

Ladygrove Primary School

Old Office Road, Dawley, Telford, TF4 2LF

Inspection dates

7–8 November 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		Requires improvement	3
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

- Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is below average and their progress in all year groups requires improvement.
- Too much teaching requires improvement. Some teachers do not have an accurate understanding of what pupils have already achieved as a basis for planning their next steps in learning.
- While pupils are courteous and well behaved as they move around the school, in some lessons they do not concentrate on their tasks because they are not sufficiently challenged by the work set for them.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is not yet fully effective in supporting pupils' reading and writing skills.
- Some subject leaders do not have the skills to drive improvement sufficiently rapidly.
- Staffing difficulties last year put a great strain on systems and processes within the school, and leaders have not yet given full attention to using monitoring and evaluation to raise the standard of teaching and pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Recent school actions, supported by the local authority, have been very effective in improving progress across all year groups and for pupils of all abilities.
- Governors have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and undertake high-quality training to help them support and challenge the school.
- Pupils enjoy the various subjects they study, and the exciting range of clubs.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know how to stay safe outside school. Most play happily and show great respect and care for each other within a warm and nurturing environment.
- The school is committed to environmental issues and has led projects in energy conservation. They use the beautiful grounds, wind turbine and solar panels to create a wide variety of learning opportunities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes and visited 22 lessons. The headteacher and deputy headteacher shared in the joint observation of six lessons.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, parents, teachers, the headteacher, three members of the governing body and two local authority officers.
- Inspectors examined the 39 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Information on the school website was reviewed.
- Inspectors looked at records of pupils' achievement and heard pupils read. They looked at pupils' work, judgements made by leaders about the quality of teaching, and the training activities undertaken to bring about improvement.
- Attendance was checked, along with safeguarding records, records of pupils' behaviour, and the use of the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government to support groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority). They also looked at the use made of extra government funding for physical education.
- Plans for improvement were examined against the evaluations carried out by school leaders.

Inspection team

Lynne Bradbury, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Helen Owen

Additional Inspector

Andrew Bailey

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ladygrove Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is lower than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average.
- In 2013, the school failed to meet the government's floor standards, which set minimum expectations for progress and attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently good or better so that all pupils make rapid progress in English and mathematics by:
 - improving teachers' understanding of what pupils have already achieved in order to plan more carefully to meet individual needs through high-quality, challenging activities
 - matching the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) precisely to pupils' learning needs, so they make more rapid progress in reading and writing
 - helping pupils to understand how to make judgements about their own success in learning, so they have a better understanding of how to improve their skills
 - making sure that the behaviour and attitudes of pupils in all lessons contribute positively to their learning.
- Raise the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - making sure that leaders plan urgent action to address improvement needs following their lesson observations and reviews of work in pupils' books
 - developing the role of subject leaders in challenging and supporting other members of staff to improve their effectiveness.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Children join the Reception class with skills that are generally below those expected for their age. Their progress requires improvement during this year because teachers not always plan activities which are based on a clear understanding of what the children can already do. As a result, they start Year 1 with skills which are still below those expected.
- Achievement in Years 1, 2 and 3 is held back because learning activities do not always meet pupils' individual learning needs. Recent staff training in assessment and planning has helped teachers to improve this match, but some pupils are still not doing work at an appropriate level, including in phonics (the sounds that letters make). The results of the Year 1 screening check on phonics in 2013 were below nationally expected levels.
- As pupils move through the school their achievement in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics improves, but their attainment is still below the level expected for their age. In each of the last two years, pupils have left Year 2 around six months behind pupils nationally. In 2013, pupils left Year 6 nearly two terms behind national expectations in reading, a term in writing, and six months in mathematics.
- Despite these weaknesses, by Year 6 children have developed a love of reading. They read fluently and with understanding and are able to talk knowledgeably about their favourite books and authors. Some are able to talk about the technical aspects of how language is used by authors to share meaning and emotion.
- Progress checks across the school suggest that training to improve teachers' planning to meet learning needs has led to a significant improvement in progress for pupils of all abilities, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- The pupil premium is used to pay for one-to-one tuition, small-group work and wider school activities for those who are eligible for the funding. Eligible pupils were on average about five months behind their classmates in reading, two months behind in writing, and two months in mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2013. Because of the improvements in teaching in the summer term, gaps were beginning to close in other year groups. Current assessments indicate that these gaps are reducing further, and this is supported by work in books in most age groups.
- The school is used by other schools in the local authority as a centre for sport and has invested heavily in this area. The extra funding for physical education supports this work. Pupils have a very healthy and lively attitude towards physical activity.
- Recent school data and the work in pupils' books show that most pupils in the current Years 4 to 6 are now making better progress because staff have a better understanding of their learning needs and set interesting and challenging tasks. Pupils in these older age groups engage with interest and enthusiasm in solving problems, applying skills, working with others and developing an understanding of their own learning processes. They do not have enough opportunities to make judgements about their own progress so they can develop higher-level learning skills.
- Pupils across the age range are given 'steps to success' to guide their learning. In some classes, pupils work with partners to check their progress against 'statements of success'.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching in most classes is improving rapidly, but it is not yet consistently good enough to promote good achievement and in some classes it requires further improvement.
- Teachers in the Reception classes are ambitious for their children’s learning but do not yet have a clear understanding of the skills that the children have already developed. This means that planning for new learning does not lead to sufficient progress. When children have the opportunity to explore the full range of the indoor and outdoor environment with activities which support their learning needs, they make better progress.
- Teachers in the lower year groups do not all have a clear understanding of what pupils have already learned, so they are not making sure that all learning activities meet learning needs and support good progress. In phonics, teachers give well-focused work to their teaching groups, but do not always make sure that other groups have work which stretches them.
- Teachers in the older age groups carefully check what pupils already know and plan interesting activities at the correct level of challenge so that pupils make good progress. They also give pupils the opportunity to work together on high-level investigations, with clear guidance for success. This is beginning to raise standards.
- The tracking of the progress made by those pupils who have special educational needs requires further improvement. These pupils generally make good progress when working in small groups but are not always provided with work at an appropriate level of difficulty in class, so some do not make enough progress in lessons.
- Most teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils’ progress in individual tuition, small-group work and whole-class lessons.
- Marking and feedback have improved over recent months and give pupils valuable help in improving their work. In some classes, where pupils are given the opportunity to follow up the marking, progress is improving further.
- Most members of staff make sure that pupils behave well and concentrate on their work. These nurturing relationships help pupils to gain new skills confidently.
- In a minority of classes, pupils’ behaviour and attitudes do not support their progress, and this is generally because they find the work they are doing either too easy or too hard.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Disruption is rare in most lessons, but where learning activities do not engage pupils enough they become unsettled, lose interest in their work and lose important learning time.
- In the most successful lessons, where challenging learning activities are matched well to learning needs, pupils’ attitudes and behaviour make a significant contribution to their learning. They share ideas, cooperate and collaborate to solve problems or to investigate topics. However, on occasion pupils become bored and their attitudes deteriorate when work is not set at the correct level.
- The school has set up systems to give good support to pupils who have difficulty managing their own behaviour. These pupils generally work well with their classmates where their learning

