

Ludlow Junior School

Clee View, Ludlow, SY8 1HX

Inspection dates 13–14 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure pupils achieve well.
- Teachers expect pupils to behave well in lessons, but do not always plan activities in a way that makes sure they work hard.
- Staff at all levels do not make enough use of the information they collect on pupils' progress, so pupils' targets in English and mathematics are not demanding enough to promote good progress, and lesson activities are not always planned at the right level of difficulty.
- Teachers do not give pupils enough chance to develop their mathematical skills by carrying out investigations and working with data.
- Although leaders know what they need to do to improve pupils' achievement, they do not always act quickly or follow up their actions thoroughly enough to make sure they have been effective.
- The headteacher has not made sure that the roles of other leaders are fully developed. This means these leaders are not as accountable as they should be for checking and improving the performance of teachers and pupils in the subjects they are responsible for.

The school has the following strengths

- The way senior leaders have improved attainment in writing since the last inspection shows that they are able to raise standards.
- Pupils are well cared for, and their behaviour is well managed by staff. They get on well with each other, know how to stay safe and are happy in school.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Parents and carers are pleased with the quality of education the school provides.
- Attendance is above average, and has improved further since the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 19 lessons taught by 11 teachers. Two of these lessons were observed together with the headteacher.
- Samples of pupils’ work in English and mathematics were analysed. An inspector listened to some Year 6 pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with school staff, a group of pupils and members of the governing body. A telephone discussion took place with a school improvement adviser from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 21 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), parents’ and pupils’ responses to the school’s own recent surveys, and the 14 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the work in pupils’ books; monitoring records; the school’s own data on pupils’ progress; minutes of governing body meetings; and policies, procedures and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Derek Aitken, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Michael Thomas	Additional Inspector
Sandra Ewing	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ludlow Junior is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Nearly all pupils are White British.
- An average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides extra funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, pupils in local authority care, and children of members of the armed forces serving overseas.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher joined the school in September 2012.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by ensuring all teachers:
 - make consistently good use of progress information to plan lessons at the right level of difficulty to challenge all groups of pupils
 - insist that pupils always produce high-quality work
 - use time in lessons well to increase the pace of pupils' learning.
- Improve achievement in mathematics by ensuring teachers give pupils:
 - more opportunities to carry out investigations and to work with handling data
 - clear guidance through marking on how they can improve their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by making sure that:
 - weaknesses are identified more sharply and quick and firm actions are taken to remedy them
 - leaders other than the headteacher are given more responsibility for checking the school's work, so they play a full role in school development
 - leaders make better use of data to set pupils challenging targets and to quickly identify pupils who need extra help with their work
 - pupil premium funding is directed specifically at those pupils for whom it is intended, and the effectiveness of the spending is judged by how well any gaps in attainment are closing
 - governors take into account evidence of pupils' performance when judging the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment when they join Year 3 is average in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6 their attainment remains broadly average. While most pupils reach the nationally expected Level 4 in English and mathematics, achievement fluctuates a little in both subjects from year to year. In mathematics the proportion of pupils making expected progress was a little below the national figure in 2012. Overall, most pupils make the progress expected of them but few make good progress.
- Pupils' attainment in writing has risen as a result of well-considered actions taken by staff. Pupils use a good range of vocabulary in their written accounts and they usually present their work neatly.
- In mathematics, there are some small gaps in pupils' learning. They do not have enough opportunities to use and apply their knowledge and understanding by handling data or carrying out mathematical investigations. Younger pupils often find it difficult to handle fractions and this leads them into making mistakes when they are required to apply their knowledge in new situations.
- There are no marked differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils, although more-able Year 6 pupils in 2012 made slightly better progress than their classmates. The progress of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding varies. In 2011 their attainment was higher than that of similar pupils across the country; in 2012 it was lower. The school's leaders do not analyse the progress made by different groups in enough detail to be sure that pupil premium is being spent effectively on improving achievement for eligible pupils.
- Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make expected progress, but their needs are not always distinguished clearly enough from those of less-able pupils when extra support is planned.
- Less-able pupils in Year 6 read competently, but sometimes with little expression. However, they understand how to blend sounds correctly, persevere when faced with tricky words and make accurate predictions about how storylines will unfold.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There are examples of good teaching in all year groups. However, this is not yet a consistent feature of the school's work and no outstanding teaching was observed. Teaching is generally matched better to pupils' needs and ability levels in English than in mathematics.
- Teachers do not always make enough use of their knowledge of what pupils can and cannot do to plan lessons in a way that ensures pupils make good progress, deepen their understanding and provide clear direction for their learning.
- On a few occasions, teachers' expectations for pupils' work-rate are not high enough to ensure a brisk pace of learning. In such cases, pupils spend too long on the carpet on lesson starter activities and not enough time applying new knowledge independently.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress when work is planned at the right level of difficulty and staff help them to take small, secure steps in their

learning. This was observed in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, but is not a routine feature of lessons across the school.

