

Inspection of Lawford Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

The Avenue, Lawford, Manningtree, Essex CO11 2FR

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 March 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils really enjoy attending Lawford Primary School. There is a strong community ethos between everyone who is part of this school. Reception children have Year 6 'buddies' who look out for them at playtimes; all pupils have a reading buddy. Parents value this community spirit too.

They play in mixed-age year groups. There is lots to do at playtimes, such as pogoing, skipping, bouncing on space hoppers and playing football. There are quieter activities such as colouring, and younger pupils also enjoy building towers with the construction kit.

Pupils are interested in what they are learning about. They have access to a wide selection of books; they often choose to read non-fiction ones about topics they are studying. They learn to read quickly because of the emphasis that the school puts on early reading and writing. For any pupils at risk of falling behind, there are lots of small group support sessions that help them to catch up.

Pupils say there is rarely any bullying, but when it does happen leaders deal with it effectively. Pupils are clear that they feel well looked after. Teachers check on their well-being daily, so any worries are picked up quickly.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have high expectations for what pupils at Lawford can achieve. They emphasise the wider experiences too, such as residentials, trips out and lots of extra-curricular clubs. Staff are a close-knit team and work collaboratively to improve the pupils' education.

The teaching of reading is a priority. Phonics is taught consistently to the youngest children in the early years using the school's chosen programme, and continues to be used as pupils move into Year 1 and 2. The books sent home are well matched to pupils' phonics knowledge. For older pupils there are interesting books and a good range of books for them to access. Pupils enjoy reading. Staff regularly share stories with them and incorporate use of texts into lessons across the curriculum.

Teachers use a wide range of resources to help pupils access the curriculum, for example word banks and equipment in mathematics. In Years 5 and 6, technology is a core part of this, pupils regularly refer back to teaching slideshows and videos to help them. As a result, most of the children keep up well with what they are expected to learn. Small groups support those who need extra practice of key skills.

What pupils learn is well sequenced week on week. The progression of pupils' skills is planned out in long-term plans. However, in a few subjects, the detail of what content should be taught is not as clear in long-term plans. Consequently, how pupils build learning on what has come before is not yet of the very highest quality

in all subjects. Subject leaders are beginning to undertake this work, following recent training.

Training for staff has resulted in the education in most subjects, including English, mathematics and science, being delivered effectively. There are a very few subjects where staff are less confident in the delivery of the chosen schemes. Where this is the case, sometimes activities do not always enable pupils to learn what is intended.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Their needs are identified, with the SEND coordinator seeking external advice where needed. Clear advice for teachers leads directly into good support in class.

Parents value the strong start that children make in the early years. Staff plan effectively so that pupils access good-quality learning activities and resources in both their indoors and outdoor environment. Adults ensure that there are lots of opportunities for pupils to practise key skills through their play, including early mark-making and letter formation. Pupils settle quickly and are well prepared for Year 1 by the end of their time in the early years.

Most pupils behave well. Where pupils do misbehave, staff deal with any poorer behaviour in a positive and supportive way, which means that classes are not disrupted.

Pupils are aware of key values such as respect and integrity. They learn about being tolerant and understanding others' way of life. They show these in their daily life, holding doors open for each other, being polite and kind. They access a wide range of trips out and visitors in, which supports their personal development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff know the pupils well. Leaders are highly responsive to any concerns that staff may pass on. They work closely with a wide range of agencies.

Pupils learn about keeping themselves safe right from the start of Reception. They say that they feel safe.

Staff have had regular training and are clear on the risks that pupils may face. Governors have made sure that all appropriate checks are in place on adults in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum content in a few subjects is not as well planned out as in others. Although progression grids for skills and some knowledge are in place, these are not detailed enough in terms of what leaders expect to be taught and when. As a result, pupils' learning does not build precisely enough on what has come before for them to make the best possible progress. Leaders need to make sure that it is clearer what is expected across the school in terms of what is taught and when.
- Some staff are not as confident as others in delivering the parts of the curriculum. As a result, pupils do not learn as much about the intended objectives as they should. Leaders need to make sure that all staff who are delivering teaching have the confidence and skills to do this to a high quality, enabling pupils to make excellent progress.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	115297
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10211772
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Francis Franks
Headteacher	Abigail Fairbairn
Website	www.lawford.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 July 2007, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is in the process of changing from one form to two form entry. Currently only Reception is two form entry.
- The school has benefited from recent expansion, gaining a new key stage 2 building, food technology room and what will be a library. It is located on the same site as before, but the access to this is now in a different location. The postcode has changed from CO11 2EF to CO11 2FR.
- A separately registered and inspected pre-school uses part of the school site.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Chelmsford. The most recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools was in September 2017. The school was graded outstanding.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school clubs.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and a wide range of staff. They met with representatives of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, history and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors looked at the school's single central record and a sample of safeguarding records. They spoke to staff, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 106 responses to the parent survey. They also took account of the 35 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Michael Thomas

Ofsted Inspector

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