

Ludlow Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	116098
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	379201
Inspection dates	10–11 January 2012
Lead inspector	Deborah Zachary

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	524
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Clark
Headteacher	Simon Watkins
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Deborah Zachary

Additional inspector

Susan Hunnings

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Martin James

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. All classes were observed and 21 teachers seen teaching, during a range of visits between 15 minutes and 40 minutes in length. Inspectors had discussions with a range of groups including parents and carers, pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, and observed the school's work. They looked at school data about pupils' attainment and progress, records of the school's monitoring of teaching, the school's development planning and pupils' work. They analysed questionnaires returned by staff, pupils and 159 parents and carers.

Information about the school

The school is much larger than the average junior school, and most of its pupils are White British. Very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average. An above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals.

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes of staffing. The executive headteacher was appointed in 2009, and the head of learning and teaching, who co-leads with the executive headteacher, was appointed in 2010, as was the assistant headteacher. New leaders of mathematics and literacy and new phase leaders took up their posts in April 2011, and a new inclusion leader in September 2011. Two thirds of the class teachers are in their first, second or third year of teaching. The school has met the government's current floor standard.

A privately-run childcare facility, Ludlow Kidz Club, includes before- and after-school clubs for up to 24 children. The provision was inspected separately in December 2011.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. After a period of instability, teaching, pupils' achievement and behaviour have improved significantly and are now good.
- Most groups of pupils have made good progress over the last two years. Some are now making outstanding progress. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have started to make good progress more recently.
- English and mathematics lessons are taught well. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects but are not always helped to improve these skills as they do so.
- An outstanding feature of teaching is the way the planned work is pitched to pupils' differing ability levels, so all are challenged to do well. Occasionally, teachers do not check that pupils remain challenged and engaged throughout the lesson. The pace of learning is usually impressively high, but occasionally the lesson moves on a little too quickly, before some pupils are ready.
- Marking is exceptionally good in most, but not all, classes. A notable feature is the way pupils are often given a target for improvement for the next lesson.
- Leadership and management are good. The many improvements have come about because of the school's outstanding system for helping teachers to teach better. The school evaluates the quality of its teaching and the extent to which pupils make progress extremely well. It does not yet rigorously evaluate the success of the different strategies chosen to help individuals to overcome barriers to learning.
- Most pupils are highly engaged and motivated in lessons. The school has good systems for helping those who find good behaviour hard to maintain to do better. It promotes many aspects of personal development well, but pupils' awareness of the wide range of cultures and religions present in Britain is comparatively limited.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that fewer lessons are satisfactory and more are outstanding by:

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- improving checks, feedback to and dialogue with pupils in lessons where these are less than good
- formalising a marking policy and ensuring marking in all classes gives pupils clear written guidance on how to improve
- teaching literacy and numeracy skills when pupils use them in other subjects
- ensuring that in the many high-paced lessons pupils are nevertheless given time to pause, reflect, clarify and go deeper in their thinking.
- Rigorously monitor the impact of the interventions made to improve the learning of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Better promote pupils' understanding of the multicultural society in the United Kingdom.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Attainment is broadly average, as are standards of reading by the time pupils leave the school. Current pupils are making good, and in some cases outstanding, progress. Most groups of pupils who were in Year 6 in 2011 made outstanding progress during Year 6 but had a great deal of ground to make up. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, pupils who were known to be eligible for free school meals and boys as a whole underachieved in comparison to the points they had reached in Key Stage 1, especially in mathematics. Boys and those known to be eligible for free school meals who are currently in the school have been making rapid, and accelerating, progress for the last two years, as teaching has improved. Progress has also accelerated for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, but primarily over the last year as support systems have been improved. Pupils in Year 6 have made up lost ground and are on track to reach the standards they should, given their Key Stage 1 attainment. Those in Year 5 and below are on track to achieve better because they have benefited from the improvements for a greater proportion of their time in the school. Parents and carers agree that their children's progress has accelerated under the current management team.

Pupils typically learn well in their lessons. They enjoy what they are learning because it is often set in an interesting context. Pupils in Year 4, for example, produced some excellent vocabulary and showed very good understanding of punctuation when they imagined a conversation between two cats. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs played a full part because they were well prepared by a support assistant at the start of the lesson, and had the opportunity to try out their ideas through acting partway through. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils showed great enthusiasm for their work on coordinates because the context concerned moving spacecraft for NASA. Pupils respond very well to the opportunities they get to discuss work with a partner, using the time maturely, and are also good at assessing each other's work, using criteria given at the start of the lesson. They can reflect with understanding,

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too, as shown when a Year 3 class came up with ideas about what the symbol of a tree might represent, such as 'strength', 'life' or 'nature'. Learning moves rapidly in many lessons. This is usually a good thing, but occasionally pupils are moved on so quickly that they do not get an opportunity to think more deeply about what they are doing or to consolidate their understanding. This holds back learning that might otherwise be outstanding.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers have faith in the quality of teaching, with many commenting in questionnaires on how much it has improved and very few not agreeing that it was good. Pupils, too, think lessons have improved. One commented that his Year 6 was 'the best year ever' and 95% of the pupils' 130 questionnaire responses praised teaching. School leaders have focused on developing teachers' assessment skills so that activities can be consistently well matched to pupils' abilities. They have been conspicuously successful: work challenged pupils successfully in every lesson observed. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson of exceptional quality, the teacher assessed and reacted to pupils' learning throughout the lesson and fine-tuned activities with such expertise that, even at an individual level, pupils were carrying out varied learning tasks. In the occasional satisfactory lesson, although planned work was well designed, pace dropped for some groups when they had limited dialogue with the teacher and the checks made on what they were doing were less frequent.

