

# Ludlow Church of England School

Bromfield Road, Burway, Ludlow, SY8 1GJ

**Inspection dates** 17–18 October 2013

|                                |                      |                             |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory                | 3        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Requires improvement</b> | <b>3</b> |
| 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

- Students are not making consistently good progress in all subjects in Key Stage 3.
- In two of the last three years, students did not make the expected progress in Key Stage 4. In the last school year students made better progress in English and much better progress in mathematics.
- In 2012 students left the school with standards that were below those found nationally. In the last school year standards at GCSE improved in English and improved greatly in mathematics and in science.
- The most-able students are not achieving the highest grades at GCSE across the full range of other subjects.
- Not all teachers provide lively and challenging lessons that allow all students to do at least some work on their own.
- Teachers do not always make good use of support staff or a wide enough variety of resources when planning lessons.
- Teachers are not consistently producing regular and reliable information about students' progress, particularly in English in Key Stage 3, and using it to help raise achievement.
- The school's leaders have not always been quick enough in identifying areas of underachievement and taking effective action to tackle them.
- Leaders have brought improvements to the quality of teaching but these have not been consistent throughout the school and in all subjects.

### The school has the following strengths

- Students' behaviour, both in lessons and around school, is good. The school has very effective systems for managing behaviour.
- Relationships between staff and students are strong, productive and based on mutual respect.
- The social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects of students' education are given a high priority and have a clear impact on their development.
- A well-planned careers programme has resulted in all leavers moving on to education, training or employment in the last two years.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 lessons, of which four were jointly observed with the headteacher, one of the deputy headteachers or the assistant headteacher. In addition, the inspection team looked at students' work in their books and listened to them read.
- There were meetings with groups of students, senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 37 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View. Inspectors also considered the 21 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team examined the school's own data on students' recent and current progress; planning and monitoring documentation; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

|                                 |                      |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Richard Boswell, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Anna Fisher                     | Additional Inspector |
| Helen Owen                      | Additional Inspector |
| Michael Rose                    | Additional Inspector |

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Ludlow Church of England School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The vast majority of students come from White British backgrounds.
- The percentage of students who are supported through the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of students supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- Nine students in Year 10 and nine students in Year 11 attend work-related courses for half a day per week, principally at two local colleges, Lower Bush Farm, and Walford and North Shropshire College.
- The school receives the support of a Local Leader of Education from Meole Brace School, Shrewsbury.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that all lessons are of a consistently good or better quality by teachers:
  - planning more imaginative and challenging work that allows students to develop independent learning skills
  - providing different groups of students with a variety of resources in lessons that are at the right level of difficulty to challenge them and support their learning
  - making more effective use of support staff to meet the needs of all students in the classroom.
- Improve students' progress and standards by:
  - sustaining and further developing the recent improvements in English, mathematics and science
  - giving more students the confidence and independent learning skills to aim for the very highest grades at GCSE in all of their subjects.
- Strengthen leaders' roles in monitoring the school's performance so that they have a swifter impact on students' achievement by:
  - making sure all teachers are secure in their assessment of the progress of individual students, particularly in Key Stage 3
  - making better use of the school's increasingly detailed information about students' progress to identify and tackle potential underachievement

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Students enter the school with skills and understanding that are broadly average. In 2011 most students left the school with standards that were still broadly average and, in 2012, below average. Standards improved in 2013. This means that students are not consistently making rapid enough progress.
- The proportion of students making and exceeding the expected progress in mathematics in 2013 was much increased on the previous year. The proportion in English increased more moderately. Overall, this also indicates that, year on year, students' progress is not rapid enough in all subjects.
- Standards in English at the end of Key Stage 4 fell in 2012 to below the national average. In mathematics and science they were well below average. Results improved in 2013 in English and improved greatly in mathematics and science.
- The most-able students show better achievement than other groups in mathematics and English, year on year. A greater proportion of these pupils than found nationally have made and exceeded the expected progress. In 2013, the percentage achieving A and A\* grades in English was similar to the national average of the previous year while in mathematics it was above it. The proportion achieving the highest grades in many other subjects, however, is lower than that found nationally.
- Some students are entered for examinations earlier than is usual. This has been done with some success in mathematics and in English, with the aim of motivating the students and providing examination practice. All students are able to take the examination again to improve their grade.
- School records show that the progress of students in Key Stage 3 has improved in science and mathematics in the last year, but leaders acknowledge that it is not possible to make clear judgements of progress in English in Key Stage 3. This is because teachers' assessments have not been consistently accurate. Based on inspectors' lesson observations, discussions with students, looking at their books and analysis of reliable assessment information, students are not making rapid enough progress overall in Key Stage 3.
- The school recognises the importance of developing students' interest and skills in reading. Inspectors listened to some Year 7 students who were weaker readers. They had not all been given books that were appropriate for their levels but they all used appropriate strategies to help them read. Inspectors also discussed reading with groups of students and observed students making good progress when using a reading programme on computers.
- A small number of carefully selected students take work-related courses off the school site in land-based operations, hairdressing and engineering. In 2012 and 2013 all students taking these courses passed at Level 1. The school closely monitors attendance and safeguarding arrangements for students on these courses.
- The proportion of students gaining a good pass at GCSE in art and in physical education has been well above the national average in recent years.
- The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs has improved in 2013 in both English and mathematics. Thorough and careful screening identifies

