

Ladysmith Junior School

Pretoria Road, Exeter, EX1 2PT

Inspection dates 30 April–1 May 2013

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | 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

- In older classes, pupils' progress compared to their starting points has not been fast enough particularly in writing.
- Standards are not high enough given pupils' starting points. Not enough pupils reach the higher levels of attainment.
- Teachers are not consistent in ensuring that activities meet the needs of all pupils especially higher attaining pupils.
- Teachers do not always reshape tasks for pupils in lessons in the light of their responses to teachers' questions or use other ways of checking progress.
- Teachers do not always give pupils enough time to think and talk about their work.
- Teachers do not include enough practical activities to engage all pupils in their learning.
- Not all leaders, including governors, are fully involved in the school's self-evaluation and monitoring of how well the school is doing.
- Leaders are not robust enough in using monitoring systems to ensure all teaching is at least good.
- Governors do not hold the school rigorously to account to raise achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils receiving additional support through the pupil premium are making good progress so that they are achieving standards similar to others.
- Leaders have introduced better ways of teaching both mathematics and writing. This is raising pupils' standards and accelerating their progress towards good in mathematics and average in English.
- The needs of pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs are promptly identified and addressed so that the progress they are making in lessons is now similar to that of other pupils.
- The school provides a careful and nurturing environment to ensure pupils feel safe. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to their work, behave consistently well and show respect for others.
- Pupils' attendance has improved and is currently above average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons or part lessons. The headteacher and two assistant headteachers joined the inspectors for some observations. The inspectors also observed a number of small group activities led by teaching assistants.
- They held discussions with the headteacher, staff, governors, pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 31 responses to the on-line questionnaire, (Parent View), correspondence from parents and carers and discussions with parents at the end of the school day. They also took account of 22 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- They observed the school at work and examined policies and records, information about pupils' attainment and progress, teachers' planning, pupils' work and the school's priorities and planning for improvement.

Inspection team

Sarah Conway, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Simon Bishop

Additional Inspector

Terry Payne

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-size school.
- The majority of pupils come from a White British background; a small number come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- An average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs through the school is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching by:
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to think and talk about their learning
 - including more practical activities so that pupils are more actively engaged in their learning
 - ensuring teachers respond in lessons to their observations of how well individual pupils are doing to reshape tasks to ensure they make rapid progress.
- Improve standards achieved in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that tasks in lessons are carefully planned to match the different needs of pupils in the class so that all pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils, make expected progress, and a greater proportion make more than expected progress.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring senior and middle leaders are fully involved in monitoring how well the school is doing so that they are better able to drive up standards in their own areas of responsibility
 - governors making better use of information about achievement to offer greater challenge to school leaders to secure faster progress
 - teachers receive clear priorities on how to improve their teaching and are monitored closely so that all teaching is good or better.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In 2011 some pupils in Year 6, did not make the progress expected of them. It was better in mathematics because improvements in the way mathematics was taught had secured accelerated progress so that more pupils made expected progress. By 2012, pupils in Year 6 made expected progress in mathematics, but progress remained weak in English particularly writing. Early in 2012, leaders introduced new approaches to the teaching of writing and progress is now better in all year groups.
- Pupils' attainment on entry into Year 3 is broadly above average. Standards for pupils who have recently left, and those currently in Years 5 and 6, are broadly average in English but better in mathematics. Standards have not improved fast enough because of weaker teaching in previous years. Pupils' writing shows that standards are now rising so that they are as they should be in Years 3 and 4 and improving in Years 5 and 6. There are now more pupils writing at expected levels and some whose writing is even better.
- There are still not enough pupils in all year groups who are working above expected levels. This is because high attaining pupils are offered work that is too easy and this slows down the progress they can make.
- The attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium in Year 6 is improving. This is because pupil premium funding has been used to employ specialist staff to provide support to improve pupils' behaviour and boost their confidence. As a result, these pupils are developing better attitudes to learning, contributing to similar average point scores to their classmates in both English and mathematics. A higher proportion reached expected levels than those pupils not eligible for free school meals in mathematics in 2012.
- Disabled pupils and those who have a special educational need are now making progress similar to their peers. This is because the school is rigorous in ensuring that the support they put in place meets pupils' different needs and is securing improvements. Leaders are more robust in assessing pupils early in Year 3, so that they can quickly put in place targeted programmes, additional support in lessons and small group work, which helps pupils with their learning.
- Pupils enjoy reading and are enthusiastic about exploring a range of texts. Pupils make better progress in reading in Years 3 and 4 than in Years 5 and 6. Pupils make effective use of punctuation to help them in understanding a new text, but do not always make good use of linking sounds to letters to help them read words with which they are unfamiliar. Reading is routinely taught in small ability groups and these groups are being used to target those who need support to improve their reading.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, it is not yet good enough to ensure that all pupils make rapid progress.
- Where teaching is weaker, questioning is not used effectively to challenge pupils to think for themselves and they are not given enough time to talk about their learning. Where it is stronger, teachers use questioning both to probe and check pupils' understanding. Pupils are encouraged to challenge each other. In one mathematics lesson, pupils were asked to take on the role of the teacher and one pupil asked another to explain how he might estimate the size of an angle.
- New approaches to the teaching of writing are enabling pupils to know how to make their writing both more lively and accurate. For example, in Year 6 writing lessons, pupils were making very effective use of figurative language such as metaphors and personification to write about a special event that happened to them in the holidays.
- Too often, work is too easy for higher attaining pupils or they spend too long on one activity and their attention wanders.
- Although the use of real-life situations is being used successfully, particularly in mathematics to

improve the engagement of boys, some teachers do not plan enough activities which involve pupils in practical activities to reinforce new knowledge.

