

Ludlow Infant and Nursery School Academy

Sandpits Road, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1HG

Inspection dates

21–22 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and governors do not have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability are unclear. The trust does not hold governors and leaders to account sufficiently.
- Rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance, including the quality of teaching, are not in place. As a result, self-evaluation is overgenerous.
- Leaders do not have robust plans for making improvements in the school. The school's development planning does not provide the strategic direction to improve the school.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their writing skills across a wide range of subjects. Very few pupils reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The impact of additional funding, such as the pupil premium, is not accurately evaluated.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils and children can achieve. Nor do teachers always plan coherent sequences of work that enable pupils to develop their skills.
- When teaching fails to interest them or when it does not meet their needs, pupils lose focus. Pupils and children are not encouraged sufficiently to become independent learners.
- In the past, external reports commissioned by the trust have been weak. They did not inform leaders, especially governors, of the key issues facing the school. These are now improving.
- The curriculum is not sufficiently broad and balanced. It does not meet the needs of pupils and children or engage them enough in learning.
- The provision and leadership in early years is inadequate. The provision is especially weak in the Reception classes.

The school has the following strengths

- Behaviour in the school is good. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They have positive relationships with staff.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good.
- Two-year-olds get a positive start to school.
- In 2018, more pupils reached the expected standard in phonics than did nationally. Pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics from their starting points.
- The school is a calm and orderly place. Pupils are safe and well cared for. Parents value the close-knit, harmonious ethos.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve and strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability at every level are clarified so that leaders, staff and governors understand precisely who is responsible for what
 - leaders at all levels have the skills, knowledge and understanding to carry out their roles effectively
 - a clear strategic direction for the school is developed that supports staff in improving teaching and outcomes for pupils
 - rigorous systems of monitoring and evaluation are implemented to accurately identify the school's most pressing priorities for improvement
 - leaders evaluate the quality of teaching more rigorously to check that it challenges all pupils effectively
 - a long-term improvement plan for the school is drawn up that has well-defined and demanding actions, timescales and success criteria
 - a broad and balanced curriculum is put in place to meet the needs of all pupils and engage them in their learning
 - the school's use of additional funding, including the pupil premium and for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), is monitored effectively and addresses the needs of pupils
 - the trust holds the local governing board and leaders to account robustly.
- Improve the effectiveness of the early years by:
 - strengthening the leadership of the early years to ensure that a clear vision is in place, underpinned by a strong strategic plan to drive the necessary improvements
 - developing the learning environment to ensure high-quality, continuous provision is in place that enables children to fully develop their skills as independent learners
 - developing a rich, engaging curriculum that meets pupils' needs and engages them in their learning
 - ensuring that all staff have high expectations of what children can do independently, and they plan appropriate learning activities that develop reading, writing and mathematics skills.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and thereby improve outcomes for pupils across the school by:

- ensuring that teachers have sufficiently high expectations of all pupils, especially the most able and disadvantaged pupils, and they set tasks that are appropriately matched to individual pupils' needs
 - ensuring that all teachers plan a coherent teaching sequence that enables pupils to deepen and develop their skills and knowledge over time, building on prior learning
 - improving the teaching of writing by giving pupils opportunities to write more often across a wide range of subjects
 - developing pupils' attitudes to learning so that they are more independent and regularly take ownership of what they are learning to do.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
 - An external review of the use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

It is recommended that newly qualified teachers should not be appointed.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders at all levels, including governors and the trustees, have not been effective in ensuring that the quality of education is adequate. The headteacher and governors accept that they have ‘taken their eye off the ball’.
- A lack of clarity about leadership roles and responsibilities leads to misunderstanding about accountability. Leaders, including governors, in school do not fully understand the role of the trust or who is responsible for specific aspects of school improvement. As a result, there is a lack of a strong strategic approach in driving the necessary improvements and developments.
- There has been no consistent, systematic monitoring and evaluation of the school. Some monitoring activities have taken place, but they are random and the outcomes have not been sufficiently analysed or evaluated to identify the areas for improvement. Leaders, including governors, do not have a realistic picture of the school. They do not have a secure understanding of how to evaluate the impact of actions taken. As a result, self-evaluation is overgenerous and not used effectively to drive the improvements needed.
- Reports from external consultants, commissioned by the trust, have, until recently, not provided leaders with the specific information they need about the areas of weakness across the school. Leaders’ perceptions have not been challenged by a rigorous external view. Consequently, leaders have not been well supported to make full and accurate judgements about the school.
- The school development plan lacks clarity. Plans aimed at delivering improvements lack precision and are not focused tightly enough on the difference they will make to pupils’ outcomes. There are no comprehensive development plans for key aspects of the school’s provision, such as the early years foundation stage. Leaders and governors are not able to hold colleagues stringently to account.
- Middle leaders show enthusiasm for improving teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. However, there is no strategic approach to their work. They lack opportunities to analyse data about pupils’ outcomes fully or to check the quality of teaching regularly. They are limited in their drive to make changes and improvements.
- Leadership of provision for pupils with (SEND) is weak. Information about the progress and attainment of this group of pupils is limited. For example, no baseline information has been gathered for interventions in place since September. Consequently, leaders cannot measure the progress made by this group over time. Leaders do not fully evaluate the quality of provision for this group.
- The curriculum is inadequate. It is narrow and does not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding fully in a broad range of subjects. There is no coherent plan in place for the core subjects or the wider curriculum. Leaders acknowledge that they do not have a clear picture of the curriculum currently taught in school. Leaders are only now beginning to plan a more coherent curriculum.
- Over time, the impact of leaders’ use of the pupil premium has been variable in