these students and the Pupil Support Centre is a base in which students can develop speech and language skills, in particular. Students always return to mainstream lessons as swiftly as possible.

- In 2011 the gap between the attainment of students who were supported through the pupil premium and other students was a cause for concern. It was eighteen months in English and over two years in mathematics. This gap narrowed in 2012 to ten months and eighteen months respectively. School records indicate that the gap in the attainment of 5 A\*-C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, narrowed from 2012 to 2013. From 2011 to 2013 the gap in the progress made by this group and other students narrowed in English and did not widen in mathematics.
- The improvement in achievement for pupils supported through the pupil premium resulted from the extra funding being used to offer additional one-to-one and small group tuition, access to a computer-based support programme for literacy and the services of specialist support staff. The school has also used Year 7 catch-up funding for literacy to offer similar support to students entering the school.

### **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- During the last year the school has focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning and, as a result, there have been improvements in the progress students make. Teaching is still not consistently good in all subjects, however, and it varies particularly in the quality of assessment.
- Students are well behaved in lessons, but teachers do not give them enough opportunities to work on their own, do their own research and tackle challenging problem-solving activities. Too few lessons contain imaginative approaches to stimulate students' interest and to foster a love of learning.
- Teachers do not always plan for the most effective use of support staff in lessons. This means that support staff tend to become spectators rather than being actively engaged in the well-targeted assistance of individuals or groups of students. Inspectors saw some very effective one-to-one interactions between students and support staff, however, in a few lessons.
- Teachers do not use a wide enough variety of resources in their lessons for students of differing abilities. Students, and particularly lower and middle achievers, are too often all given the same task to complete. The most able students are frequently given additional tasks in lessons but the needs of others are sometimes overlooked.
- The feedback given to students through questioning in lessons and through the marking of written work is inconsistent. Although some teachers ask searching questions in class and target them well to assess how well individuals and groups have grasped an idea or a process, others rely too readily on a few, more responsive, students. While homework is given regularly, the marking of it does not always give a clear indication of how students can improve their work.
- There are examples of high expectations among teachers and some outstanding teaching practice in English, mathematics and science. The school has developed a coaching system for sharing this expertise with all staff. In one Year 11 English lesson seen during the inspection, for example, all students were fully engaged in assessing their own work against the examination criteria and were highly motivated by seeing exactly how they could improve their marks.

- A number of the examples of outstanding quality of teaching seen during the inspection were in practical activities in which students were able to work together in a 'hands-on' approach to their learning. For example in a Year 10 class investigating resistant materials, students learnt how machines in the workshop are used in everyday manufacturing and in a physical education lesson groups of Year 9 students devised a gymnastics routine using new equipment. These lessons met the needs of all students and involved a 'multi-sensory' approach that was particularly helpful for some students who have special educational needs.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of students in lessons is good and this was confirmed in the school's records and by inspectors' discussions with students and lesson observations. Students are very clear about expectations of good behaviour and staff are consistent and fair in applying the school's system of sanctions when required.
- Behaviour around the school is also good during break and lunch times and between lessons. All the members of the inspection team commented on the courtesy and friendliness of students shown to staff, to visitors and to each other. Students show pride in their school and respect for their environment and there are strong, positive relationships between teachers and their classes.
- The management of behaviour in the school is a strength. It is well led and all staff show a commitment to applying school policies and supporting the school's inclusive ethos. The rate of fixed-term exclusions is low compared to national averages and only one permanent exclusion took place in the last two years, well below the national average. Where issues of challenging behaviour arise, behaviour support agreements are used to work with parents and the local authority on finding solutions.
- In discussions with inspectors, older students commented on how behaviour had improved in recent years. Students say that bullying has not been completely eradicated but that they are aware of what to do and who to go to if they are bullied or witness bullying.
- Students are very aware of all aspects of keeping themselves safe. They receive helpful and relevant guidance about staying safe on the internet and learn to manage their online safety by guarding their identity and reporting any concerns. Any students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are particularly well cared for by the school. Inspectors saw evidence of these students developing their self-confidence by continuing to make progress in their academic work in spite of the challenges they face.
- Students show independence and initiative in activities outside of lessons. This is most evident in their own organisation of fundraising events for charity. This degree of independence does not yet extend to their learning in the classroom.
- Attendance has steadily improved for the last three years for all groups of students, including disabled students, those who have special educational needs and students supported through the pupil premium, and is now just above the national average. Persistent absence has halved in five years and is now well below the national average for secondary schools. Punctuality has also improved.

