

Ludlow Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116098
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	326331
Inspection date	9 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Margaret Coussins

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	558
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Paul Firmin
Headteacher	Mr Simon Watkins
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2006
School address	Peveril Road Itchen Southampton SO19 2DW
Telephone number	023 8044 7885
Fax number	023 8044 0914

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- How effectively leaders and managers at all levels are securing school improvement by ensuring consistency in teaching and learning and thereby raising standards and achievement.
- Pupils' progress across all year groups and subjects.
- The extent to which pupils know where they are in their work and how they can improve their learning.
- The benefits of working in partnership with a local school.

Evidence was gathered from performance data, school information and records, and pupils' work in books and lessons. Parents' questionnaires and discussion with pupils, staff and governors also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

This is a very large junior school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as well as the proportion who have statements of special educational needs, is only slightly lower than average. Their needs relate mainly to moderate learning, speech, language and communication or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school has gained a range of national awards. The headteacher has been in post for one term. The school is working in partnership with a local school. The headteachers of both schools are consultant leaders working with the local authority.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It is improving rapidly and has some good features because of the strong and very effective leadership of the new headteacher, who is successfully and relentlessly driving forward school improvement. In the years since the previous inspection, the school has been through a period of instability in its leadership and management. Recent improvements have lifted the school from its fragile position that saw a decline in overall standards in 2008, particularly in English. The partnership with a local school is having a significant impact on securing improvement and shared expertise for pupils and staff.

The provisional national test results for 2009 show that progress in Year 6 has accelerated, standards have risen to at least average levels and pupils' achievement is satisfactory from their average starting points. However, progress remains uneven across year groups and is relatively weaker in mathematics. The school has correctly identified mathematics as a priority for further improvement. There has been notable improvement in English in Year 6, particularly in writing. Effective subject leadership, better teaching and a sharper focus on identifying pupils who need extra support and providing it, has enabled the school to close the gap between achievement in reading and writing and, as a result, standards in English are above average. Standards in science are average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment has increased, considerably so in English, and is above average in all core subjects. The work the school has done to gain the Inclusion Quality Mark means that procedures are managed well to effectively ensure the inclusion of pupils from a range of backgrounds, some of whom have complex learning, emotional or physical needs. As a result, they make similarly satisfactory progress to others because of the inclusive ethos and the extra help provided for them.

A key focus for the work of leaders and managers has been to improve the quality of teaching and learning, which is now satisfactory. There is some good teaching but insufficient to ensure that all pupils make consistent progress in every year group. Recent improvements are evident because of tighter monitoring and effective guidance and support from skilled and experienced colleagues. However, teachers do not always make the most of pupils' good personal skills by providing enough opportunities for them to work actively and collaboratively and thus experience sufficient challenge. This sometimes slows the pace of learning. Pupils say they learn most when they are allowed to find things out for themselves and when lessons are fun and involve games and problem-solving activities, which promote independence and thinking skills. However, opportunities for learning in this way are inconsistent across the school and sometimes work is not well matched to pupils' needs. There are some examples of effective marking, which informs pupils of where they are and gives helpful points for improvement. This is inconsistent across the school and some pupils do not always have clear targets for their learning or enough information to know how they can do better. The school recognises that to further improve standards more teaching needs to be good or better if progress is to be accelerated and challenging targets are to be met.

The school provides good pastoral care for its pupils and this contributes effectively to their good personal development and well-being including good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The inspector was impressed with pupils' politeness, enthusiasm and willingness to express how much they liked their school and enjoyed their learning. Attendance is average and the school works hard to promote better attendance and dissuade families from taking children on holidays during term time, as this means they miss out on important learning. Pupils

feel safe at school and there are good systems established to safeguard them. Behaviour is good and pupils respond well to a behaviour policy that is helping them to be more responsible for their actions. Teachers ensure that any inappropriate behaviour does not adversely affect the learning of others. Good links with a range of other schools and agencies make a good contribution to pupils' well-being. The induction procedures help to make a smooth transition into Year 3. One parent wrote, 'I feel the school has handled the transition from infant to junior school brilliantly'. A successful focus is given to personal, social and health and physical education, which, along with the school's work to gain the Healthy School Award and the Activemark, makes an effective contribution to pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils relish their responsibilities such as acting as school council members, monitors and playground buddies, and take them very seriously. They say they would like more. Pupils' good personal skills and improving level of basic skills means they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

