

Ladywood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112681
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	310981
Inspection dates	7–8 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Martin Newell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms M Stevens
Headteacher	Mrs J Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2004
School address	Oliver Road Ilkeston Derbyshire DE7 4NH
Telephone number	0115 9320585
Fax number	0115 9320585

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly similar to the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with that found nationally with the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need being a little above the picture nationally. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and of the very small number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, none is at an early stage of acquiring English. The school has gained Healthy School, Activemark and Basic Skills Awards.

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. When pupils leave, they are rounded individuals, who are well equipped with qualities to help them in their future lives. The success of the school owes much to its leadership, teaching and the contribution of the pupils. Parents are supportive and appreciate of the quality of education and care provided for their children. The school has a good record of continually moving forward. Staff embrace curriculum change and other initiatives well, so that they have a positive impact on pupils' learning. This record indicates that the school is well placed for continued improvement.

Many children start at the school with attainment levels that are below, and for some, well below the expected level for their age. By the time that they leave, standards overall are in line with the national average. This represents good progress and achievement for pupils of all abilities and is a direct consequence of the good quality teaching that pupils receive across the school. Lessons are often fun and work is well matched to the wide range of ability of pupils in each class. Relationships are good and pupils are keen to learn. However, the school recognises that staff do not yet provide enough opportunities for pupils to become accomplished independent learners and as a result, they rely too heavily on adult support and guidance. Pupils' learning is brought to life by a rich and varied curriculum. The school rightly places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' skills in key subjects, but this is not at the expense of other subjects such as art, history and religious education, where pupils learn at a good rate and broaden their horizons to the wider world.

The care and welfare of the pupils are afforded a high priority. Pupils have a genuine say in decision-making and this builds up their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils receive effective guidance to help them to improve their work. Most are only too ready to take on board the comments and advice given, although not all marking is consistent with the best practice for older pupils. Pupils make an important contribution to the life of the school as a community. They enjoy school, most behave well and take on responsibilities with a real sense of purpose and maturity and with a smile on their face. However, they sometimes lack confidence in their own abilities and shy away from taking the initiative or working independently. They know the importance of keeping fit, safe and healthy and put their knowledge into practice. Pupils show a good awareness of the needs of others and this is reflected in their readiness to participate in fundraising activities.

Good schools often benefit from good leadership and management and Ladywood is no exception. The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership and has played a pivotal role in the school's success. She recognises and values the contributions made by all staff and governors and this helps to create a sense of unity in working to provide a good quality of education for all pupils. The senior leadership team work together well to promote school improvement but recognise the need to use test and assessment data in a more cutting-edge way, so that they can monitor pupils' achievements more rigorously and make teachers more readily accountable for the progress of pupils in their class.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children do well in the Foundation Stage. Links with parents and induction procedures are good, enabling children to settle quickly into school routines. From relatively low entry levels