reducing gaps between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally. The school's strategy for pupil premium spending is not clear and no up-to-date report was available at the time of the inspection. Leaders have not monitored the impact of this funding sufficiently. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

- The physical education and sport premium is used to give pupils opportunities to participate in a range of sports such as cricket, football and swimming. A local dance festival provides a chance for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils to work alongside pupils from other schools. At the time of the inspection, however, no impact statement was available. The impact of this funding is not evaluated by leaders.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the school. Pupils are given many opportunities to find out about people of different faiths. They learn to help others less fortunate than themselves by raising money. For example, they sell produce grown in school at a farmers' market and sponsor a well to provide clean water in Mozambique. Displays around the school celebrate pupils' successes and pupils eagerly talk about them.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school. They comment on the progress their children make. They value the good communication from the school, which helps them know how to support their children with their learning. They know their children are happy and well cared for. Parents value the harmonious atmosphere that pervades the school.

Governance of the school

- The trust does not hold the local governing body and leaders to account rigorously enough for the quality of education across the school. There is a lack of clarity over roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability across the trust. Governors are unsure who holds who to account.
- The local governing body does not have a secure knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The lack of a comprehensive monitoring programme limits governors' ability to have strategic oversight across all aspects of provision. They do not check the impact of external funding on pupils' outcomes.
- Governors are over reliant on reports from external consultants, commissioned by the trust, to gather information about the performance of the school. In the past, governors have not been well served by these reports. As governors state, 'These reports have been sketchy at best.' However, support over the past year is more focused and reports are more detailed, providing accurate information about the school.
- Governors have not ensured that the website meets all the statutory requirements.
- Governors are fully committed and keen to make a difference. They bring a range of skills and experience to their role. They take advantage of training provided through the trust and use an annual skills audit to identify further areas for development.
- Governors take their responsibility for keeping children safe seriously. Regular audits are carried out to ensure that school systems and procedures are followed appropriately. They make sure that all appropriate checks are made on staff employed

to work at the school. Governors receive up-to-date training in safeguarding. As a result, they are well informed and ensure that children's well-being is given a high priority.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that up to date policies are in place to keep children safe. Staff understand their responsibility to notify a designated safeguarding lead if they have a concern about a child. The records kept are adequate and securely stored. Leaders take action and ensure that vulnerable children and families receive timely support. They know their families well.
- All staff recently received updated safeguarding training. This includes training on spotting signs of neglect, radicalisation, extremism and female genital mutilation. Before they start work, new staff receive an induction in how to keep children safe.
- Safer recruitment procedures are in place. Leaders carry out appropriate checks on the suitability of staff working with pupils, and their records are well maintained.
- Pastoral care of pupils is given a high priority, and this is reflected in the ethos of the school. Pupils are nurtured and supported to feel happy and safe in school. Strong relationships exist between staff and pupils. Parents who spoke to the inspectors expressed confidence in the school's ability to keep their children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across the school. While there are examples of good practice in teaching, there is much requiring improvement. Leaders have not monitored the quality of teaching over time regularly or held teachers to account. As a result, there is a lack of consistently good teaching in the school.
- Expectations of what pupils can do and achieve are too low. The pitch of work is not well matched to pupils' different needs. Sometimes work is too challenging and pupils cannot complete it without adult support. At other times pupils finish work quickly because it is too easy. Consequently, progress over time is variable.
- Teachers do not demonstrate a deep understanding of how pupils learn. Learning does not routinely build on what pupils already know, understand and can do. Staff are still developing a secure understanding of end of year expectations. As a result, planning is limited and does not identify a clearly ordered teaching sequence. Pupils do not have an opportunity to deepen their understanding over time.
- Where teaching is weakest, teachers do not make their expectations clear to pupils. Pupils are unsure of how to start and complete their work. Instructions are minimal and pupils are left confused. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to be independent in their learning and not enough is expected of them. Consequently, for many pupils, time is wasted in lessons as they wait for adults to tell them what to do. This contributes to the lack of progress.

