

Lumley Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114002
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	378782
Inspection dates	7–8 March 2012
Lead inspector	Moira Fitzpatrick

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	122
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Forster
Headteacher	Angela Vear
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2011
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Introduction

Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed 13 lessons taught by seven teachers. The inspector heard pupils from three year-groups reading. The headteacher shared lesson observations with the inspector on the first day. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff, senior leaders and members of the governing body. The inspector observed the school at work and looked at a range of documentation relating to the school's improvement, pupils' progress and attainment, and safeguarding procedures. The inspector also examined the work in pupils' books in all year groups. The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers in the 74 questionnaires that were returned. The views of staff and pupils were also taken into account in the questionnaires they returned. The inspector took account of the response to the online questionnaire (Parent View) when planning the inspection.

Information about the school

The school is an average-sized junior school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. Almost all pupils are from White British heritage, with very few who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those supported at school action plus is above average. The school meets current floor standards set by the government for the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school holds a number of awards including Healthy School status, Activemark, the International School Award and Investors in Pupils.

The school has undergone a number of changes since just before the previous inspection. A new headteacher was appointed to the school in July 2009 and took up post in the school in January 2010. The school was inspected in January 2011 and given a notice to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Since that inspection there have been changes in senior leadership and the team has expanded.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- In accordance with section 13(5) of the education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. The school’s overall effectiveness is satisfactory. It is not yet good because teaching is not consistently good and pupils could do better in writing.
- The school is improving rapidly because of the drive and determination of the headteacher to provide the best education possible for all pupils. She is ably supported by a highly skilled, dedicated senior leadership team. Together, they have improved the quality of teaching, increased pupils’ progress and ensured that their achievement is now at least satisfactory and often good in Years 5 and 6. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are good. Systems for monitoring pupils’ progress and the actions taken to tackle under-achievement are proving effective in closing gaps between groups.
- Pupils’ attainment is average and rising year-on-year. The school’s performance in national tests in 2011 was the best achieved in recent years. Attainment is strongest in reading and mathematics. While weaknesses remain in writing, these are being eradicated through whole-school action and expert support.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall, though there are striking variations between the teaching in the lower key stage, where it is satisfactory, and the upper key stage, where it is usually good or better. Senior leaders are robust in providing support through coaching and advice to improve the consistency of teaching across the school and raise the quality to that of the best.
- Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for. Their behaviour, which is always good and often exemplary, makes a strong contribution to their learning and happiness while in school. Their spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about how safe and happy their children are at school. They praise the rapid changes made to the school’s ethos and ambition with comments such as, ‘The school has moved on significantly since the last inspection.’ and, ‘A very supportive school that provides great opportunities for my children.’

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing by:
 - providing frequent opportunities for pupils to write at length for different purposes
 - ensuring that existing excellent practice in teaching writing skills is shared with all staff so that pupils are well prepared to write independently
 - improving pupils' handwriting so that they are proud to exhibit their work and it is legible to all who read it.

- Improve the quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 to good by the end of the summer term 2012 so that pupils make better progress and reach higher standards by:
 - improving the lesson planning and use of assessment information of some teachers so that pupils are appropriately challenged and motivated in lessons
 - setting clear expectations for accelerated progress in classes in the lower key stage, especially in reading, writing and mathematics
 - ensuring that teachers have high expectations of pupils' output in lessons by sharing with the m the best examples of high quality work.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

All groups of pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning, from broadly average starting points. By Year 6, overall attainment is broadly average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory, and improving in older classes. Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs are effectively supported by skilled teaching assistants to make similar progress to their peers; they often make better progress when they are given intensive one-to-one support. Learning is well matched to pupils' needs in Years 5 and 6 because teachers' sharp understanding of these needs and of how pupils learn best enables them to provide work that is challenging and motivating. For example, Year 6 pupils made very good progress in their reading and speaking skills in a discussion about Martin Luther King's, 'I Have a Dream' speech. They had been extremely well prepared to analyse how different effects were achieved and used this information to discuss maturely how the speech affected the reader as it did. Pupils' enjoyment and sense of success were obvious throughout the lesson and their courtesy in listening and adding to the views of others was outstanding. Learning is usually slower in Year 3 and 4 classes, mainly because teachers do not make such effective use of their assessment of pupils' learning to guide their planning or prepare resources. For example, in a lesson on writing explanations in Year 4, pupils' progress was slowed because they were expected to manage too much information too quickly, which confused some and frustrated others.

In all lessons pupils are attentive and willing to work hard. They are supportive of each other and enjoy the opportunity to work together and learn from each other. Basic skills and guided reading sessions provide good opportunities for pupils to learn independently while developing these key skills. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach at least the national average

in mathematics and reading. School data shows that the proportion exceeding this level is increasing year-on-year as new systems take effect. Attainment in writing, including pupils' handwriting, lags behind that in mathematics and reading, but it too is improving because of action taken by senior leaders to improve provision and accelerate progress. The vast majority of parents and carers think their children make good progress and achieve well. Inspection evidence is that progress is improving but is still satisfactory overall.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is satisfactory overall, though there are differences between upper and lower key-stage classes. Nonetheless, teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection as a result of the headteacher's relentless drive to raise standards and improve teaching. Effective new systems to monitor pupils' progress are embedding so that staff are making better use of assessment information. Where this is well used, in Year 5 and 6 classes, tasks are very well tailored to pupils' needs and interests so that they are fired with enthusiasm for learning and delight in rising to teachers' high expectations. They work hard, have excellent collaborative skills and in many lessons there is a steady buzz of excitement about learning. This was seen clearly in a Year 5 lesson where pupils worked hard at independent tasks ranging from silent and group reading to research on computers about their recent visit to the Great North Museum. A similar example was seen in Year 6, where writing was extremely well taught so that pupils made excellent progress in their discursive writing skills. This excellent practice in teaching writing skills to prepare pupils for independent writing has not yet been shared with staff across the school.

