

Ladysmith Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113081
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	338089
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Ronald Hall

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 of pupils on the school roll	347
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martyn Snow
Headteacher	Jackie Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They spent the majority of their time observing learning in the 12 classes, visited 17 lessons and observed 14 teachers. Inspectors also held meetings with the headteacher, staff, pupils, and representatives of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including tracking of pupils' progress, samples of the monitoring documents related to teaching and learning, and the school development plan. Inspectors scrutinised samples of pupils' recent work and documents regarding safeguarding. Questionnaires from 102 parents and carers, 22 staff and 99 pupils were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the extent to which leadership and management are driving improvement and demonstrate capacity to improve
- the extent to which all pupils make progress, especially in the core subjects, and the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the extent to which teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection
- how well the new curriculum meets pupils' needs and promotes their academic and personal development
- the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation and judgements.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average sized junior school, with the vast majority of pupils coming from White British backgrounds and a small number from a range of other ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. These include some pupils with physical disabilities and learning difficulties. The school holds the Healthy School award. There is independently run before- and after-school provision operating out of the school which is subject to a separate inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Ladysmith Junior School has improved in all areas since its last inspection and is now an effective school. Pupils enjoy attending, which is demonstrated by its rapidly improving attendance figures. The curriculum is broad, well balanced and organised, presenting the pupils with a range of interesting and highly relevant learning opportunities. It is supported by a good range of extra-curricular activities, such as dance club and a wide range of sporting events, which contributes to the pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles. Pupils are polite and well mannered, and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe. The pupils and staff feel the school is very friendly and everyone is welcoming.

The headteacher, supported by the effective leadership team and governing body, has ensured continued improvement throughout the school. The impact of this is evident in improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. There is a sustained improvement in attainment, and progress in all subjects is now good. These improvements demonstrate that the school has good capacity for sustained improvement. The governing body has used external advice and support to ensure their effectiveness. The school development plan is well focused and informed by accurate self-evaluation. Pupils enter the school broadly in line with national averages. They make good progress throughout the school, with pupils now reaching levels above national averages by the end of Year 6. However, these levels of attainment have not yet been consolidated, and data for recent years indicate that attainment is average overall, with signs that trends are starting to rise. Presentation of the pupils' work throughout the school is of inconsistent quality, however, and teachers need to develop in the pupils a greater sense of pride in their work.

The focus for the headteacher has rightly been in improving the quality of teaching and learning for all pupils to raise attainment. However, there is still some inconsistency in the quality of teaching. The quality of marking to inform pupils of their next steps is also inconsistent, with some staff demonstrating consistently excellent practice while others are not so strong. The school has generated a range of useful and in-depth data on individual pupils' performance and has used these effectively to raise attainment. It has, for example, recognised that girls were not doing as well as they might in mathematics, and put in place robust plans to correct this. Teachers' planning and assessment are supporting pupils' progress and attainment, but learning objectives and outcomes are not always as closely linked and matched to pupils' needs as they could be. Pupils demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm for learning but are not as independent or involved in their learning, and the school as a whole, as they could be.

The school has good links with other local schools and organisations, providing a range

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of learning opportunities. There are good links with a wide range of external agencies.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching so that it is at least good or better by July 2011, particularly with regard to:
 - ensuring that all teachers' planning has consistently clear learning intentions linked to pupils' needs
 - ensuring that all teachers consistently use effective marking to enable pupils to have a clear understanding of their next steps
 - developing pupils' independent learning skills through greater involvement in their learning and the school as a whole
 - developing a consistent approach to promote high quality presentation of pupils' work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In lessons observed during the inspection pupils made good progress, with achievement for all groups being good. In an outstanding English lesson the pupils were enthusiastically engaged in developing creative personification poems. The descriptive language used and use of metaphor were excellent. Throughout the school good use of collaborative work was seen to both enhance learning and encourage pupils of different abilities to strive to achieve their best. Pupils are enthusiastic and say that they fully enjoy learning. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress, but this is not consistently as good as their peers. The school is successfully closing the gaps with improved outcomes for girls in mathematics and for boys in writing.

Pupils play a role in the life of the school and community, as members of the school council, which works to raise money for numerous causes. They are increasingly involved in the development of the school through the learning council. However, they are not currently provided with opportunities to take a greater lead in these areas or in their own learning. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their improving attendance, which is now above the national average.

