

Ferrars Junior School

Lewsey Road, Luton, LU4 0ES

Inspection dates 30–31 January 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Strong leadership and management have improved both teaching and achievement. They have ensured a positive climate for learning across the school in which all pupils prosper, both academically and personally.
- Pupils reach standards at the end of Year 6 that are above average. They make good progress in reading and writing.
- As a result of the good support they receive disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who join part way through the year, often with English as an additional language, achieve well.
- Teaching is good in all subjects, with some that is outstanding. Teachers have good subject expertise and build very good relationships with pupils, helping them to do their best.
- Pupils feel safe and are looked after well. Their behaviour is consistently good. They are proud of their school, want to learn and enjoy coming to school.
- Attendance rates have improved and are now above average.
- Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in all aspects of school life. They work very effectively as prefects and buddies to younger children and take an active role in the school council.
- Ferrars is a lively and thriving school at the centre of its local community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not make as much progress in mathematics as they do in reading and writing.
- Not enough teaching allows pupils to find out information for themselves. There are not enough opportunities in lessons for pupils to show initiative and make choices about their learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 14 lessons, taught by teachers and two sessions, led by a higher-level teaching assistant. Some lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and senior staff.
- In addition the inspection team made a number of other short visits to lessons, listened to pupils read and scrutinised their work.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- A wide range of documentation was looked at, including the school's own self-evaluation, assessment data from the monitoring of pupils' progress, improvement plans and minutes from meetings of the governing body. School policies and performance management documentation and records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance, together with the school's safeguarding procedures, were also evaluated.
- Inspectors took account of the 15 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views of several parents and carers who spoke to the inspectors during the inspection.
- Questionnaires from 25 staff were also considered.

Inspection team

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| Christine Mayle, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Ken Parry | Additional Inspector |
| Graham Gossage | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average junior school. There are no pupils learning at places away from school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is significantly higher than average.
- A significant number of pupils join or leave the school between Year 3 and 6.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and for whom the school receives additional funding (the pupil premium) is above average.
- There is a breakfast club that is managed by the governing body and was included in this inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - providing regular and well-planned opportunities for pupils to learn on their own both in lessons and through better use of homework.
- Ensure pupils make at least good or even better progress in mathematics by providing training to help teachers:
 - plan activities that encourage pupils to practise their mathematical skills in different ways, and within a variety of other subjects
 - provide pupils of all ages with demanding problem-solving activities that make them think really hard.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well. There has been an improving trend in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics over recent years. By the time they leave, pupils achieve better standards than others of their age nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who make the progress they should or better compares favourably with national figures. Inspectors' own lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work, and assessment information held by the school show that pupils are making good progress. This supports the views of parents that their children make good progress.
- Although standards in mathematics have improved, and are higher than average, pupils do not make as much progress as they do in reading and writing. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their mathematical skills across a range of subjects.
- Pupils across the school enjoy reading and speak enthusiastically about the stories they have read. By the end of Year 6 they are able to find ways of reading unfamiliar words, and the majority read accurately and with confidence.
- Pupils' writing skills are well developed. Across all subjects they are given opportunities to practise these skills and write for different purposes. Pupils take exceptional pride in the presentation of their work.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar rates of progress to other pupils. Staff carefully track their progress and put in place well-targeted programmes, through individual support or group work, to help them overcome their difficulties.
- The needs of those pupils who join the school part way through the year, as well as those from ethnic minorities or who have English as an additional language, are identified early and skilled teaching assistants provide targeted support on a one-to-one or group basis. These pupils make good, and often outstanding, progress.
- The school has made good use of the additional funding, provided for those pupils entitled to the pupil premium, to increase the number of support staff and provide additional resources and access to activities such as music tuition and residential visits. This has helped these pupils make the same progress as their classmates.
- The attainment of free school meals pupils is the same as similar pupils nationally. Although it is below the standards reached by all pupils nationally, the gap between the standards reached in Year 6 by pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are not eligible is reducing.

The quality of teaching is good

- The relentless drive by senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching has been successful. Teaching has improved since the last inspection so that the vast majority is now good or outstanding.
- Teachers have good subject expertise, use skilled support staff well and regularly check that pupils understand what they are doing. This has helped raise standards in both English and

mathematics. They use probing questions to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding, and their own enthusiasm means pupils are equally keen to learn.

- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide comments about what the pupils have done well and what they need to do next, allowing time for them to respond and improve their work. Pupils say they enjoy assessing each other's work as it helps them to learn.
- In most lessons pupils are fully engaged in learning activities that are well planned and set at the right level of difficulty. The pace is usually brisk and the tasks are interesting so that pupils want to work hard.
- All teachers expect pupils to do their best. In a Year 5 lesson on Egypt and Myths, for example, pupils were given different objects and asked to describe them to a partner. This helped pupils to think about the more imaginative language they could use before writing the beginning of a story. At the end of the lesson pupils offered constructive comments on how to improve each other's writing. There are, however, too few opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and find out information for themselves, either in class or through homework.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are polite and well mannered. Relationships between adults and pupils are very positive and caring, and make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils enjoy school and they behave well in lessons and move safely around the school.
- An impressive feature of the school is the way in which all pupils get on well together and support each other. Pupils from a variety of backgrounds and cultures are all well supported, settle quickly and make friends. Pupils explained how the 'buddy's chair' in the playground helps children who might be feeling unhappy or left out to make new friends.
- Pupils have an eagerness to learn which helps them to concentrate in lessons and make good progress. They know their academic targets and what they should do to achieve them. At times, however, they are not adventurous or self confident enough in some subjects to take risks and push their learning forward for themselves.
- Pupils understand the various forms of bullying, including name calling, cyber bullying and that related to prejudice. They know what to do should a bullying issue arise and have confidence that the adults will sort out any incidents quickly. Racist or bullying incidents are very rare.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy the range of responsibilities they can take, such as being mentors for younger children, prefect duties, raising money for charities or becoming class representatives on the school council. The school council is very active and works hard to represent all pupils.
- Attendance rates have improved and are now above average. This reflects the extensive work that the school does to engage families and the local community. Family workers, employed by the school, provide support and advice to parents who may have difficulty accessing information.
- Parents and carers are welcome in the school and the feedback from them indicates a high level of satisfaction with the work the school does. One parent wrote: "My son has achieved well in all areas of the curriculum. He is very happy here and I could not wish for a better school for my

child.”

- The breakfast club provides pupils with a calm and nutritious start to the day.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads by example and is inspirational in her commitment to improve all aspects of the school’s work. She has a high profile around the school and is well supported by her leadership team who share her passion to achieve the best for all the pupils. Their determination to succeed is evident in the on-going improvements in the attainment and progress of pupils.
- The school maintains an extensive programme of monitoring, through analysis of data, regular lesson observations and the checking of pupils’ work. Its own evaluation of its performance is accurate.
- Teachers’ performance is carefully managed. Decisions regarding their pay and promotion are directly linked to whether staff have met their targets and had sufficient impact on pupils’ achievement. Professional training is matched very closely to teachers’ needs and its impact is reflected in the improving quality of teaching and adult support observed in lessons. Staff morale is high.
- Teaching programmes are well-planned. Pupils are taught through a range of exciting topics, such as Tomb Raiders, which link subjects together whilst promoting the teaching of reading and writing. There are, however, too few occasions when pupils are encouraged to use their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- The school makes a significant contribution to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Every opportunity is taken to celebrate diversity including inviting visitors and workshops, as well as festivals and events from a variety of different faiths and cultures. Equality of opportunity is well promoted and any discrimination is tackled effectively.
- All statutory requirements are met relating to safeguarding.
- The local authority provides effective ‘light touch’ support for the school. Partnerships with other schools have been beneficial and have helped the senior leaders to receive training and share good practice.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a secure understanding of the school’s strengths and scope for improvement. Governors know how the school’s performance compares with others, how good teaching is, where further improvements are needed and what is being done to achieve them. Governors provide good support to the headteacher and hold leaders to account by asking demanding questions on all aspects of the school’s work. They undertake appropriate training, visit the school, talk to pupils and meet with staff regularly. They ensure the school uses its funds, including the pupil premium, prudently to bring about improvement and maintain a good oversight of the effectiveness of the school’s arrangements for managing teachers’ performance and linking this to pay.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 109540 |
| Local authority | Luton |
| Inspection number | 401061 |

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

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 341 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Jan McMulkin |
| Headteacher | Anne McCarthy |
| Date of previous school inspection | 21 April 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01582 574933 |
| Fax number | 01582 560518 |
| Email address | ferrars.juniors.admin@luton.gov.uk |

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