**The leadership and management requires improvement**

- In the last three years, the school's leaders have not always been quick enough in identifying underachievement and taking swift, effective action. At times this has led to a decline in students' achievement and to the current judgement that achievement is not yet good.
- Recent improvements, however, have had an impact on the school's performance at the end of Key Stage 4 and demonstrate leaders' capacity to bring about further improvements in achievement and the quality of teaching. For example, responsibilities for the oversight of core subjects have been shared out between members of the leadership team and they have started to tackle underperformance in teaching effectively. Targeted and timely interventions have accelerated the progress of students in Year 11. Recently improved tracking of students' progress has also led to earlier identification of potential underachievement. The impact of these recent initiatives, however, is limited by the short timescale they have been in place.
- The school's monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching is regular and increasingly focused on specific areas of concern, such as the accuracy of assessment at Key Stage 3. The lack of reliable assessment by teachers in English at Key Stage 3 means that underachievement has not always been swiftly identified and tackled. Leaders of different subjects consistently apply the school's policies on, for example, behaviour management and developing skills in literacy.
- The headteacher's approach to performance management is evident in the staff's understanding of what is required in order to gain increases in salary. Staff, and particularly newly qualified teachers, are well supported by a programme of professional development that is targeted to meet their needs.
- The judgements of the quality of teaching made by inspectors during the course of the inspection largely reflected the school's own assessment of teaching over time. Where shared observations took place, the school leaders' judgements were in line with those of the inspection team.
- The school has a very successful careers programme that runs throughout students' time in the school. It offers independent and impartial advice from an external agency as well as ongoing support using the school's own expertise. This has led to all students in the last two years moving on to further education, training or employment.
- The safeguarding of students' welfare meets all statutory requirements and there are examples of particularly good practice in the school's keeping of records and working with a wide range of other agencies. Procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of those students who spend time off the school site are fully in place.
- The school's commitment to promoting the social, moral, spiritual and cultural education of its students is a strength. The school's house system means that students from all year groups are brought together. Older students act as mentors to younger students and this leads to all students feeling secure and having a sense of belonging to the school. There are many opportunities for students to develop leadership skills and active citizenship, for example in sports and charity events. There are strong links to a charity foundation in Uganda that helps to build students' understanding of other cultures and visits to galleries and places of historical interest broaden their wider cultural awareness. Students are encouraged to reflect on moral choices in a 'Thought for the Day' during morning tutor time.
- The range of subjects studied meets the needs of all students. The school has shown a



commitment to tackling discrimination and to promoting equality of opportunity through providing access to all GCSE subjects for the vast majority of students. Work-related courses are available when these are appropriate to students' needs. The school provides opportunities for students to develop the study skills they will need to be successful in examinations as well as personal and social skills that will assist them in life beyond school.

- The school's partnership with parents is particularly successful and the improvements in attendance and decline in exclusions are evidence of strong parental engagement. The school also has a partnership with four local primary schools and with local sixth form providers. The headteacher has a productive and mutually beneficial link with a Local Leader in Education and this had led to improvements in the school's monitoring of students' progress.
- The local authority has played a role in helping the school to recognise its weaknesses and to develop its strengths. The collaboration of subject advisers in a number of key areas has been particularly beneficial in improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - In the last eighteen months the governing body has considerably developed the skills and expertise of governors through training and consultation. They now have a clear and realistic view of what is happening in the school and take all their statutory duties very seriously. They make good use of committees and link governors, as well as external advisors, to develop a good understanding of the detailed information provided by the school and how to compare it to other similar schools. They use this information to offer a robust and constructive challenge to senior leaders, asking searching questions and requiring detailed responses. The governors are knowledgeable about strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and how increases in pay are linked to a teacher's performance. They have regular contact with teachers and an involvement in the day-to-day life of the school. The governors are financially prudent and are aware of the impact of school spending such as the pupil premium funding that has improved the progress of this group of students in 2013.



## 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

|                                |            |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 123587     |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Shropshire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 427044     |

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

|  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Secondary                     |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary controlled          |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11–16                         |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                         |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 734                           |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body            |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Annabel Gilmour               |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Philip Poulton                |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 22 February 2012              |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01584 872691                  |
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