

Ladywood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112681
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	357167
Inspection dates	30 November 2010–1 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Derek Aitken

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	277
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michelle Cox
Headteacher	Melanie Lawson
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The school was closed on 1 December due to snow and the inspectors returned on 7 December to conduct the second day. Inspectors observed 15 lessons with 10 teachers being seen. Four of these lessons were observed jointly with key senior leaders and judgements on the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress in these lessons were agreed. A detailed scrutiny of pupils' work in mathematics was also conducted. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff, the School Improvement Partner and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documents, including policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils; self-evaluation and monitoring records; and assessment information. The inspectors analysed questionnaires from 107 parents and carers, 100 pupils and 30 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following questions.

- Are teaching and the use of assessment consistently good enough to improve pupils' attainment, especially in mathematics?
- How well are basic skills, especially in mathematics, being promoted?
- Is there sufficient evidence to show that school leaders are effectively tackling weaknesses in pupils' attainment?
- What is the impact of mixed-age classes on outcomes for children in Reception?

Information about the school

Ladywood is larger than most primary schools. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. An increasing and above-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These are mostly for moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of two Nursery classes and two mixed Reception/Year 1 classes. Provision for other pupils is through a combination of mixed- and single-age classes. The headteacher took up post in September 2008 and a new senior leadership team was created in September 2010. The composition of the teaching staff is almost entirely changed since the last inspection. The school has Health Promoting Schools status and its other awards include the Activemark.

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: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Ladywood Primary School is not providing its pupils with an adequate quality of education. Pupils' attainment in Year 6 has declined since the previous inspection and progress for too many pupils across the school is unsatisfactory. National assessment data indicate that attainment in mathematics for Year 6 pupils was low in 2009 and 2010 and progress for pupils in these years was inadequate. Similarly, progress in English was inadequate in 2009. Attainment in English and mathematics in the current Year 6 is broadly average, but this also represents unsatisfactory progress for these pupils because their starting points in Year 3 were above average. In part, this decline in pupils' performance has been due to discontinuity in staffing, including at leadership level. This has slowed the pace of school improvement and contributed to inconsistencies in practice, for example in teaching and learning. While teaching is consistently good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and mixed Reception/Year 1 classes, this good start is not capitalised on and, overall, teaching is inadequate for the other pupils. Where the quality of teaching is inadequate, expectations for pupils' achievement are often too low and ineffective use is made of assessment to plan and structure learning for all groups of pupils. Teachers' techniques for managing pupils' behaviour and encouraging pupils' active engagement in their learning are often too limited, so pupils quickly lose focus and are largely unresponsive to teachers' questioning, which slows the pace of learning. The monitoring of teaching and learning lacks the rigour needed to provide a secure platform for new staff to develop their expertise.

