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Dear Mr Watkins

Short inspection of Ludlow Junior School

Following my visit with Gehane Gordelier, Her Majesty's Inspector, to the school on 23 February 2016 I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school converted to become an academy in September 2012. The final inspection of the predecessor school, in January 2012, judged the school to be good.

This school continues to be good.

Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the conversion to academy status. Your ambition, for the best possible achievement of all the school's pupils through continuous improvement in teaching, is clear. Staff overwhelmingly support your vision, so that adults' teamwork is enthusiastic and effective. Pupils told inspectors they enjoy being 'pushed' to learn more and feel supported well when learning is challenging.

You ensure all the adults apply school policies consistently. The school is kept clean, tidy and safe, with stimulating displays to encourage pupils' interest and celebrate successes. As a result, pupils take a pride in their appearance and their work, pupils behave well and show respect for adults, one another and the school. This helps them to achieve well.

The high quality of food provided at lunchtime and in the breakfast club reflects your commitment to nourish every aspect of pupils' development, and to ensure a great quality of daily life for everyone in school. The personal care staff provide for individual pupils is strikingly sensitive and well considered.

The continuous improvement of teaching and pupils' achievement reflects leaders' effective action since the inspection in January 2012. You, your senior team and governors are not complacent, however. You have rightly identified the need to continue raising pupils' achievement in writing, and to persevere with work to eliminate the persistent absences of some pupils. Governors are rapidly rebuilding their ways of working after significant personnel changes and are aware that more remains to be done, including developing communication with parents and updating the school's website.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school is a very safe place where pupils are cared for well. Safeguarding procedures have recently been updated to meet new requirements and staff promptly trained. Well-considered staff recruitment procedures ensure all the necessary checks are conducted and recorded, and extended to cover volunteers or visitors whenever necessary. Leaders work effectively with colleagues in social care and support teachers well to meet the needs of individual pupils. The limited play space is organised and supervised carefully so pupils play happily and safely together. Suitably qualified staff provide prompt and sensitive first aid. The majority of parents agree their children are safe and happy at school, but a significant minority do not believe that bullying is dealt with effectively. Pupils, however, told inspectors that bullying is rare and explained from experience how such behaviour is not tolerated in the school, with adults swift to intervene if required.

Pupils are taught well how to keep safe online and some helpful guidance is provided to parents through the school's website.

Inspection findings

- You have established a secure cycle of comprehensive review to ensure teaching improves continuously. Senior leaders have clear responsibilities and work together as a highly effective team. Every leader's role is strictly focused on improving teaching and pupils' achievement. Staff, including newly qualified teachers, value the coaching and advice senior leaders provide.
- From starting points in Year 3 which are usually above average, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics to achieve well at the age of 11. Pupils' achievement is strongest in mathematics, where subject leaders over time have exercised a significant influence on teaching.
- While pupils achieve well in reading and in writing, a lower proportion than in mathematics attain levels of learning higher than those expected at age 11, particularly in writing. Some pupils are slower to close gaps in their writing during Years 3 and 4 than in mathematics. Rightly, developing teaching to further improve pupils' writing progress is central to the school's improvement plans. You are supporting the English leader well to achieve this.
- You ensure that leaders and teachers check closely the progress of pupils with disability and those who have special educational needs, and of pupils supported

by the pupil premium (additional funding for those entitled to free school meals and those looked after by the local authority). The 'aiming high' teacher organises well-considered support and intervention for pupils who need help to learn well. As a result these pupils make good progress. Gaps between the attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium and others are closing steadily, although more slowly in writing than in reading and mathematics.

- You ensure staff do all they can to encourage pupils' good attendance. The pupils inspectors spoke with love learning at school and look forward to lessons. The wide variety of sports and before- and after-school activities are also valued highly by pupils, who take part enthusiastically. The 'aiming high' teacher works diligently with parents and other agencies to resolve individual problems with attendance. As a result, the number of pupils whose learning is undermined by persistent absence from school is reducing, but only slowly.
- Teachers provide a wide-ranging curriculum and pupils enjoy the visits and visitors they experience in connection with different topics. These activities helpfully introduce pupils to aspects of life in the wider United Kingdom, for instance when Year 3 visit the village of Minstead and when Year 5 attend the Houses of Parliament. Some of these experiences also broaden pupils' cultural development, for example when visits are made to local mosques or when Chinese New Year is marked in assembly. The English leader is helpfully promoting fresh opportunities to extend pupils' writing skills through their topic work.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils have valuable opportunities to take up responsibilities such as being a 'playground pal', school council member or house captain. Elections to the school council introduce pupils to ideas of democracy and representation. Clear behaviour policies promote the rights and responsibilities of individuals and support pupils well to understand the consequences of their actions.
- Most parents inspectors spoke with were confident they could easily approach staff with any queries. However, a significant minority responding to Parent View (Ofsted's online survey) do not believe they receive enough information about their children's progress. A few feel the school does not respond well to their concerns.
- After recent significant changes to personnel, the governing body is rapidly re-establishing its operation. The knowledgeable and committed Chair of the Governing Body has strong links to other schools and the local authority and valuable knowledge about special educational needs. Governors are using information gathered through a recent skills audit to ensure appropriate recruitment to remaining vacancies. Governors regularly visit the school to observe teaching and discuss pupils' progress with leaders. Governors are making themselves increasingly available to parents, for example by attending parents' evenings. Governors have recognised the need to audit and update the school's website and are rightly making this a priority.

- You are outward looking in leading the continuing improvement of the school. Through the local teaching school alliance, expert teachers from Ludlow provide support to colleagues in other schools and bring back valuable learning gained for themselves through these links.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the teaching of writing improves further, to close any gaps in pupils' skills more rapidly during Years 3 and 4, and to ensure more pupils attain highly from their starting points
- leaders redouble efforts to eliminate the remaining persistent absence of some pupils
- governors rapidly consolidate recent changes in their work and ensure effective oversight of the school's website and communication with parents.

Yours sincerely

Siân Thornton
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you and senior leaders to discuss your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and priorities for further improvement. Accompanied by senior leaders, inspectors visited every year group to observe teaching and look at pupils' work. Inspectors spoke with parents in the playground at the start of the day, analysed the 45 responses to Ofsted's online survey Parent View and considered one letter from a parent. Inspectors met with a group of pupils and talked with others during lessons and at playtime. A meeting was held with staff and the 57 responses to Ofsted's staff survey were analysed. A range of documents was considered, including information about teaching and pupils' achievement, the school's self-evaluation summary and improvement plan, governing body records, information about pupils' attendance and behaviour, and safeguarding checks and policies.