



Ludlow Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123426
Local Authority Shropshire
Inspection number 292659
Inspection date 8 November 2006
Reporting inspector David Carrington

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Clee View
School category	Community		Ludlow
Age range of pupils	7-11		SY8 1HX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01584 873602
Number on roll (school)	293	Fax number	01584 873602
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Neville Stephens
		Headteacher	Ella Bolt
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Ludlow Junior School is of average size. Whilst most pupils come from Ludlow itself, a considerable number come from further away. The entitlement to free school meals is similar to most junior schools. Nearly all pupils speak English as their first language. Over a third of the pupils have some form of learning difficulty or disability, which is a high proportion. Whilst the range of ability is wide, when pupils start in Year 3 their prior attainment is average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ludlow Junior is a good school with some outstanding features. High on the list is the excellent personal development of the pupils. They are exceptionally well behaved, work very successfully together and support each other with much kindness and consideration. The pupils want to do well, but more than this, they want others to succeed as well.

The school has a good track record of standards and achievement. Standards are above average when pupils leave Year 6, having achieved well in all four years in school. Pupils make good progress, although results in mathematics and writing dipped a bit in 2005. Last year they improved well in mathematics and rose a little in writing. Writing remains an ongoing priority for improvement. Whilst lower and higher attaining pupils learn the expected writing skills, many middle attaining pupils do not use enough interesting and expressive language in their writing.

Teaching is good. There is ample evidence of some outstanding teaching, especially in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are adamant that learning is fun and that they learn a lot of new and interesting things. Parents report that the teachers ensure their children make good progress. The curriculum is rich and rewarding and there is increasing success in promoting pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for later education and life outside school. Pupils' enjoyment of learning is an instantly recognisable feature of lessons.

Assessment procedures and systems to track pupils' achievement are well established and work effectively. Thus, teachers give pupils secure guidance on their work. The care and support provided to ensure pupils are happy, content and do well is outstanding. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are as successful in their work and school life as the other pupils, and the more able are set challenging tasks consistently.

The many strengths of the school are the outcome of expert leadership from the headteacher. In all, leadership and management are good and the leaders new to post are already making a positive impact on the quality of educational provision. More-established senior and subject leaders and the governors have a firm fix on pupils' achievement and this contributes well to the realistic evaluations that the school makes about its work. The school has good capacity to continue its steady rise.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' writing, especially that of middle attainers, so that it is more consistently expressive in its use of interesting language.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and achievement is good. Pupils make good progress from their average starting points. Results in science have been particularly strong over the last few years. In some years in the past, nearly two thirds of the pupils have reached the higher Level 5 in science and virtually all have reached the expected level. The fact that pupils say that learning is hands-on and interesting is a significant factor in their successes in science.

Standards in English have generally been good for a number of years, though in 2005 results fell because middle attainers in particular did not do as well in writing as they should. Ground was regained in 2006 and writing results were better, though they did not reach the same level as in other aspects of English such as reading.

Mathematics results also dipped in 2005, with insufficient numbers reaching the higher Level 5. The school has successfully improved the curriculum and teaching for mathematics and standards are now securely above average and pupils achieve well.

Pupils' ICT skills are developed successfully across the curriculum and some very challenging work is set for Year 6 pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities do well because their work is broken down into the necessary small steps that aid learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. The pupils are very clearly one of the great strengths of the school. They are friendly, confident learners who get on really well with adults and other pupils. The sense of mutual support is strong and learning is relished. Pupils very much enjoy coming to school and their attendance is average. A few pupils are absent fairly frequently, which affects the overall statistic for attendance. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education contributes well to their development as happy, considerate children.

Pupils have a very marked understanding of why healthy lifestyles are vital. Year 5 pupils told the school nurse that this was necessary because 'we are growing up'. They show good alertness to maintaining their own safety and that of others. The nettle patch in the school grounds has been a good recent focus for pupils' ideas for improving their own safety. Careful consideration was given to the balance between preserving a butterfly habitat and ensuring pupils do not get stung by nettles. Pupils' awareness of the need to contribute to the community is heightened by their good appreciation of the school community and close involvement with that in the town. For example, the community policeman is seen as a very good friend.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching quality is improving well and is good overall. During the inspection some outstanding features were observed in teaching in Years 5 and 6 and there is other evidence of particular strengths in teaching across the school, especially high expectations and a brisk pace to learning. Lessons are often lively and fun because of teachers' imaginative presentation of work.

Teaching assistants do an effective job in supporting the learning of their target groups. Occasionally, this support could be more sharply focused, for example, when pupils are gathered together to discuss the progress made so far. However, the pupils respond very positively to the support given by their teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has identified sensibly the need to strengthen links between subjects in order to promote pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and to foster greater creativity. This is progressing well, though the creative aspect of writing remains a priority for improvement. In other respects the curriculum is rich and rewarding, with a strong emphasis on investigation and problem solving. There is some stimulating and attractive artwork on display. History work has a special prominence in school and is a subject that pupils are particularly enthusiastic about.

The programme of out-of-school activities is well balanced to enable pupils of all ages to extend and practice particular skills. There is a wide range of sports and games, which are marked favourites. The pupils report that the school is successful in inter-school sports, such as the recent cross-country running event.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils and their parents are virtually unanimous in stating that the reason nearly every pupil enjoys school and does well is because the staff take great care of them. Pupils trust their teachers and see them as friends with a sense of humour. This, they say, helps them talk more easily about problems and worries. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust. The school has very strong partnerships with other agencies in promoting pupils' well-being. The links with the on-site Early Years providers are particularly effective in enhancing pupils' awareness of and empathy with the needs of others.

Pupils' good academic achievement is fostered by well-thought-out procedures to assess their skills and knowledge and to track that they are on course for best achievement. The information produced by these procedures is used carefully to give thorough guidance about how to improve. As a result, pupils enjoy talking about their

targets and about how well they are doing. They rise to the challenges set, but do not find them oppressive.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has made some recent amendments to its leadership structure that are already showing good results. Thus, achievement in mathematics has been improved effectively and the school is promoting more evocative writing with greater consistency, though work to finalise improvement in writing is not complete. Great strides have been made in the personal development of pupils, resulting from effective leadership of this central plank of the school's work.

At the end of the current school year the headteacher is due to leave. She leads the school with great skill and insight, and high expectations. Senior leaders have picked up the challenge to maintain the many good qualities of the school during this time of transition with enthusiasm and determination. Their systems to check and evaluate the school's performance are good. Governors have a well-reasoned understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and ask critical questions to ensure decisions are justified. Parents' and pupils' views are checked regularly and used to finalise decisions. For example, members of the school council are shortly to be involved in the interviews for the new headteacher.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	1
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	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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?	1

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	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
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 the very warm welcome you gave me when I visited school recently. You were keen to tell me that the best thing about the school is the way that your teachers care for you and make your learning fun. I had plenty of opportunity to see that this is true and noticed that the care, guidance and support that you get are outstanding.

I found many good things about your school. The most important is that you go to a good school. Other things that stand out are

- You do well in your work and reach good standards.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you work extremely well together.
- You know your targets well and try hard to reach them.
- You are taught well and greatly enjoy your learning.
- You get good opportunities to learn a lot about the different subjects.
- Your teachers and the other adults in school look after you really well.
- Your headteacher expects you to do your best and, working well with all of the other adults, runs the school expertly.

I think that there is one important thing that could be improved.

- You could be given even more opportunities to write in interesting and expressive ways.

I am sure that you will want to help your teachers make this improvement. You can start by talking together about your ideas and by using words that are a bit different in your writing.