
- The school receives targeted challenge and support from the local authority representative, including professional development opportunities, which has been very effective in driving forward improvements in school.

Governance of the school

- Governors bring a range of appropriate professional skills and experience to the school that enhance their effectiveness and impact. They share the passion and commitment of the headteacher and senior leaders and have effectively managed changes in staffing and leadership. Governors effectively question school leaders and hold them to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, as well as for pupils' outcomes.
- Governors make it their business to know about the work of the school and have an accurate and incisive view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have ensured, along with the headteacher and senior leaders, that the school's priorities are intrinsically embedded in the performance management of all adults. Governors participate in monitoring activities alongside senior leaders, such as analysing work in pupils' books and making short visits to classes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. The long-established culture of keeping pupils safe remains very evident. Leaders ensure that a culture of safeguarding is embedded among all staff and they leave no stone unturned in their duty to keep pupils safe.
- The school has a tangible ethos that is positive and caring, putting the welfare and well-being of each pupil at the heart of all that it does. This is clearly seen in the friendly and confident manner of the pupils in school. The curriculum supports pupils well in maintaining their own safety, including keeping themselves safe online.
- Policies, procedures and records are of extremely high quality. Staff training is thorough and up to date, including training to ensure that pupils are kept safe from the risk of extremism and online dangers. Registers of staff training are completed diligently. Staff have access to well-written policies and guidance and, as a result, have a very secure understanding of their individual responsibilities for safeguarding.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the school was previously inspected, and continues to improve. The impact of teaching on learning, including in reading, writing and mathematics, is reflected in the strong progress pupils now make in each year group.
- Lessons are usually lively and interesting, capturing pupils' imagination. For example in Year 2, the teacher's use of a visit to a farm and the pupils' love of books by the author Kim Lewis inspired them to write a well-structured letter to the author to ask her questions and to tell her about their favourite book.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to structure learning effectively. For example, pupils in Year 4 were encouraged to write a character description, using a character from the novel 'The Lion, the witch and the wardrobe' by C.S. Lewis. The teacher encouraged pupils to use similes, metaphors, alliteration, subheadings and figurative language to improve their work.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and stick closely to the school's behaviour policy. Very occasional low-level disruption is addressed quickly and effectively.
- Work is usually pitched well according to pupils' abilities, and teachers are skilled at adapting and changing plans based on ongoing daily assessments of how well pupils grasp learning. On some occasions, work does not provide sufficient challenge, especially for most-able and most-able disadvantaged pupils. Teachers are not yet adept at assessing subject-specific skills across all curriculum subjects, as systems are only developing and are not embedded.
- In mathematics, basic skills of number and mental calculation are taught daily and consolidated regularly, and applied in other areas of mathematics. For example, Year 6 pupils applied algebraic formulae such as $y=x+4$ or $y=x-3$ to different sets of data, before plotting results in all four quadrants on a graph. Pupils used their skills to predict and reason whether the plotted line would be straight.
- Pupils write with enthusiasm and imagination, often because their writing is linked to the topic they are studying. Year 3 pupils enjoyed retelling the end of the fairy story 'Hansel and Gretel' using adventurous vocabulary such as 'ferocious' and 'anxious'. Although pupils have numerous opportunities to undertake extended writing tasks in English and in other subjects, many pupils' skills in handwriting, spelling and presentation require further development.
- As a result of the rigorous and systematic teaching of phonics, children are getting off to a fast start in their reading. In 2017, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening was above that found nationally for a second year. Pupils are quickly developing a love of reading. Key stage 1 pupils were thrilled to read to the teddy bear that each was given to take home.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well, and most are very skilled at giving timely help and support to individuals and groups of pupils. They work well as part of the teaching team and play an important part in pupils' progress in their learning.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Staff work tirelessly to ensure that all pupils are safe and well cared for. Adults work closely with pupils and families in a supportive and sensitive manner, led by the parental support worker. Pupils said that they feel extremely safe in school.
- Pupils show high levels of respect and care for each other, valuing their classmates' opinions and working cooperatively in lessons. The school is, rightly, proud that its motto of 'kindness, tolerance and respect' is threaded through all aspects of its work.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are largely exemplary, and most are very keen to succeed and to produce their very best work. They grow in confidence during their time in school, acquiring an assured and resilient approach to developing their own learning. They take their roles of responsibility in the school community very seriously and are proud to be elected as school councillors.
- Pupils thrive in the well-ordered and positive school environment. Displays are of good quality, bright and attractive and support learning well. The school works very effectively to ensure that pupils' physical and emotional well-being are valued and developed. Pupils' aspirations are raised by visits from former pupils to discuss their careers since leaving school, and pupils from Year 6 recently visited the University of Newcastle.
- Pupils reported that they feel safe at all times, including when working online. Pupils' knowledge of keeping themselves safe outside school is very strong. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and development are excellent. Pupils talked convincingly to an inspector about how they learned about people and their faith from other countries and cultures. They were proud to raise money to help children from a village in Malawi by buying them a pencil case and equipment, without which they could not attend school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The strong relationships that are nurtured in school ensure that pupils usually conduct themselves well in lessons and around school. Pupils are polite and have good manners. Playtimes are harmonious occasions when pupils play happily together and no-one is left out.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and mostly work conscientiously. Incidents of low-level disruption are rare. Behaviour systems encourage positive attitudes to learning, and the few incidents of misbehaviour are swiftly and deftly addressed.
- The school has worked extremely hard to eradicate low rates of attendance, informing parents of the potential damage done to pupils' education by missing school. Despite the raft of strategies and incentives to improve attendance, including the employment

