

# Ladysmith Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113081
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	298550
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Laurie Lewin

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	444
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alison Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jackie Jackson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 May 2006
<b>School address</b>	Pretoria Road Exeter EX1 2PT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01392 255554
<b>Fax number</b>	01392 496603

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a large school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most pupils are White British. A small number come from other ethnic backgrounds. During the current academic year 20 pupils joined the school who are at the early stages of learning to speak English. About a quarter of the pupils come from less advantaged home backgrounds.

The inspection carried out one year ago gave the school a notice to improve and reported that significant improvement was required in pupils' achievement –especially in mathematics, in the quality of teaching and in the use of assessment to aid planning.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

This is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. It is increasingly becoming a success story. Strong leadership coupled with very effective support from partner organisations and full commitment from staff have driven up standards and the quality of provision in an impressive manner since the last inspection. In particular, improvements made to teaching – which is now good – have resulted in pupils making good progress across the current academic year. This has removed a legacy of underperformance so that pupils' overall achievement from the time they enter to the time they leave the school is now satisfactory.

Pupils reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. This year's national test results show that a much higher proportion of them now reach the upper levels than was previously the case. Very good work by the Year 6 leader and the English and mathematics coordinators has been very effective in helping staff improve standards. Much effective work has been done by the school, in combination with the local authority's intensive support programme, to improve mathematics standards. However, the full impact of this work is still to be realised and mathematics standards remain weaker than those in English and science.

The school has implemented good systems to record and check pupils' progress regularly. Rigorous analysis of the information gained has been a key element to help staff pinpoint weaknesses in pupils' work. This information is mainly used well by teachers to guide their lesson planning and match activities to pupils' needs. Although pupils have clear individual targets in English to aid their progress, the targets set for them in mathematics are not clear enough. Pupils' work is marked well in English, but in mathematics and science, not enough guidance is given in the marking to help pupils know how to improve their work. The school has a satisfactory curriculum that is well enriched by the extra-curricular activities and the good range of visits and visitors. However, the links between subjects are not sufficiently developed and this limits the opportunities to enhance skills such as writing in different areas of work.

The school has excellent links with parents and with partner organisations, including other local schools, and it uses these very well to boost the quality of education and pupils' learning. Parents have a high regard for the work of the school.

Good care, support and guidance result in pupils showing good personal development and good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils have good attitudes and behaviour and they become confident and articulate young people by the time they leave. They have a good understanding about how to stay fit and healthy.

