

Leys Junior School

Flowery Leys Lane, Alfreton, DE55 7HA

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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.

- The headteacher and governors have tackled the weaknesses identified by the last inspection with increasing success. As a result, over the last year the quality of teaching has improved to a good standard, progress has increased and standards have risen in writing.
- Pupils are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and achieving well.
- The teaching is lively. The teachers use their subject knowledge well to teach pupils about a range of interesting topics.
- Reading is strongly promoted and pupils' progress is accelerating.
- Although classroom spaces are small, they have attractive displays and are well organised.
- Pupils behave well, concentrate on their work and respond very positively to the headteacher's and teachers' high expectations.
- The school's systems for rewarding good behaviour and promoting hard work are particularly effective.
- The school has good arrangements to keep pupils as safe as possible.
- The headteacher keeps a very careful check on the quality of teaching and the progress that the pupils make.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in mathematics is not yet as rapid as in reading and writing.
- The adults who work alongside the teachers do not have a big enough impact on the pupils' learning in some lessons.
- The headteacher and governors are not yet evaluating whether their spending of the pupil premium is resulting in good value for money.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 19 lessons and, in addition, made a number of short visits to lessons. They spoke with pupils in lessons and at playtime, heard some pupils read and held a meeting with a group of older pupils.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school’s plans for improvement, and policies about keeping pupils safe. They also examined the work in pupils’ books, and a range of data about their progress.
- The inspectors held discussions with teachers, the headteacher, three members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- The views of 23 parents were analysed through the Parent View website. In addition, the views of parents who spoke to inspectors were considered. The inspectors also considered the views expressed in questionnaires returned by 14 members of staff.

Inspection team

Christopher Parker, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Malcolm Johnstone

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than average for schools of this type.
- Most of the pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are both well below the national averages.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs at school action (pupils who need extra support with their learning) is above average. The proportions supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs are also above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is well above the national average. This funding supports those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, any in the care of the local authority, and pupils who have a parent serving in the armed services. In some year groups the number of pupils supported by this funding is very small.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The headteacher has been in post since just before the last inspection in September 2012. A new Chair of the Governing Body, and a new Vice Chair, were elected in September 2013.
- Two new classrooms are under construction to provide more space for teachers and pupils to work in comfortably.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more pupils make faster than expected progress, particularly in mathematics, by making sure that:
 - adults who work alongside teachers are well briefed and effectively deployed
 - pupils of all abilities are always set mathematical problems that stretch their thinking
 - pupils are frequently reminded to present their work neatly.
- Refine the school's evaluation of the impact of the pupil premium to take account of the cost of extra teaching and group work, and its impact on pupils' progress, so that future decisions can be taken with a view to obtaining the best value for money.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Over the last year the progress that pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics has improved considerably. The pupils who left the school at the end of the last academic year made as much progress during Year 6 as they made in total in the previous three years. Although much improved their achievement had not reached a level that was securely good.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 6 who made progress at the expected rate was better than or similar to the national average, in 2013. However, the proportion of pupils making rapid progress was a little below the national average in reading and mathematics. Progress is now good overall because more pupils are making rapid progress, from their different starting points, and standards are continuing to rise.
- Pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress in lessons with any pupil in danger of falling behind being picked up quickly. Analysis of the information in the school records shows that many more pupils are on course to make more rapid progress than seen previously. In reading, for example, half of the pupils in Years 5 and 6 are on course to make more progress than is usually expected from Year 3 to 6.
- Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are making good progress in lessons and the work in their writing and mathematics books shows they are successfully gaining new skills and knowledge. For example, in a lesson in Year 3 and 4 the pupils gave clear explanations when identifying similarities and differences in photographs of their own town and other places.
- The school's analysis of pupils' performance last year highlighted weaknesses in spelling. To tackle this, the teachers have introduced frequent short lessons that help the pupils in all years to identify and learn spelling rules and patterns. Work in their books shows that spelling has improved and is more accurate as a result of these developments.
- Over the last year, the quality of pupils' writing across the school has improved. Younger pupils draw well on interesting topic themes to help them make their writing interesting. Many older pupils are able to vary the length of sentences, use punctuation correctly, and make their writing interesting by using well-chosen adverbs and lively adjectives. They recognise the importance of editing and re-drafting their work to ensure it is polished, and often do this by turning to a dictionary to check spellings or seek alternative words.
- Not as many pupils are making rapid progress in mathematics as they are in reading and writing. The most able are doing well because they are set problems to solve that make them think hard. In other ability groups teachers often set pupils interesting challenges, but there are occasions when pupils are given calculations that are too easy for them.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium in Year 6 made similar progress last year to their classmates. However, they left school about four terms behind them in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result of the additional teaching in 'raising achievement' groups, this group of pupils in the current Year 5 and 6 classes are now only about one term behind their classmates.

The quality of teaching is good

- The teaching in English and mathematics has improved since the last inspection because the headteacher has set the teachers very clear targets, organised training and encouraged them to

visit other schools to observe outstanding teaching. As a result, teaching is now usually good, and some is outstanding and leads to pupils' quickening progress.