- Where teaching is stronger, the sequence of lessons is well structured. Teachers focus on the learning outcomes and additional adults support the learning effectively. Teachers make regular checks on what pupils are doing. They support pupils to reflect on their work and improve it. This purposeful approach enables pupils to extend their knowledge and secure their skills more quickly.
- Where there is effective teaching, pupils are helped to make links with what they have previously learned. Adults challenge them to explain and think deeply about what they are learning. They help pupils to develop confidence to learn from their mistakes. Pupils experience that 'light bulb moment' when they understand fully what they are learning.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely and often. They enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about favourite authors. They show resilience and use effective strategies to help them decipher unfamiliar words and phrases. Pupils practise their reading during a daily 'reading circuit', when teachers and support staff listen to every child read. As a result, they develop fluency and stamina.
- The teaching of writing is developing. Staff encourage pupils to use ambitious vocabulary. For example, in Year 1, pupils were encouraged to use words such as 'migrated' and 'gobbled' when writing about 'Handa's Surprise'. Pupils are taught to write in a fluent joined style from an early age. This is modelled well by adults. By the end of Year 2, pupils' work is carefully and neatly presented.
- Pupils with SEND are supported with kindness and understanding so that pupils make progress. They are helped to focus on their learning by adults who care deeply about their well-being.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils do not consistently demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Where teaching is not well matched to the different abilities and interests in a class, many pupils lose concentration. When the pace of learning is too slow, pupils begin to chatter and focus on each other rather than what they are learning. They talk over the teacher and miss vital instructions. Many pupils fail to push themselves with their work.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know that they can talk to an adult in school if they are anxious or worried about anything. They talk about the first aiders who help them if they fall over at breaktime. Pupils trust adults to keep them safe.
- Pupils understand the importance of learning to swim in order to keep themselves safe in water. Similarly, they have a good understanding of road and fire safety. However, their knowledge of how to stay safe on the internet or when using modern technology is less well developed.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of the world in which they live. They show respect towards people of different faiths and cultures. Pupils said that they like their

celebration assemblies and the opportunity to be thoughtful.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct and self-discipline is consistently good. They are a credit to themselves, the school and their families. They move sensibly around the school and take care of school property. The school is calm, orderly and harmonious.
- Pupils are extremely polite, well mannered and show respect to those around them. For example, they hold doors open for visitors and ask if they can help. When eating their dinner, pupils display good table manners, engage in positive conversations and use their cutlery well.
- The school behaviour policy is implemented consistently by all staff. Adults display compassion and kindness when dealing with pupils who have specific behavioural needs that cause them to become anxious or upset. Pupils understand the behaviour expectations and have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They enjoy receiving the rewards used in school.
- Pupils' attendance has improved and is now broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who do not attend regularly fell significantly in 2017 and is now below the national average. Leaders have developed effective systems to promote pupils' good attendance. For example, the education welfare officer works closely with school leaders and, together, they have been successful in improving the attendance of targeted individuals.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes have been variable over time and have not reflected pupils' true capabilities. Although outcomes improved during the last academic year, progress is not consistently strong for all pupils across the school.
- In 2017, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were too low for many pupils. No pupils reached greater depth in reading or mathematics. This was despite the fact that this group of pupils had attainment in line with the national average when they left the early years foundation stage (EYFS). The 2017 results indicated very limited progress from pupils' starting points, with many pupils making no progress at all.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics in 2018 showed a significant improvement. Standards in reading and mathematics rose dramatically. Standards in writing remain low, however, with few pupils reaching greater depth.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check by the end of Year 1 rose in 2018 to above the national average. This is a result of good phonics teaching across Reception and key stage 1. Pupils engage in lively, challenging work and enjoy reading a range of books.
- Progress in reading has been strong over the last two years. Pupils have many opportunities to read at school. They read fluently and show a developing

understanding of what they have read. The vast majority of parents hear their children read regularly at home.