Leadership and management are good. Excellent leadership by the headteacher, fully supported by the deputy headteacher, has ensured that no stone has been left unturned in seeking ways of moving the school forward speedily. Rigorous and accurate analysis of current performance means that staff and governors are clear about what works well and what needs improving. The school has very effective action plans that give it a very clear vision for the future. The capacity to sustain improvement is good.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the clarity of targets set for pupils in mathematics in order to raise standards further.
- Improve marking in mathematics and science so that pupils can see clearly how to improve their work.
- Develop stronger links between different subjects to extend the opportunities for pupils to build on their learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils join the school with attainment that is slightly above average. In the recent past, their achievement has been unsatisfactory, but over the last 12 months in particular, this has changed significantly. Rigorous analysis of assessment information, better teaching and carefully targeted support for individuals have led to good progress being made by the vast majority of pupils this year. Results in this year's national tests alongside samples of work show pupils now achieve broadly average standards. In this year's tests, just over half of the pupils reached the upper level in science and just under half of them reached this level in English. This big improvement confirms that pupils are no longer underachieving. While mathematics results are broadly average and have improved, standards continue to lag behind English and science. Good quality initiatives have done much to improve pupils' progress in mathematics to a good level this year. However, the legacy of underachievement was bigger in this subject than in others and the impact of the initiatives put in place has not yet been fully realised. The progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language is good. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make sound and sometimes good progress. However, their progress in mathematics is not as good as in English.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Comments such as: 'Ladysmith Junior School rocks', 'We have lots of fun here', and 'They've made lots of really good improvements this year' left inspectors in no doubt about what pupils feel about their school. They clearly enjoy their time here and develop in a confident way as they progress through the classes. The very wide range of sporting activities, including the daily physical work out sessions, ensures pupils keep themselves fit. Pupils eat healthily both in their snack breaks and at lunchtimes. They have a good understanding of the importance of racial harmony and have forged useful links with a Ugandan school which help to deepen their understanding of other cultures. Pupils make significant contributions to the community, for example by raising funds for charities and taking part in productions where the community are invited in. Pupils take part in very well organised enterprise projects such as making, evaluating, marketing and selling bread. They learn a lot about life in the working world from visitors and when they visit places. As a result, pupils are well equipped to progress confidently in the future. Pupils feel safe at school, but some of those spoken to say they are not confident in seeking adult assistance if they encounter difficulties with other pupils at break times. Attendance is satisfactory.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching is now good. This is as a result of rigorous monitoring of lessons and feedback to staff about their work, intensive training and a much increased emphasis on using information about pupils' progress to inform planning. Relationships between the staff and pupils are strong and pupils say they feel very encouraged by their teachers. Lesson plans ensure that tasks are matched to pupils' needs as closely as possible. Lessons seen generally showed teachers possessing confident subject knowledge and providing clear and interesting explanations that helped pupils progress well. Occasionally, whole-class sessions are too long and this has the effect of slowing the progress of some groups of pupils. Teachers mark pupils' work well in English, but their marking in mathematics and science does not always give individuals enough guidance about how they can improve their work. Teaching assistants provide good, and occasionally excellent, support for teachers and pupils. This gives a good boost to the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The school's curriculum is enriched well by the wide range of visits made and visitors coming to the school. The particularly expansive programme of residential visits does much to enhance pupils' personal and social skills. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, which pupils thoroughly enjoy. The excellent links with a local secondary school provide a strong boost to the physical education provision offered by the school. The school also makes good provision for enhancing pupils' work in music. Although some work is planned that links learning between different subjects this approach is not commonly adopted when planning the curriculum. As a result, chances are missed to extend pupils' learning, for example by developing their writing or mathematical skills in other subjects.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Staff know all pupils in their care very well and cater sensitively for their individual needs. Parents feel rightly that their children are well looked after at school. All procedures are fully in place to check on health and safety including those to ensure child protection. The school has good induction procedures that ensure all pupils new to the school settle in quickly and happily. Staff, and in particular the home-school worker, work very well with external agencies to provide effective support for vulnerable pupils and their families. Generally staff are good at ensuring that pupils feel entirely safe. However, pupils do not always feel that lunchtime supervisors give them the support they need in sorting out problems with other pupils.

As a result of the school implementing good quality systems to record and check pupils' progress, staff are now in a much stronger position to support and guide individuals. Teachers use the assessment information well to set personal targets for pupils in English. This approach has had a positive impact on raising standards and achievement in this subject. However, pupils' personal targets in mathematics are not as sharply defined and do not give pupils full clarity on the next steps needed to advance their learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, the staff have worked very hard and effectively across the year to bring about the changes and improvements required. They have responded well to the local authority's intensive support programme and to school based training initiatives and thereby improved the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. This has served to bring the school back on an even keel and away from an era of underperformance. The morale amongst the staff is good and there is a palpable enthusiasm and strong commitment to keep things improving. The senior management team and the deputy headteacher provide strong support for the headteacher. While many subject and year group leaders manage their responsibilities efficiently, some have not yet reached the stage where they can take the lead in their area in a proactive and independent manner. Governors carry out their roles well and are effectively involved in monitoring the performance of the school.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
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

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
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

5 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ladysmith Junior School, Exeter, EX1 2PT

- I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed coming to visit your school. Thank you for making us so welcome and helping us during the school's inspection. The school is doing a satisfactory job and is improving rapidly. Here are some of the things we found:
- Your achievement as you move through the school is satisfactory and you reach average standards by the end of Year 6. This is much better than a year ago.
- Your personal development is good – you behave well and have a good knowledge about how to stay safe, healthy and fit.
- You have a satisfactory curriculum and enjoy a good range of activities outside lessons.
- Your teachers do a good job of teaching you and you get on well with all of the staff.
- The school does a good job of taking care of you even though some of you feel that problems that happen at lunchtime with other pupils are not always sorted out as well as they might be.
- Your headteacher does an excellent job of helping the staff to improve things for you and that is why your learning is better now.

To keep things improving the school should now:

- Give you clear targets to help you improve your mathematics work even more.
- Improve the marking of your work in mathematics and science by giving you more information on how you can improve what you do.
- Develop better links between the different subjects you are taught so that you get to practise your skills, especially writing and mathematics, in all your work.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.

Laurie Lewin Lead Inspector