of an attendance officer, rates of attendance are stubbornly below average, and a small number of pupils are still persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' progress and attainment in key stage 2 have remained strong since the school was previously inspected, and improved in key stage 1 and the early years. Evidence from provisional 2017 statutory assessment data, work in pupils' books and the school's own tracking data show clearly that current pupils are making consistently strong progress in English and mathematics, as well as in some other subjects across the curriculum, including science.
- Pupils are now making consistently strong progress across Years 1 and 2. The proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2017 provisional Year 2 assessment data was above national figures in writing and reading, and in line in mathematics. A slightly smaller proportion of pupils than that found nationally were working at a greater depth of understanding in writing and mathematics, but this does not include the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils make a solid start in their early reading skills, and a very large majority of pupils achieved well in the 2016 and 2017 national phonics screening check. The proportion who met the standard in both Years 1 and 2 was above that found nationally.
- Progress is continuing to accelerate across key stage 2. In the 2017 national assessments, provisional data shows that the proportion of Year 6 pupils who met the expected standard was in line with that found nationally in mathematics and writing, and above in reading. Current pupils are making strong progress in their learning from their individual starting points in most year groups, and a much larger proportion work at expected standards for their age across the school.
- The progress of the current most-able and most-able disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 is improving, and has accelerated since the start of the school year. The proportion of pupils achieving a high score or working at a greater depth of understanding in 2017 is below that found nationally, including of the most able disadvantaged pupils. The proportion of pupils currently working at such a greater depth is not as high as it could be, because the work set is not consistently challenging for those pupils capable of having their understanding stretched further.
- As a result of the effective and strategic use of the pupil premium funding, current disadvantaged pupils in each year group make good progress in English and mathematics. Over time, there has been a difference between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally, but this is now diminishing quickly.
- The school is quick to identify any pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Staff make effective provision for these pupils through activities which are well matched to their individual needs and abilities. This includes pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Where needed, detailed individual support plans are in place, many including a focus on pupils' reading fluency. As a result, the progress made by these pupils is largely good from their individual starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- Provision in the early years has improved since the previous inspection. Leaders have taken every opportunity to undertake further professional development and visit other outstanding early years settings. Improvements are impacting on the rates of progress children make in their learning.
- Children are eager to explore and learn. They enjoy the opportunities provided to investigate and they learn happily together. Behaviour is generally good and most children, although not all, are happy to share and take turns. Leaders are becoming increasingly skilled in developing areas of provision to maximise learning opportunities for all children, based on accurate and ongoing online assessments.
- The vast majority of children start the early years with skills and knowledge which are below those typical for their age, especially in reading and writing. As a result of good teaching and provision, careful observation and good questioning, most children make good progress and are well prepared to start Year 1. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development is now just above average.
- Adults observe children carefully and build on their interests. They carefully support children's learning through prompts and good questioning and are developing in their skills when working alongside children during imaginative and creative play sessions.
- Activities and resources are chosen well to develop children's vocabulary and enrich their experiences. Children developed in their understanding of 2-D shapes by choosing to make jam sandwiches in the shape of a square, circle or triangle using a cutter. The quality of the outdoor learning environment has improved significantly and, when allowed to go outside, children are engaged and enthused by the activities and experiences available.
- Basic skills in reading, writing and number are taught very effectively. In the sessions observed, children were able to count single-digit numbers when setting out a series of numbered tree-trunk slices. Reception children accurately used sounds to start each word when writing Christmas words or a letter to Santa.
- The early years leader understands the learning needs of young children and leads an effective team of adults who share the same passion and drive to see young children thrive. She has a clear understanding of the strengths in the early years and has identified key areas for improvement. Planned actions do not yet have any information regarding their impact or details of ongoing evaluations.
- Safeguarding practices in the early years are highly effective. Children are taught how to manage risks from an early age, and the very effective safeguarding culture that permeates the school is equally apparent in the early years. There are no material breaches of statutory welfare requirements; children are safe and well supported. Judging by the confidence and fun with which children play and learn, children clearly feel very safe, secure and happy.

School details

Unique reference number	108509
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10036554

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Cunningham
Headteacher	Paul Brown
Telephone number	01912 659881
Website	www.stlawrencesprimary.org.uk
Email address	admin@stlawrences.newcastle.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 December 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as their first language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for support from the pupil premium and the proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school's part-time Nursery operates in the morning and afternoon for three days every week. Reception children attend on a full-time basis every day.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons, including lessons observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, an inspector listened to some pupils from Years 1 and 2 read and reviewed a sample of pupils' work, alongside the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with governors, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, senior leaders and members of the teaching staff. Inspectors also met the school administrative staff and a representative of the local authority. They also held meetings with a group of pupils from the school.
- Inspectors viewed a range of documents, including information relating to pupils' achievements over time, the school's data on recent and current progress of pupils and the school's view on how well it is doing. Inspectors also reviewed the school improvement plan, documents relating to performance management and safeguarding and records of behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 24 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The school's website was also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Fiona Dixon

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 2018