Lessons in the lower key stage move at a slower pace and do not fire pupils with the same enthusiasm. Teachers' planning does not always make sharp use of assessment information to meet pupils' needs and interests, so lively activities and enthusiasm for learning are lacking. Teachers of younger pupils are not always ambitious enough for them to do their best, so expectations and pace and challenge are not high. They miss opportunities to share the best examples of work. Improvements to marking and feedback to pupils are having a positive effect on their learning, though again there is still inconsistency in the quality of this across the school. Teaching makes a good rather than outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, because of these inconsistencies. Basic skills are well promoted across the curriculum so that pupils are increasingly aware of the importance of these in everyday life. Teachers are increasingly effective at designing activities that allow pupils to practise these skills in other subjects although there are still not enough opportunities to write at length for different purposes.

The vast majority of parents feel their children are well taught and have their needs met. Inspection evidence is that while this is true for older pupils, there is still room for improvement in the way younger pupils are taught.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils fully understand that good behaviour and consideration for others are expected by their headteacher and teachers. They know that it helps to create a happy, safe and caring community where everyone can flourish. Consequently, behaviour in lessons is always good and usually exemplary in the upper part of the school. Parents' and carers' views and school records confirm that this is the norm. The headteacher's vision to develop the whole child is realised through the many opportunities pupils have to take responsibility and have a say in

improving the school. Older pupils, who act as Buddies, are proud of their work in looking after pupils who may be feeling vulnerable or need a friend to play with.

Pupils are convinced that incidents of bullying are rare and that staff handle any reported concerns quickly and effectively. They have a secure knowledge of different types of bullying, though they only comment on name calling as one they have witnessed. Pupils say they feel safe and that they know how to assess and avoid any potentially unsafe situations. They understand the steps the school has taken to protect them when using the internet, and older pupils have noted the increased security measures that have been put in place since the arrival of the headteacher. Parents and carers agree that their children are well cared for and safe in school. Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs are very well supported by well trained and dedicated support staff. They ensure that these pupils succeed, enjoy all that the school offers and feel fully integrated with their peers. Pupils' above average attendance and good punctuality reflect their enjoyment of school and the good relationships they enjoy with their peers and the staff.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and senior leaders share a clear vision for how the school needs to improve. They demonstrate the ambition, determination and expertise to move the school forward at a good rate. Since the previous inspection they have introduced a range of successful measures designed to eradicate weak teaching, improve assessment of pupils' work and provide good quality feedback to pupils on how well they are doing. The success of these is seen in pupils' rising attainment, improved test results, increased progress and better achievement for pupils. Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs now make the same progress as their peers and achieve as well as they do. Given these improvements and their impact on outcomes for pupils, the school is demonstrating a good capacity for further improvement.

Self-evaluation is accurate and monitoring activities are tightly focused on raising standards by improving provision. Staff are supportive of changes and acknowledge how much the new systems have supported better teaching and learning since the previous inspection. The majority recognise that there is still some way to go to meet the headteacher's ambitions for the school. The curriculum is satisfactory because opportunities to develop writing in other subjects are inconsistent. Nonetheless, it is improving quickly and now provides a better match than formerly, to the needs and aptitudes of all groups of pupils. It ensures that equality of opportunity is now satisfactorily promoted and that pupils have the opportunity to learn about the wider society in which they live. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school's good quality arrangements for safeguarding pupils fully meet requirements.

The governing body fully supports the headteacher's determination to improve teaching and learning as the most important priorities for the school. They have been highly supportive with regard to performance management and in helping the school to be the best it can be. All governors have undertaken classroom observation training in order to gain first-hand knowledge of how quickly things are improving. Governors and staff make good links with parents and carers who praise the school for the way it has improved in the last year. 'Massive improvements all round. Great progress made in helping our daughter to achieve excellent levels of education.' – are comments that sum up the views of many parents who returned questionnaires. Links with other schools and organisations are well developed to extend support and the range of expertise available.

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.
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.



9 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lumley Junior School, Chester le Street, DH3 4JJ

Many thanks for your kind welcome and courtesy when I visited your school recently. You will be pleased to know that your school no longer needs a notice to improve, because it is now improving at a good rate and provides a satisfactory education. You have all played a part in this by working hard, supporting each other and behaving so well. You reach average standards, which are improving well, especially in reading and mathematics, and your achievement is satisfactory. You make slower progress in your writing, mainly because you have fewer opportunities to practice this in other subjects. Your curriculum is well planned to give you plenty of opportunities to practice your reading and mathematics. I have suggested to your headteacher that more attention to improving your writing will help you to reach the next level of achievement quickly.

Teaching in your school is improving because your headteacher and governors want you to achieve the best you can. They check on your learning regularly so that they know how well you are doing. Like me, they have found that older pupils often benefit from good and outstanding teaching. For younger ones, teaching is still mostly satisfactory so your headteacher and I have agreed that staff should share all the best ideas and methods to make sure that every one of you benefits from high quality teaching and makes faster progress.

You told me that you feel safe and secure in school and I could tell from the happy faces I saw each day that this was true. This is because the headteacher and staff take your safety and welfare very seriously, listen to your concerns and give you good support with any difficulties you may have. Your parents and carers agree that staff look after you very well and keep you safe and happy.

Thank you again for making my visit such a pleasure. I send my very best wishes for the future to all at Lumley Junior School.

Yours sincerely
Moira Fitzpatrick
Lead inspector

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