- The quality of marking varies too much. Pupils' work is regularly marked, and constructive guidance in English helps them to understand what they can do and provides targets for future progress. In mathematics, while pupils' efforts are regularly praised, teachers' comments rarely include useful examples for pupils to follow.
- Where teaching is good, it is marked by careful planning which ensures work is matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities. In these lessons teachers use ongoing assessment and skilful questioning well to check pupils' understanding, to help them explain their thinking and to guide their learning. This enabled Year 5 pupils in an art lesson to understand the idea of proportion and apply it correctly to their sketch drawings.
- In these lessons, teachers communicate their high expectations and their lively approach and clear explanations engage pupils' interest. They encourage pupils to work at a brisk pace, and to think up ways to improve their answers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well and show consideration and respect for staff and for each other. This was evident in the 'Christmas Cracker' assembly when pupils listened with rapt attention to the performances of their classmates and applauded their efforts generously.
- Pupils know the difference between right and wrong behaviour, make the right decisions and comply quickly with staff requests. They behave sensibly in corridors and in the playground.
- Parents, pupils and staff indicate very few concerns about pupils' behaviour. The procedures for managing behaviour and for supporting pupils who find it difficult to behave at the expected standard are detailed, consistent and highly effective. The school works closely with parents and outside agencies, for example the local behavioural unit and tuition service, to promote good behaviour. Exclusions are rare.
- Staff routinely record details relating to pupils' lives outside school which might cause pupils to be anxious or concerned, and use this information sensitively when they relate to pupils. Consequently, pupils feel nurtured and well cared for and are happy in school. Pupils know they can use 'worry boxes' to express their concerns, or speak directly to the headteacher and staff.
- Pupils feel safe in school because they are taught what they need to know to stay safe in different situations. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including racism. The school's anti-bullying policy is regularly reviewed and takes pupils' views into account. Pupils report that bullying is rare because they get on well with each other.
- Merits and rewards are used regularly to encourage positive attitudes. Pupils typically enjoy their learning. This is very noticeable when they work in pairs to test out new ideas, as seen in a Year 3 technology lesson when pupils explored making different types of switches to use in their 'Super Hero' alarm system. In a few lessons pupils lose focus briefly when teaching does not engage them fully, but teachers quickly and skilfully restore pupils' concentration.
- Staff, including parent support advisers, have worked effectively to further improve pupils'

above-average attendance.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Parents are rightly pleased with the quality of care their children receive. There are, however, some weaknesses in the way pupils' academic work is tracked and improved. Leaders other than the headteacher are not involved enough in checking pupils' progress across the school, or the impact teaching has on their learning. This restricts these leaders' accountability and the school's effectiveness in judging its own performance, and holds back the pace of improvement.
 - Leaders are keen to raise pupils' achievement, and have forged useful links with local schools that have led to some improvements in teaching and the curriculum. New members of the senior leadership team have implemented some useful initiatives to help staff and pupils assess pupils' progress in reading and writing more closely. These are starting to accelerate pupils' achievement.
 - Salary increases are linked appropriately to the quality of teaching and the specific responsibilities of individual staff, and depend on agreed performance targets being reached. These targets reflect the priorities of the school's development plan as well as pupils' progress, but the progress targets are only moderately challenging. Training has had most impact on developing expertise in teaching writing skills.
 - The school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination adequately. Individual pupils whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable have benefited from pupil premium spending. This funding has been used to provide extra one-to-one support for pupils and to employ an additional part-time teacher in Year 6 to work with less-able pupils. Pupils' progress is tracked individually but not sharply enough by group. This makes it difficult for leaders to assess precisely the impact of the actions they take to improve pupils' performance.
 - Staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, for example through topic work in art and projects in information and communication technology where pupils compare and contrast their lives with those of other people.
 - Until recently, the local authority had given the school little support since the last inspection. It is now stepping up its efforts through more frequent visits.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance requires improvement. Since the last inspection the governors have set up new committees to enable them to work more closely with the school. They check pupils' test results and progress each term and look closely at pupils' work during school visits. They understand the main messages from data on pupils' performance, and are aware how well pupils are achieving compared to other pupils in similar schools. However, as pupil premium funding is not clearly earmarked for eligible pupils, governors are not in a position to evaluate fully the effectiveness of this expenditure. Governors regularly set out their ideas about how they can improve their own work. They recognise that raising pupils' achievement in mathematics is a priority. Governors make sure that the school links salary increases and promotion for teachers to their performance. However, their view of the quality of teaching is overgenerous because they have not taken full account of pupils' progress to challenge the school's judgements on teaching. Training records indicate that governors have taken appropriate steps to increase their expertise. They make sure that the school meets national requirements, including those for safeguarding children.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	123426
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	402161

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	261
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neville Stephens
Headteacher	Sally Swann
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2010
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