- The teachers create a good climate for learning. The school's values are positively and consistently promoted. Expectations of behaviour, concentration and perseverance are high, and pupils respond well to this. Classrooms are kept neat and tidy so that pupils can work effectively in the often small classroom spaces.
- At the start of each lesson, the teachers make sure that all of the books the pupils need are on their desks ready to use. This was the case in a lesson in Years 3 and 4 where the teacher used photographs of India to stimulate discussion before the pupils were asked to write about Grandpa Chatterji. In the discussion, the teacher skilfully questioned some of the pupils' perceptions about life in India.
- Teachers use interesting fiction and non-fiction texts to encourage pupils to write in different styles. In a lesson in Years 5 and 6 the most-able pupils refined and edited their writing, based on a science fiction novel, by varying the length of sentences and checking that the punctuation was accurate.
- In all lessons the teachers set the pupils bronze, silver and gold learning targets. These make the purpose of the lesson very clear, and make sure that pupils always have a next step to aim for. Teachers phrase these targets in everyday language so that pupils understand what is expected of them and try to aim high.
- Where the teaching is outstanding, this is because the teachers use their subject knowledge very effectively. In a Year 5 and 6 science lesson on forces, for example, pupils made rapid progress because the teacher questioned and prompted them to set out a hypothesis and then test it out. This lesson was enhanced by the pupils' positive attitudes and approach to a practical activity which they undertook sensibly and without any fuss.
- The adults who work alongside the teachers are not always effective in lessons. Where they are well briefed to work with small groups, such as in support of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, they help the pupils to make faster progress. However, there are times when they are not used very well, making only infrequent suggestions to pupils about their work and not helping them to move on quickly.
- Most mathematics lessons engage the pupils because they are set problems that interest them. In discussion, the most-able pupils say they like the hard problems that their teacher sets for them. However, there are occasions when other groups of pupils have to complete calculations which they can already do before they are given more difficult work and this hampers their progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons they listen carefully to the teacher and rarely need reminding to work quietly. The school is calm, and pupils concentrate well on their work. This is important because some classrooms are in 'open' areas where any noise would disturb others.
- Discussions with pupils in the playground indicate that behaviour is usually good. Pupils say that incidents of misbehaviour are infrequent, but that when they do occur they are dealt with promptly. Pupils refer to incidents of bullying that happened some time ago and say it is now rare. They are well informed about different forms of bullying and know what to do should it

occur.

- Rewards play an important role in encouraging good behaviour, and recognising effort and good work. The 'Ley' is the school's own currency. Teachers give 'Leys' as rewards. The pupils collect these, bank them, keep a check on their account, and withdraw them to spend at the rewards shop.
- Pupils show a good deal of care and concern for each other. They look after books and keep their classrooms tidy. Most pupils, although not yet all, present their work carefully. The drive to improve handwriting is bringing improvements, although pupils are not routinely reminded by all of their teachers that neat handwriting is important.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Checks are carried out on all adults to make sure that they are permitted to work with children. Policies to keep pupils safe are in place and staff are trained so that they know the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about a pupil's wellbeing.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's strong leadership has been the key to the school's good improvement. Her expectations are high, and the teachers are very receptive to ideas that raise standards. The school improvement plan sets out very clearly what needs to improve further, who is responsible, and how success will be judged.
- The subject leaders for English and mathematics lead by example, and are training and supporting other members of staff very effectively. They are involved in making decisions about the use of the pupil premium, and keep a close eye on the impact that 'raising achievement' groups have on pupils' progress.
- Each teacher's performance is carefully monitored. Their targets are closely linked to the school's number one priority to increase the rate at which the pupils make progress. Any aspects of teaching that are not good when the headteacher visits a lesson are followed up in further observations and scrutiny of pupils' work, to make sure that improvements are made speedily.
- The progress of all groups of pupils is carefully tracked. Detailed analysis of pupils' progress, term by term, shows that there have been clear improvements. Nevertheless, the school is, rightly, identifying those who are not keeping up with their classmates and is providing more support for them.
- The headteacher's ambition for all pupils was evident in an assembly. This assembly also illustrated well the school's commitment to equality of opportunity and compassion for others. The pupils reflected maturely on the difficulties faced by those who overcome considerable disability.
- The subjects, themes and topics that the pupils are taught provide them with many interesting opportunities to learn and make progress. They are clearly enjoying the current topic on chocolate! Links with Aztec history and art have resulted in pupils finding out about the Aztec sunstone and calendar. As a result, they want to know more.
- The extra funding to promote sport in primary schools is being used to provide the pupils with an enhanced range of opportunities for physical exercise both during and after school, such as dance. A sports coach now leads lunchtime activities for pupils who may otherwise elect not to

engage in sports and games. Pupils appreciate and benefit from these activities.

- The pupil premium funds are being used successfully. Extra teaching, not only to support those falling behind but also to help others reach a higher level, is having a marked impact. The headteacher has taken account of research and has added 'learning conversations' with teachers attended by pupils, with their parents, to the strategies used to raise achievement.
- The local authority has been instrumental in helping teachers to change and improve. Advisers for school improvement, teaching and learning, and assessment have all provided good guidance. They have also helped the governors to improve their work – for example, by training them to make better use of data about pupils' progress.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have an accurate knowledge of the school's performance. They are working closely with the headteacher to set high expectations for the whole school community. They are also now questioning decisions rigorously, and calling on school leaders to explain any anomalies in the information they receive about pupils' progress or the quality of teaching. They fully support the headteacher in tackling any teaching that requires improvement.
- Governors have done a lot of training over the last year, so they are, for example, able to check that all aspects of the school's safeguarding arrangements are up to date. All new governors attend induction training.
- The governors keep a careful watch on the 'tight' financial situation. They know what the pupil premium funds are spent on, and question the school about its impact. But neither they nor the headteacher are looking sufficiently closely to see which elements of the support that they are paying for are bringing the best returns and providing good value for money.
- The governors want the school to improve further and become outstanding. To this end the vice-chair has taken responsibility for promoting 'three levels progress' in their discussions and when holding the school to account. Governors recently held conversations with pupils as part of their visits to the school to find out for themselves how well it is doing.

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	112492
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	431600

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	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Ralph
Headteacher	Nichola Way
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2012
Telephone number	01773 832895
Fax number	01773 832895
Email address	info@leys.derbyshire.sch.uk

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