The discontinuity in staffing, accompanied by regular reallocation of leadership roles, has led to monitoring systems which are underdeveloped. This is reflected in the weak quality of the school's self-evaluation and unfocused planning for future development. The responsibilities of key senior leaders for improving pupils' academic achievement are not clearly defined or prioritised enough. The governing body is supportive of the school but its members have not been sufficiently involved in monitoring or evaluating its performance. There is little discernible impact of the work of the reconstructed senior leadership team, although there is an increasing awareness of the challenges the staff face to raise the achievement of all groups of pupils. In combination, these factors mean that the school has insufficient capacity to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress, especially in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - developing teachers' skills in using assessment to plan lessons and to guide pupils' learning more effectively
 - ensuring teachers acquire a wider range of techniques to promote pupils' active engagement in their learning
 - ensuring senior leaders monitor teaching and learning more frequently and rigorously.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the leadership roles of key senior leaders are focused more sharply on raising pupils' attainment and accelerating their progress
 - strengthening strategic planning to provide a clear steer for staff to develop provision
 - ensuring that all actions taken are monitored, evaluated and reviewed robustly by the senior leadership team
 - developing the monitoring and evaluation role of the governing body to enable its members to hold the school's leaders more effectively to account.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Pupils' achievement is inadequate. Children's skills when they join Year 1 are generally average, although slightly lower in reading and writing. Year 1 pupils who work with Reception children get off to a good start. For example, Year 1 pupils can accurately distinguish between objects which give out light or heat and those which do not and they show some understanding of complex words such as 'nocturnal'. Progress slows in Key Stage 2, leaving pupils with too much ground to catch up in Year 6, especially in mathematics. This is because pupils in the mixed-age classes, for example, in Year 3 and Year 4, on occasions work for too long on low-level, repetitive tasks such as routine multiples of ten. Pupils often lack sufficient strategies in mental mathematics to enable them to work confidently on unfamiliar problems. When these factors combine, pupils' interest and concentration wane. Pupils' progress is also too variable in English. In the 2010 national tests, Year 6 pupils made satisfactory progress in writing, but the school's tracking information indicates that, for the current Year 6 pupils, progress in this skill is inadequate. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make unsatisfactory progress. They, in common with other groups of pupils, sometimes show insufficient capacity to work either independently or with others to develop their learning. Although pupils with behavioural difficulties are usually managed effectively by teaching assistants, the pupils often lack the motivation to work hard, which restricts their achievement.

Most pupils say they enjoy school and are keen to learn. They relate satisfactorily to each other and the staff, and are sometimes responsive in lessons. They say that they feel safe in school, but that the poor behaviour of a minority can occasionally spoil their lessons.

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The school's awards for promoting healthy lifestyles are well merited. Pupils have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles and say, 'You should avoid taking too much sugar although you need a little bit for energy.' They contribute satisfactorily to the school community in a range of useful posts such as school councillors, house captains and, in Year 6, as 'buddies' for the younger children. Pupils' workplace skills are inadequate. Although pupils' attendance is broadly average and older pupils have an awareness of economic issues, pupils are often too passive in lessons. This, combined with weaknesses in their basic skills, especially in mathematics, means that they are insufficiently prepared for their later lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching has strengths but these are confined to too few classes. These positive features include good planning, which promotes pupils' independence and engagement in their learning. These good qualities are not, however, the norm. Learning objectives often lack clarity, the tasks set for pupils lack sufficient challenge, and not enough use is made of assessment to build momentum and pace into pupils' learning. In these circumstances, pupils lose concentration and teachers have to spend too much time refocusing pupils on their learning. Questioning is sometimes superficial so that teachers cannot check how well pupils understand, or provide follow-up questions to extend their thinking. Pupils have some awareness of their targets, but there is little evidence of these targets being used

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productively to advance their learning. Marking is too variable in quality and only provides limited guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work.

Pupils say they enjoy project work, for example that based on 'The Wind in the Willows', and the specialist teaching they receive in French. The curriculum is enriched by a wide selection of clubs, including for physical education, which are also popular with pupils. Provision for numeracy has developed fitfully. While some useful initiatives have been undertaken to promote literacy skills, numeracy has had, until recently, less of a focus and opportunities are missed for pupils to reinforce and extend their mathematical skills in other subjects. This term, some systems have been put in place to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities more accurately and to determine which programmes would be most useful to address underachievement. This work is in its early stages and, hence, it is too early to gauge any impact on outcomes for pupils.

The staff care for pupils satisfactorily. Induction and transition arrangements to secondary school are good and several pupils whose circumstances make them especially vulnerable are well supported by the school. The family resource worker makes a good contribution to pupils' well-being through her close links with families. The school's leaders promote attendance satisfactorily and have recently been successful in reducing the above-average level of persistent absence. However, strategies for promoting positive attitudes and behaviour are not yet embedded enough and consequently pupils' behaviour is satisfactory rather than good.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

