



Ludlow Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123379
Local Authority Shropshire
Inspection number 292643
Inspection dates 9–10 January 2007
Reporting inspector Joyce Cox

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Sandpits Road
School category	Community		Ludlow
Age range of pupils	3–7		SY8 1HG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01584 872765
Number on roll (school)	230	Fax number	01584 872765
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ian Jones
		Headteacher	Anne Weller
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2002		

Age group 3–7	Inspection dates 9–10 January 2007	Inspection number 292643
-------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized, popular infant school, serving a mixed residential area in Ludlow. The majority of the pupils are White British, with a very small number from minority ethnic backgrounds, including a very small percentage who speak English as a second language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties, including those with a statement of special education need, is above the national average. Children start in the Nursery at three years old with knowledge and skills that are below the expected levels, particularly in terms of their language and social skills.

As part of the school's continuous commitment to improvement, it has secured many awards for its work, including full Healthy Schools status, a Sports Active Mark in 2006 and a Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark in 1999, 2002 and 2005. It is currently participating in the Primary Leadership Sustaining Success programme. The school has also received a Local Authority Quality Mark for its work in involving parents in their children's education.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which is highly successful in giving parents every opportunity to be involved in their children's learning. Pupils enjoy the interesting activities and all parents are very pleased with the quality of care and education their children receive. One parent writes, 'I have nothing but praise for this excellent school'.

Considering their below average starting point in the Nursery, pupils achieve well and attain average standards by the end of Year 2. Good support for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, together with a good and interesting curriculum, are key factors in the good progress made by all pupils. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall but varies in Years 1 and 2, particularly in the way in which teachers provide sufficiently challenging work for the very small number of more able pupils. Teachers are provided with good assessment information which tells them how well pupils are achieving.

Children are given a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage. There is an effective emphasis on developing the early skills of literacy and numeracy, and children are successfully encouraged to plan and select their own learning activities. Foundation Stage staff succeed in ensuring that all children make good progress. Despite this, not all children attain the expected levels on entry to Year 1, particularly in their communication and mathematical development. Foundation Stage staff work hard to make sure children feel safe and enjoy their learning and it is here that the basis for the pupils' good personal development throughout the rest of the school is successfully begun.

Pupils' behaviour is good; they get on well with each other and really enjoy taking responsibility by being school or class councillors. Parents recognise and appreciate the high standard of care provided for all pupils and in particular those with quite complex learning or medical needs. The family support worker swiftly and sensitively supports parents with any problems they have concerning their children which ensures that all pupils can enjoy school and participate in all the interesting activities on offer.

The school's success in achieving its aims is due to good leadership. The headteacher has been particularly effective in building a strong staff team who support each other and work very well together. Senior leaders have a generally accurate view of the school, but monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently rigorous because some of it describes lessons rather than evaluating them and identifying how they might be improved. Standards and attendance are rising and the school has successfully tackled many of the issues for improvement from the last inspection. Consequently, it is well placed to carry on improving.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that Years 1 and 2 teachers provide the more able pupils with work that is sufficiently challenging.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning even further by making sure that monitoring is evaluative and identifies and spreads the best practice.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Children start Nursery with below average skills when compared to others of their age. Due to effective teaching, all children make good progress in Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and in learning to read. Since the last inspection, pupils have attained broadly average standards in assessments at the end of Year 2. In the 2006 assessments, pupils' attainment was above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's very good focus on supporting pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities gives them increased confidence and enthusiasm for learning. The very few pupils speaking English as an additional language are provided with good support, ensuring they achieve as well as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The good personal development is epitomised by pupils who talk proudly of their contributions to the 'friendship squad', especially when they can help lonely children in the playground. Pupils are very caring of each other, describe their school as 'happy' and 'great', and find it very difficult to think of anything they do not enjoy, or like, in their learning. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good and enables them to celebrate both their own work, and the achievement of others. Behaviour is good, and pupils feel safe from bullying and have confidence that adults deal fairly with this if it happens. The school has worked successfully over several years to improve attendance, which is now in line with the national average. This has been enhanced by the greatly increased liaison with parents. The one area to improve in this otherwise positive picture is to further develop older pupils' independence and ability to use their initiative. Pupils contribute well to the school through the very active class and school councils, and to the community through fundraising for example for leukaemia research. Pupils understand what a healthy lifestyle is, and try hard to put their knowledge into practice, with the help of parents, through events such as a 'healthy lunchbox' challenge. All these activities are helping to give pupils a better understanding of their future lives and economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good, and this ensures that the pupils learn successfully and make good progress. Teachers plan interesting and exciting lessons that are well paced and engage pupils' sustained application and enjoyment in doing the best they can. Sometimes, over-directed activities limit the opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for managing aspects of their own learning and this inhibits personal