- Pupils make rapid progress when the teacher challenges them to identify what they need to show in their work in order to succeed. This enables them to self-assess and to offer advice to each other on how to improve. Sometimes teachers do not take opportunities to redirect teaching when pupils show they have not fully understood or are finding work too easy. As a result, the progress of some pupils slows.
- Teacher assistants are used well to support less able pupils and those with special educational needs, helping them to make similar progress to their classmates. They work effectively with these pupils in small groups using practical tasks to reinforce what is taught in shared sessions.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and accurately. It is better in mathematics where pupils are expected to respond to teachers' comments and try again. Pupils are learning how to check their own writing, but are not always provided with clear prompts by teachers to help them with the next steps.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Teachers work hard to ensure classes and corridors are attractive in a building which is scheduled to be replaced. Classrooms have a good mix of pupils' work and displays which pupils routinely use to support them in their work, including useful vocabulary and ideas to support them to improve their writing. This has contributed to the very positive attitudes pupils display in lessons.
- Pupils want to learn and support each other in most lessons well. They work in groups collaboratively and comment helpfully on each other's work when they are given the opportunity. They are confident to ask for help when they need it. At times, when work is too easy, the teacher spends too long talking or pupils do not understand fully what to do next, their attention wanders.
- Pupils are keen to come to school and show their respect for the teachers and other adults who help them. Parents are also highly supportive of the school and particularly appreciative of the attention given to ensuring pupils are well cared for and feel safe. Pupils are punctual and attendance has improved so that it is now above average.
- Behaviour around school is good and pupils mix well with each other in the playground, both when socialising with each other and when taking part in organised games. The school has a good range of outside spaces which are carefully supervised to ensure pupils are safe.
- Pupils play a full part in caring for each other. There are a number of groups such as anti-bullying ambassadors, the school council and the health and safety group which work with adults to ensure the school is a happy and safe place to be. They all have a secure understanding of the different forms of bullying, including cyber and e-bullying, and they know whom to go if they are concerned about anything.
- Presentation in books has improved which reflects the pride pupils have for their school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- School evaluation has been too generous, with leaders not being rigorous enough in comparing pupils' achievement to achievement nationally. In the past, expectations of what pupils can achieve have not been high enough.
- Senior leaders are developing in their role and share the headteacher's commitment to improving standards. They are beginning to play a part in monitoring how well teachers help pupils to progress well. They have a number of responsibilities as well as each teaching a class. This limits the contribution they can make to improving teaching across the school.
- The headteacher now ensures there is a wealth of information about how well pupils and groups of pupils are doing against their starting points and national averages. She uses this information

to ensure that steps are taken to ensure that all groups are supported to make progress. She took prompt action when too many pupils did not reach expected standards in writing in 2011 to improve the teaching of writing. All teachers took part in training to adopt new approaches to teaching writing. This has resulted in improved standards of writing in pupils' books.

- Relations with the neighbouring infant school have improved and teachers from both schools are working together to ensure that they agree assessments of the attainment of pupils when they transfer from the infant school to the junior school.
- In previous years, when standards in mathematics fell, the school had also taken steps to improve the teaching of mathematics by introducing more practical activities in lessons to engage boys. The impact of this initiative is apparent in the improved numbers of pupils who reached expected standards in 2012.
- In addition, with higher proportions of disabled pupils and those with a special educational needs arriving in the school both in Year 3 and at other times during the school year, the school is more rigorous in identifying early those who struggle with their learning. Leaders now ensure support is more effective so that the progress of these pupils is similar to that of their peers. This improvement, together with those referred to above, shows the school's capacity to improve.
- School records show that there are few incidents of racial discrimination and bullying but, when there are, the school is rigorous in following them up.
- There is a wide range of activities, both inside and beyond the formal curriculum, which provide numerous opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Middle leaders are not sufficiently involved in all aspects of school self-evaluation to enable them to ensure that the areas of the school's work for which they have responsibility are performing well.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that the school meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils.
- In recent years the school has not received effective support from the local authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has challenged leaders to ensure that once teachers are observed by senior leaders they receive training where necessary and are monitored to ensure improvement happens. However, governors are not making effective use of the Teachers' Standards and pay scales to secure consistency good teaching. Although the governing body shares leaders' commitment to improve achievement, it does not yet make good use of information about the performance of pupils to offer sufficient challenge to leaders to secure good progress. Governors acknowledge that they would benefit from training on how school performance data compare with achievement nationally. Governors keep careful control on school finances and are involved in securing value for money, for example in providing good quality school meals. The pupil premium is allocated appropriately to close gaps in pupils' performance and has been monitored by senior leaders and governors. It has helped to improve results in Year 6 and is making a difference in younger classes. Recently appointed governors have increased the expertise on the governing body.

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

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| Unique reference number | 113081 |
| Local authority | Devon |
| Inspection number | 413017 |

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 | 324 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mark Drew |
| Headteacher | Jackie Jackson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 6–7 July 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01392 255554 |
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