Teachers frequently demonstrated good use of resources. In an outstanding Year 6 lesson, information and communication technology was used particularly well to help pupils understand analogue and digital clocks. In the same lesson, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs were challenged individually and encouraged by excellent use of praise. In a small group literacy lesson in Year 6, pupils with significant barriers to learning responded very well to short activities and highly structured discipline. The good attention given to behaviour and manners supported pupils' social development, and in many lessons this was furthered by the many opportunities for discussion and paired working. Occasionally, teachers' demonstrations gave pupils a real sense of awe, as seen during a demonstration of the water cycle to Year 5. Well-taught assemblies also supported the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. For example, lower-school pupils learnt about perseverance.

Pupils are given individual targets in literacy, which they know well and use in English lessons. They are also provided with success criteria for lessons, and most teachers use these very well to focus on what different ability groups should be learning and to help pupils assess their own and each other's work. Marking is exceptionally good in classes where teachers not only check work against the success criteria but often identify a minor weakness and set it as a written individual target for the next lesson. Where this is used well, pupils find it very helpful and a real dialogue develops. Most marking is good, but very occasionally it fails to give suitable help and errors continue. The curriculum and its planning give good support

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to teachers. The best teaching was seen where teachers in the year group had planned together to be sure activities were well targeted to the success criteria they had defined. Opportunities to practise literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are built in to a range of subjects. However, these skills are seldom taught within other subjects, for example by asking pupils to apply a literacy target to a piece of writing in history or by teaching new ideas about graphs in science.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Questionnaires from pupils and their parents and carers suggested that a small, but significant, minority had concerns about behaviour. Inspectors therefore looked in detail at a range of evidence about pupils' behaviour over time, and came to the judgement that behaviour is good. The school's records show no evidence of prejudice-based bullying or harassment of a serious nature and indicate a steady improvement in behaviour over the last two years. Records show that pupils who have particular behavioural needs have made marked improvements. The parents and carers and pupils who met inspectors face to face, both formally and informally, said that behaviour had improved. They were much more positive than the responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, as was the response to the school's own questionnaire carried out at autumn term open evenings attended by a wide cross section of parents and carers. Parents and carers and pupils generally believe the school deals well with any incidents that occur, and that matters of bullying are swiftly sorted out when brought to the school's attention. Pupils feel safe in the school, and are typically courteous and respectful to staff and visitors. They understand how to keep themselves safe. Classrooms have a very positive climate for learning, attendance is above average and the school is a cohesive learning community.

Leadership and management

Evidence from the school's own monitoring and in reports from external sources detail a wide range of weaknesses in the school's provision two years ago. The governing body, whose members have a very good understanding of the current position of the school, confirms its rapid trajectory of improvement. A series of appointments of new managers and an excellent coaching programme to improve teaching have had a major impact on provision and pupils' progress. The recommendations of the last inspection have been addressed well. Leaders analyse data very well and use the results to plan effective strategies for the improvement of groups, year groups and subjects, for example mathematics. Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is now well managed. Identification of needs is accurate and secure, and interventions are planned systematically. The impact of interventions as a whole can be seen in pupils' improving progress, but as yet evaluation of the success of individual strategies for specific pupils is not fully established.

One of the major successes of the school leaders is the degree to which they have

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achieved the commitment of the staff to the rapid improvements. All staff who returned questionnaires were extremely supportive of the achievements of senior managers. The staff interviewed were full of praise for the way they had been helped to improve their practice. The ambition to improve is embedded at all levels in the school, the result of the energy and drive of the two co-leaders and the level of delegation and responsibility given to staff at other levels. The school clearly has the capacity to improve further.

The governing body has ensured that statutory requirements, including for safeguarding arrangements, are met. Equality is promoted effectively and groups that might otherwise be disadvantaged are now closing the gap on the performance of pupils nationally. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and meets the needs of pupils of different abilities particularly well. It promotes good spiritual, moral, cultural and particularly social development during lessons and through the wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. Strengths in the arts, particularly music, contribute well to cultural development, but the school's strategy to promote community cohesion has not been a priority for action, given the need to improve teaching and progress. The school is aware that pupils have limited contact with, or experience of, people from a range of different cultures and religions.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ludlow Junior School, Southampton SO19 2DW

Thank you for welcoming us to your school this week, particularly the many of you who discussed the school with me or my colleagues, or who showed us how well you can read.

We think you go to a good school. You are learning well in lessons because you are told what you are aiming for at the start and given work that is right for your ability. Most of you behave very well in lessons and we were pleased to see how well you concentrate. Some of you filled in questionnaires, which showed that some of you think behaviour is not always good. When we talked to you, you said a few pupils do misbehave but that the school deals with it. You also told us behaviour has improved, both in lessons and in the playground.

You, the school leaders and staff have done a huge amount to improve the school over the last two years. Everyone wants it to go on improving so we have asked the school to make sure that:

- teachers always check on how everyone is doing in lessons, and mark your work in a way that always shows you what you can improve for the next lesson
- you improve your writing and mathematics skills even when you are using them in other lessons – you can all help by making sure you use your literacy targets even when you are writing in another subject
- you are given a moment to pause and think about what you are learning, if you need it, when a lesson is going very quickly
- you are helped to learn more about how other people in this country live
- staff check carefully how well the special support some pupils get is working.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Zachary
Lead inspector

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