initiative. Teachers use the findings from their thorough assessment to ensure that tasks are well matched to the needs of most pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because they work from effective tailor-made programmes that help them meet personal targets. Occasionally, more able pupils could do better because teachers do not always set them tasks that challenge them enough. In the Foundation Stage, good teaching of basic skills provides the children with a strong foundation for the development of their literacy and numeracy skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced and has a good impact on the progress pupils make throughout the school. From Nursery to Year 2, strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' confidence, which helps them to take full advantage of the experiences provided. Well-planned, regular additional activities, particularly in reading and spelling, assist pupils with learning difficulties to reach personal goals. Information and communication technology provision (ICT) has improved but pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to practise their skills in all subjects. Pupils enjoy a rich variety of extra-curricular activities that successfully promote their enjoyment of school and enhance their personal development. The school places strong emphasis on the importance of regular exercise, as recognised in its Active Mark award. Pupils' good understanding of healthy lifestyles and their clear knowledge of how to keep safe reflect the very good provision for personal, social and health education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school places a very strong emphasis on care and support through partnership with families, and this makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' personal development, progress and their eagerness to learn. Teachers and the family worker are regularly in contact with parents, resulting in a shared understanding as to how pupils can be supported and guided in school and at home. The school uses outside agencies very effectively from the time children start at the school, in order to provide for their needs, especially for those with learning, behavioural, medical or emotional difficulties. Pupils feel safe and secure in school, and say they have an adult to whom they could take problems. Teachers set pupils clear targets as to how they can improve their work. Marking of work offers much praise, but does not always give sufficient guidance to pupils on what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has established a clear vision for the school that is shared by all staff. Consequently, they go out of their way to ensure that all pupils, whatever their background, gender, ability or disability, are included in all school activities. The school has good systems for checking how well it

is doing and how to get even better. However, monitoring of teaching and learning, particularly in Years 1 and 2, lacks rigour. All staff are now fully involved in reflecting on what is going well and what could be improved. The headteacher regularly seeks and acts upon the views of governors, staff, parents and pupils through 'future thinking days' and through the school council. The result of these consultations is a clear and detailed school improvement plan outlining priorities and how these will be tackled. Governors are very supportive of the school and increasingly involved in checking its performance and asking challenging questions about how well it is doing.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed joining some of you for lunch, talking with you and seeing you at work and play. This letter is to tell you what we think is good about your school and how it could be even better.

We particularly like these things

- Your good behaviour and your enthusiasm for lessons and other activities.
- The very good relationships you have with one another and with the staff.
- The interesting and wide range of activities that you all enjoy.
- The skilful way in which the headteacher and all the teachers make sure you enjoy learning and make good progress in your work.
- How your parents are so keen and involved in helping you to learn.
- The very caring way you are looked after and supported by adults in the school.
- The fact you are aware of the importance of eating healthily and taking lots of exercise.

These are the things we have suggested those in charge do to make it even better

- To always give you work that will challenge you and make you think.
- To help all teachers to teach even better lessons so you learn even more.

It was great to learn that you are doing so well at school and that your parents are so very happy too. Your headteacher, governors and teachers have good plans to make the school even better. You can play your part by continuing to work hard and look after each other.

We wish you all the very best for the future.