The school has correctly identified a need to review the satisfactory curriculum because there are not enough links between different subjects to make learning more meaningful, exciting and relevant. There are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. There is a good range of enrichment activities, visits and visitors to school that effectively enhance the curriculum and pupils' personal development. One pupil commented on the residential trip to the Isle of Wight and said, 'It was fun and we learnt how to survive and develop fantastic teamwork'. The school's work to achieve the Artsmark Gold Award means that arts are given a high priority in the school, particularly music, where provision is outstanding and standards are high.

Leadership and management overall are satisfactory because there is still a level of inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning and standards are not as high as they should be. However, the headteacher's drive and commitment to move the school forward are central to the improvements seen in a short amount of time. He has established a challenging vision for the school and innovative plans are well underway to improve the accommodation to enhance the teaching and learning opportunities for pupils and staff. There is an accurate picture of what is working well and what needs to improve. Weaker areas have been quickly identified and addressed through good consultation with pupils, staff, parents and governors. Good working partnerships with the local authority and the partnership school enable the school to successfully tackle these areas. The headteacher is developing a strong staff team, which has taken effective action to put the work of the school back on track. This has resulted in improvements in teaching and learning, English standards and outcomes for pupils' personal development, and demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve further. New responsibilities have been given to middle managers and subject leaders so that leadership is shared in teams of key staff. As a result, leaders are undertaking more accountability for their areas. There has not been enough time to see the full impact of their enhanced role on standards throughout the school. There is an increased emphasis on their professional development and several staff commented that, as a result, they feel valued and energised. A parent commented, 'Since the appointment of the new headteacher there appears to be much enthusiasm and direction amongst the staff team'. The previous difficulties in leadership and management have meant that the pace of improvement in tackling all the issues from the last inspection is satisfactory, but has not been as rapid as the school would have liked. Standards in English have improved but there is scope for more improvement in providing pupils with clear guidance to improve their work. Community cohesion is satisfactory because the school works effectively with its parents and partners in the local community. Most parents are positive about the school. One wrote, 'The school has

made excellent efforts to inform and canvass views of the local community'. The school develops pupils' understanding and awareness of global issues satisfactorily through its charity work. Governors support the school satisfactorily. They share the vision for the future of the school and are developing their ways of working to best support and challenge the performance of the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching and learning are consistently good in order to accelerate progress across the school.
- Increase pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve their work through better marking and target setting.
- Raise standards more rapidly in mathematics.

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.

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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?	3
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	3

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

21 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ludlow Junior School, Southampton, SO19 2DW

I am writing to thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. Thank you for talking to me about your learning and telling me what you think about your school. I was very pleased to see how polite you are. I appreciated your cheery 'good mornings' and the help you gave me to find my way around the building. Your school is satisfactory and has improved a lot over the last term. There is still more to do to make it even better.

These are the things that are best about your school.

- Ludlow Junior is a friendly, caring place and everyone looks after you well.
- You respect each other's differences and you get on well with everyone, whatever their backgrounds or beliefs. Your behaviour has improved, well done for this! Please try hard to keep this up and make it even better as it means you can learn more effectively in your lessons.
- You have worked hard to improve your writing, well done for this and keep this up. I really enjoyed your writing about whether or not the moon landing really happened.
- Your new headteacher does a very good job in running the school.
- You appreciate all the extra activities and events the staff provide for you.
- You know how to stay healthy and safe.

I have asked the school to work on the following important things.

- Make sure that all of your lessons are as good as the best ones to help you learn as well as you can.
- Make sure that teachers help you know how well you are doing in your lessons and how you can improve your learning.
- Help you to improve your learning in mathematics.

Thank you again for all your help and for being so friendly and interesting to talk to. My best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Margaret Coussins

Lead Inspector