activities motivate and challenge them, but they too often lose interest when teaching does not inspire them.

- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know how to stay safe outside school. They understand the many forms that bullying can take, and say that it is rare in school, but dealt with effectively if it happens.
- Pupils, staff and parents say that behaviour is dealt with well, and pupils like the many rewards offered for hard work and good behaviour. However, in some classes, these are not used effectively.
- Pupils move around the school and play on the playground sensibly, and show respect for each other's views and ideas. They are courteous and polite to each other, adults and visitors, and they enjoy talking about their school. They appreciate the wide range of clubs available to them.
- Attendance is above average and the school quickly tackles any problems as they arise.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Staffing difficulties in the last two years have limited the ability of school leaders to give full attention to the development needs of the school. At one stage they held up the opportunities for staff training, and pupils' achievement declined.
- During 2013, the leadership structure was revised and this gave the opportunity for school improvement to become more focused. This led to training for each member of staff to address areas for development and better meet pupils' learning needs. This is improving pupils' progress in most year groups, but some teachers have been too slow to build on this training.
- The school is highly regarded in the local community and parents greatly appreciate the headteacher's dedication to establishing a happy and purposeful school, and raising the profile of environmental understanding over many years.
- Parents, staff and pupils express a high level of support for the school. They greatly appreciate the work done to establish areas for quiet reflection, competitive sports, physically challenging apparatus and the exciting learning opportunities associated with the wind turbine and solar panels.
- Monitoring and evaluation activities by governors and school leaders have become more rigorous during 2013. Current action plans have increased the level of challenge for staff, the focus on pupils' achievement and the link between staff performance and pay, and this has led to better progress in most classes. However, there is still a minority of classes where teaching is not improving fast enough.
- The curriculum gives many exciting opportunities for pupils' learning, including every pupil learning to play a musical instrument and a wide variety of sporting opportunities. The school's wind turbine and solar panels show the focus on environmental issues.
- The good promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is shown in the warm and supportive relationships in most classes, which also illustrate the success of the school's strong commitment to tackling discrimination and promoting equal opportunities.

- The local authority recognised the staffing difficulties in the school and has worked in partnership to give training to those taking up leadership posts. Partnerships with other schools have also supported this process.

- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors undertake a range of high-quality training in order to help them to hold the school to account for its work. They fulfil all their statutory duties, including for safeguarding and finances. They have established systems to ensure that staff salaries match the contribution made to pupils' achievement, and use a range of monitoring activities to identify the school's strengths and areas for development. They link judgements made to plans for development and appropriate staff training. They ensure that resources like the pupil premium and extra physical education funding are used effectively, and as intended, to raise pupils' achievement.

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	123438
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	427129

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	276
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Eason
Headteacher	Paul Sanderson
Date of previous school inspection	18 May 2011
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