Pupils demonstrate good social skills and are helpful both to each other and to adults alike. Their good development of basic skills and effective skills of working with others prepare them well for later life. Pupils' spiritual, social and moral understanding is good and the effect of this can be seen in all pupils do and the way they behave. The pupils' understanding of other cultures and the diversity within society is good. The school promotes a healthy approach to life, which reinforces and develops the pupils' good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Pupils have a good understanding of staying safe and are confident in raising any concerns.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Generally teachers have good subject knowledge and are skilful in using different approaches to engage pupils in lessons. Good use is made of a range of resources and equipment to help make lessons fun and interesting. In lessons, the level of challenge and pace enthralls and motivates the pupils. Generally, good use is made of partner and group work to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils generally know their targets but not consistently how to improve, due to inconsistency in marking. Thus, in some classes, opportunities are missed to reinforce learning and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to move forward. Teachers set challenging targets for their pupils and effectively monitor pupils' progress against these.

The new curriculum is supporting learning well, providing a good, exciting, broad and well balanced foundation for the pupils' learning. Although new, its impact has been very positive on pupils' attitudes. As one pupil stated, 'I love school because the curriculum is fun and makes learning exciting and interesting now.' However, its impact on raising attainment has not yet had time to be assessed. There is excellent use of visits and visitors to enhance learning, and resources are carefully selected to support and develop understanding. There is an excellent range of sporting and other extra-curricular activities that enrich and enhance the pupils' learning opportunities.

The school uses its good links with the local high schools to ensure that transition arrangements are good as well as using their expertise and resources to enhance the

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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pupils' learning opportunities and skills. Care, guidance and support in the school are good, with pupils stating they feel the staff care for them and are always there to listen. The atmosphere and ethos of the school are that of a large caring family. As one little girl stated, 'We all support each other here, that's what we do.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The effective headteacher and leadership team have a clear vision for improvement, which is successfully communicated to, and shared by, the majority of staff. There is a clear understanding of areas for development, with robust plans for improvement. Governors are effective and challenge the school in all areas. The leadership team is aware of the inconsistencies within the school and has plans to eliminate these.

The school successfully promotes equal opportunities, challenges discrimination and is very inclusive. School values are well modelled and taught by all staff which has a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes and personal development. The school promotes local community cohesion very well, as local links are very strong and the pupils' responsible attitudes and behaviour in and around school reinforce the school ethos and teaching. The school is developing its national links and has good international links, which are providing pupils with a good and improving understanding of other cultures and the effects they have on our society. The engagement with parents and carers is good.

Safeguarding arrangements are good and both staff and pupils state that they feel very safe and secure in school. There are good safety and security systems in place for online learning and pupils fully understand the need for these measures.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2

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The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are very supportive of the school. They feel the quality of education and care provided in the school is good. The majority think their children are happy in school. One parent commented, 'Both my children are content and happy and progressing well.' Another stated, 'The school recognises talent and encourages it.'

A small number identified concerns about their children's progress. Some felt there were issues about behaviour, but observations and discussions with pupils found these areas were not an issue for the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ladysmith Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 102 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 347 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	61	36	35	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	66	32	31	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	45	44	48	47	9	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	40	53	52	7	7	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	45	44	55	54	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	43	53	52	5	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	49	49	48	3	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	57	56	42	41	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	49	48	44	43	7	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	45	49	48	2	2	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	37	53	52	7	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	44	43	51	50	5	5	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	53	52	46	45	2	2	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



8 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ladysmith Junior School, Exeter EX1 2PT

Thank you for making the inspection team feel so welcome. Your polite, pleasant and positive attitude helped to make our visit very enjoyable. We were impressed by your friendly approach and the pride you take in your school. You have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. You contribute to your local and school communities well, but we feel you could be given more responsibilities. You take pleasure in the positive reputation of your school. You feel safe and happy because the teachers and staff take great care of you all.

We think you attend a good school. You were very positive in your questionnaires and we agree that the school is well placed to continue to improve.

The good relationships you have built up with the teachers and other staff encourage you to try hard and always do your best in lessons. The links you have with other organisations locally help to broaden your understanding. The headteacher, governors and staff are working hard to make your school successful.

In order to make your school even better, we have asked school leaders to work on the following things.

- Make sure that your work is always marked so that you understand what you need to do to improve further and have a clear understanding of what you are to learn. Teachers' planning also needs to be more closely linked to your needs.
- Give you greater responsibility in the school and ensure you are involved in your learning.
- Help you to improve the presentation of your work.

I wish you all the best in the future and I am sure you will all continue to help make your school an even better place for you to learn.

Yours sincerely

Ronald Hall

Lead inspector

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