There is a good spirit of togetherness among the staff, with an evident willingness to improve provision. A recent departure from the leadership group has provided the opportunity for the headteacher to reshape her team with a view to enhancing accountability. However, monitoring, evaluation and review systems are too underdeveloped to secure improvement, for example, in teaching and learning. There is insufficient strategic direction to channel colleagues' energies purposefully and the responsibilities of key senior leaders are too limited to enable them to take a strong initiative in the quest to raise standards. The governing body ensures statutory requirements are met but procedures for checking the school's performance lack sufficient rigour. Consequently, the governing body is not effectively fulfilling its key role of challenging the school to account for its performance. The school's arrangements for safeguarding are satisfactory. Required policies are in place but a few procedures could be recorded more effectively to monitor practice. Relationships with parents and carers are

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positive. They are kept regularly informed by newsletters and text messages, and useful links are forged through the family SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) project. The school recognises, however, that there is more work to do to involve parents and carers more productively in their children's learning to raise achievement. The effectiveness with which the school promotes equalities and tackles discrimination is inadequate, as reflected in outcomes for all groups of pupils. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to promote community cohesion both locally and through its new link with a rural school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children start Nursery, overall their skills and knowledge are below those expected for their age. Skilful leadership and management have ensured that children in Nursery and Reception alike make good progress. This is because teaching is good and staff work very effectively together to plan a well-balanced curriculum and to ensure that children's welfare needs are fully met. Children make good progress especially in personal development and in their speaking skills. Effective use is made of a letter and sounds programme to improve children's writing. Leaders recognise that more work is needed to develop children's reading skills and are planning to increase book resources. Children acquire positive attitudes to their learning and many of the Nursery children demonstrate a pleasing sense of independence when choosing what they want to do, for example, in working with computers. Reception children make effective use of resources to reinforce and extend their learning, for example, when making up mini-stories to practise their subtractions. Staff work hard to adapt provision to suit the requirements of parents and carers, through the introduction of a lunch club. They have taken initial steps to involve parents and carers more fully in their children's education through the compilation of individual learning journeys.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The response of most parents and carers who completed questionnaires was positive, although the returns reflect some concerns about behaviour. Of the few written comments were received they included praise for provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Inspectors found that this praise was well merited.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ladywood Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 107 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 277 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	63	39	36	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	63	39	36	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	52	48	50	47	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	63	59	39	36	3	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	61	57	46	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	57	53	44	41	0	0	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	60	56	45	42	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	57	53	42	39	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	59	55	45	42	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	44	41	38	9	8	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	50	47	47	44	6	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	58	54	41	38	6	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	69	64	35	33	2	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



8 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ladywood Primary School, Ilkeston, DE7 4NH

I would like to thank you for your help when the inspection team visited your school recently. This is what we found out. There are some good parts to the school's work, for example: you have a good understanding of how to stay healthy, you enjoy school for different reasons, including French lessons. Most other aspects of your personal development are satisfactory. However, we judge that your school is not providing all of you with a satisfactory education and that it needs extra support in order to do so. For this reason we have decided that the school requires 'special measures'. Children's good start in Nursery and Reception is not kept up in the older years. Standards are too low, especially in mathematics, and by the time you leave school at the end of Year 6 many of you have not made enough progress in your learning.

To help the school improve quickly so that you all achieve as well as you should, we have asked the headteacher and the staff to do a number of things. These include:

- making sure that teachers have higher expectations of what you can do and make better use of assessment to plan your lessons and to guide your learning
- increasing opportunities for you to become more actively involved in lessons
- making sure that senior leaders regularly check on how well you are being taught so that you make better progress.
- improving the plans they draw up to make things better for you in the future
- asking members of the governing body to keep a closer check on how well the school is doing.

Other inspectors will visit your school in the near future to judge how well it is tackling these points for improvement. You can all help your teachers by seeking to answer more often in lessons and keeping up your concentration levels. Working as hard as you can to practise and improve your skills, especially in mathematics, will also be a great help.

Yours sincerely

Derek Aitken

Lead inspector

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