- Leaders are currently focusing on further improving the progress that pupils make in writing. However, the school's approach to independent writing is not having the desired impact. Many pupils use the approach as a means of finishing their work quickly without due care and attention. Opportunities to write in different subjects is limited due to the underdeveloped curriculum.
- Pupils are making stronger progress in mathematics. Regular opportunities to develop a secure understanding of number enables pupils to develop fluency when adding or subtracting. Their skills in reasoning and problem-solving are less well developed.
- Stronger progress for current pupils is evident in their work books. In some classes in Year 1 and Year 2, disadvantaged pupils make progress that is at least similar to other pupils. Evidence for some disadvantaged pupils indicates that gaps between their progress and that of other pupils nationally are closing.
- Evidence for the most able pupils currently in school indicates that they are making good progress this academic year. Their work books show the secure development of skills, knowledge and a deepening understanding over time.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- Children enter the early years with skills and knowledge that are generally below those that are typical for their age. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development is below the national average and has been for the last four years. As a result, children are not well prepared to start in Year 1.
- The quality of provision across the early years phase is extremely variable. While suitable provision is in place for the very youngest children, those in Nursery and Reception do not have their needs met sufficiently well to fully develop the skills they need for the next stage of their education.
- The early years learning environment, inside and out, does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to investigate and develop independence. The lack of high-quality continuous provision limits children's ability to think critically and build on prior knowledge and skills. Insufficient thought is given as to how children can thrive and develop across all the areas of learning. Where activities are put out for children to use independently, they often lack challenge and fail to engage the children deeply in their learning.
- The quality of teaching and learning across the early years is weak. Tasks do not meet the learning needs of children. For example, children at different stages of development complete the same tasks, such as a piece of writing about 'Rosie's Walk'. Some children find the work too easy and finish quickly, while others struggle to cope with what is expected due to a lack of appropriate support.
- The quality of adults' questioning is inconsistent. It is often weak and fails to give children opportunities to deepen their learning. Some adults are highly skilled in supporting learning through talk, but others move on without waiting for a response. As a result, questioning does not effectively develop children's language,

communication or understanding.

- Leadership of the early years is weak. The leader is keen to make changes and develop the provision. However, there is no clear strategic plan in place to drive the necessary improvements. Self-evaluation is inaccurate due to a lack of regular, detailed monitoring of the provision and of the quality of teaching.
- Disadvantaged children do not make the progress they are capable of given their starting points. The lack of a focused approach to the use of the pupil premium funding across the whole school affects children in the early years in the same way as pupils in other year groups.
- Children are proud of their work and were keen to share it with inspectors. They value the opportunity to talk at length about what they are doing.
- Provision for two-year-olds is wholly appropriate. The learning environment is interesting and engaging. It provides a safe space for children to grow, learn and develop the skills they need to be successful in nursery. Adults are skilled in prompting and encouraging children gently, while having high expectations of every child. Routines are well embedded and enable children to be independent.
- Relationships between children and adults in the early years are good. Staff ensure that children are safe and well cared for. All safeguarding requirements are in place.
- Teachers and other adults build good relationships with parents and encourage them to be involved in their children's education. Parents contribute to children's learning journals. Parents comment on the good progress that their children make in the early years, especially with their reading and phonics.

School details

Unique reference number	143800
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10067165

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	261
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Clarke
Headteacher	Val Matthews
Telephone number	01584 872 765
Website	www.ludlow-inf.shropshire.sch.uk
Email address	admin@ludlow-inf.shropshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy in December 2016 and joined the Bishop Anthony Educational Trust.
- The overall responsibility for the school lies with the board of trustees. Each school within the multi-academy trust is governed by a local governing board.
- Governors have agreed to amalgamate with Ludlow Junior School in September 2019. This has recently been approved by the Department for Education.
- The school is larger than the average-sized infant school.
- The early years consists of part-time provision for two-year-olds, nursery provision for three-year-olds and two Reception classes.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is lower than the national average.

- The proportion of pupils with SEND is lower than the national average. Fewer pupils have an education health and care plan than is found nationally.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other key leaders. The lead inspector spoke with four members of the local governing body, including the chair. The lead inspector discussed the school with a representative of the trust.
- Inspectors made visits to classrooms on both days of the inspection. Many of these visits were made jointly with the headteacher or assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide selection of pupils' work books from different subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally. A group of pupils met with an inspector to discuss a range of issues. Pupils read to the inspector. Inspectors observed behaviour in classrooms, in corridors, at lunchtime and outside on the playground.
- An inspector talked to parents before school. The lead inspector also considered the 63 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 21 responses to the free-text service.
- The lead inspector considered the 34 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and school development plan, records of monitoring, reports to governors and minutes of their meetings. Information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety were also analysed and discussed with leaders.
- Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and an inspector looked at published information on the school's website.

Inspection team

Nicola Harwood, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Chris Bandfield	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Parker	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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