to Nursery, especially in their language development, children make good progress in the area of communication, language and literacy, because teaching in the way that letters and sounds blend together (phonics) is effective. Children also achieve well in their physical and creative development, particularly in the Nursery, because they benefit from a good range and balance of play activities, such as dressing up to go exploring on a 'Bear Hunt'. Reception children, however, do not have enough opportunities to learn through outside play. The school is in the process of making provision across the two Foundation Stage classes more fluid and integrated, so that good practice can be shared and learning enriched even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure best use is made of test and assessment data to regularly check on pupil achievement and hold teachers accountable for the progress pupils make.
- Provide frequent opportunities for pupils to take the initiative for their own learning and to flourish as confident, independent learners.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage and achieve well, although standards remain below national expectations by the time that children are ready to start in Year 1. This is because of their low, and at times, very low starting points. Pupils, of all abilities, continue to make good progress in Years 1 to 6. By the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average and by the time that pupils leave school, standards are securely in line with the national average overall and a little above in mathematics and reading. The school recognises that further work is needed to bring writing standards up to those in other subjects but is tackling the issue robustly through various writing initiatives and well planned phonic work for the younger pupils. The good emphasis that the school gives to other subjects is reflected in the good work and performance in subjects such as art and design, history and physical education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils make an important contribution to the life and work of the school. They are keen and eager to learn and enjoy much of what the school has to offer. Attendance is satisfactory and improving. A minority of pupils present challenging behaviour, but the vast majority are well behaved and discussions with pupils clearly show that bullying is not an issue. Pupils are thoughtful, show a good understanding of what is right and wrong and have a good knowledge of different world faiths. Pupils' good awareness of what is needed to follow a healthy lifestyle and keep safe is reflected in their readiness to eat healthily, to participate enthusiastically in sporting activities and to manage risks well. Pupils enjoy taking on roles and responsibilities around the school, as well as acting as school councillors, play pals and team captains. They are less confident at taking the initiative for their own learning or working independently, relying too heavily on adult guidance. However, the many other strengths mean pupils leave school well prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The progress pupils make owes much to good quality teaching. Across the school, relationships in classes are good, pupils are managed well and the teaching assistants make a telling contribution to how well pupils achieve. Where teaching is most effective, lessons are packed with pace and challenge, pupils are kept on their toes and learning is brought to life by exciting activities that test out pupils' independence and enquiry skills. Teaching does not yet consistently provide pupils with enough opportunities for them to develop as confident and independent learners because at times, lessons are too adult-dominated. The marking of pupils' work in the oldest class is exemplary, because it makes crystal clear what individual pupils need to do to improve. This excellent practice is not yet embedded in all classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum captures pupils' interest well and gives a good emphasis to enhancing their literacy, numeracy and computer skills. The work in pupils' books and vibrant displays around the school indicate that subjects are covered in considerable depth. Subjects are being linked together effectively, with a greater emphasis on teaching the basic skills through every subject. However, this, together with the development of pupils' independent, investigative and enquiry skills, is work in progress and yet to impact fully on pupils' learning and achievement. Effective personal, social and health education makes a strong contribution to pupils' good personal development and behaviour. Links with businesses are strong and add an extra dimension to pupils' understanding of the world of work. A good range of extra-curricular clubs and sports activities help broaden pupils' interests and outlooks. Together with a good number of visitors and special events, such as the recent Faith Week, this culminates in a rich and engaging curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The welfare and care of pupils is given a high priority. As a result, pupils feel safe, valued and respected. They are given a genuine voice in decision-making. Pupils who find learning difficult are well supported. The good links with outside support agencies and the school's effective internal mechanisms ensure help is readily on hand for pupils experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties. Safeguarding, risk assessment and health and safety procedures are robust, known, and followed by all staff. Academic guidance is good. The best marking provides excellent pointers to help pupils aim higher. Older pupils have a good knowledge of their individual targets and levels they are working at and towards and the school is rightly seeking to extend this good practice so that younger pupils gain a better idea of how to make their work better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads and manages the school well. She has a very good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and these are articulated well in the effective school self-evaluation. She identifies and tackles weaknesses rigorously and has built up a strong sense of team spirit where all staff are committed to making the school a better place. Good procedures are in place for monitoring teaching and learning that bring about improvements. The recently restructured leadership team is playing an increasingly effective and pivotal role in this process. The leadership team collect a great deal of assessment data but the information is not yet used to best effect to rigorously check on pupil achievement or to hold teachers accountable for the progress of pupils in their class. Governance is good because governors are supportive, yet challenging, and know the school well. The recently re-instigated system of visits will provide governors with further insights into 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	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

9 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Ladywood Primary School, Ilkeston, Derbyshire, DE7 4NH.

You will probably remember that we visited your school not too long ago and I am now writing to let you know what we found out. Before I do, I would first like to thank you for making us feel so welcome. I have told your teachers how you were all so helpful and polite. Through our discussions with you, it was great to hear how much you enjoy coming to school. It was also good to hear about how safe you feel in school, that bullying is not an issue and that there is always someone to talk to if you are worried.

We found many positive things about Ladywood School. These helped us to conclude yours is a good school. Your teachers and other staff help you to achieve well because of their good teaching. The curriculum, the clubs, the visits and visitors are strengths, as is the way in which the school helps you to keep safe and healthy. Mrs Mitchell is a good headteacher, and together with all the staff and governors, makes the school a good place to learn. There is a further strength of the school that I have not mentioned yet. That is you - the children. What good ambassadors for the school you are! Many of you behave well and you show lots of enthusiasm. You know and practise a lot about keeping healthy and safe and you make a real difference to the life of the school. Well done!

Even good schools like yours can improve. We have asked your school to give you the skills to help you become better at working on your own and not always relying too much on adults. We have also asked your teachers to check more closely on how well you are doing and the progress that you are making. Mrs Mitchell, the staff and governors want the school to become even better and I know you will play your part by all behaving well, working hard, and becoming more independent in your learning. I wish you every success in your future. It was a pleasure to meet you.

Martin Newell Lead inspector