

Inspection of Ladysmith Junior School

Pretoria Road, Exeter, Devon EX1 2PT

Inspection dates: 22 and 24 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to Ladysmith Junior School. They attend regularly and play happily together during social times. Pupils are safe and adamant that bullying does not happen. Relationships across the school are warm and caring. Pupils know they have an adult to talk to if they have a worry.

The school aspires for all pupils to receive a high-quality education. However, this ambition is not yet realised. Too many pupils do not achieve well. The quality of education they receive is not good. Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not reach their full potential. As a result, pupils are not prepared well for the next stage of their education. Leaders are in the process of reviewing the curriculum to improve pupils' outcomes.

Pupils enjoy a well-thought-out programme of extra-curricular opportunities. Both pupils and parents value these opportunities. One parent's comment, which encapsulates the views of many, was, 'This is a caring school, with fantastic additional opportunities'. These opportunities prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has experienced a period of change. Many staff are new to the school and early in their careers. However, leaders have galvanised a team that is determined to bring about improvements. Leaders have the confidence of the community, and staff morale is high. Nearly all staff who completed the staff survey are fully behind the leadership of the school.

Nevertheless, a large proportion of the curriculum needs further development. In many areas, subject leadership is in its infancy. This has led to weaknesses in the curriculum not being identified. Leaders have not sequenced the order in which pupils should learn new concepts effectively. This means that pupils do not build on their knowledge well. Furthermore, the school does not make tenacious checks on the key concepts that the school wants pupils to remember. This leads to teachers not addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge or misconceptions they may have.

The reading curriculum is more developed. Many pupils enter the school without the fundamental reading skills that they need to be able to read fluently. Staff provide additional support to help these pupils catch up quickly, and they do. The books match the sounds that pupils know, and this helps them with their confidence. Most pupils enjoy reading. Pupils know a range of different authors and appreciate the time they have in school to read.

There are mixed experiences for pupils with SEND. In some year groups, the ambition for these pupils is not strong. Personalised support is not always implemented effectively. Pupils are given activities that are not adapted well. When this happens, some pupils with SEND do not learn successfully. The oversight of

additional funds for these pupils and disadvantaged pupils is not effective. Governors do not have sufficient understanding of how additional funding supports pupils' achievement.

The school has implemented a new policy to manage pupils' behaviour. Incidents of poor behaviour have fallen significantly. Nonetheless, where the curriculum is not well thought out, pupils' focus wanders and some pupils engage in low-level disruption.

The school is proud of its work to support pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about tolerance and respect. They learn about different cultures through trips and visitors to the school. Pupils have many opportunities to take on positions of leadership. They particularly enjoy the responsibility to look after the school's animals and being part of the 'sports crew'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, the curriculum is not coherently sequenced. This leads to pupils not building on their prior knowledge. Consequently, pupils do not always achieve well. The school needs to ensure that the curriculum is well thought out and supports pupils in knowing more and remembering more.
- Leadership of the curriculum needs to be strengthened further. Checks are not precise enough to ensure that the curriculum is being implemented effectively. As a result, some pupils do not achieve well. The school needs to ensure that subject leaders develop their expertise in monitoring and evaluation so that they can provide effective leadership across the school.
- Assessment is not fully developed. As a result, the school does not have an accurate overview of whether pupils have learned what was intended. The school needs to ensure that assessment information is used effectively to inform curriculum thinking and support pupils' next steps in learning.
- Some pupils with SEND do not experience a high-quality curriculum. In addition, targeted support does not meet their academic needs consistently well. This means that some pupils do not achieve well. The school needs to ensure that pupils' support plans and the curriculum are suitably ambitious so that these pupils achieve well.
- Where the curriculum is not well thought out, low-level disruption often occurs. This hinders pupils from learning the curriculum. The school needs to ensure that all staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning so that all pupils are able to learn effectively without interruptions.

- Governors do not have a sharp enough understanding of how effectively the school supports disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. They do not hold the school sufficiently to account for the impact of the additional funding provided for these pupils. Governors need to ensure that their oversight of these pupils is more precise to support improved outcomes

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	113081
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10334662
Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Annie Fletcher and Tom Butcher (Co-chairs)
Headteacher	Mark Wilkinson (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.ladysmithfederation.net
Dates of previous inspection	14 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average junior school.
- The school is federated with Ladysmith Infant and Nursery School.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision.
- There is a breakfast club operated by the school.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with representatives from the local authority, the

executive headteacher, the head of school, senior leaders, curriculum leaders and teaching and support staff. The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing body.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, English, modern foreign languages, computing and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning, looked at samples of pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- The lead inspector examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- An inspector spoke to parents at the start of the school day. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, and the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Leanne Thirlby	His Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Shirley	Ofsted Inspector

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