

Ludlow Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123379
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	340324
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Deborah Udakis HMI

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Norman
Headteacher	Val Matthews
Date of previous school inspection	9 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and observed nine teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils and observed the school's work, including a sample of pupils' books, and looked at safeguarding procedures. They scrutinised internal assessment and tracking data, special educational needs and inclusion documentation and analysed questionnaires from 90 parents and carers, and from 12 staff.

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

- the effectiveness of the school's monitoring and evaluation processes in improving outcomes for children, particularly for more able pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- whether the teaching makes sufficient demands on pupils, so that all pupils make good progress, in particular those that are more able
- the effectiveness of the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and what is being done to narrow the gap between their attainment and that of their peers
- the effectiveness of the governing body in ensuring that the school meets all of its statutory duties and, in particular, its duty to promote community cohesion and to deliver sex and relationships education.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized infant school. The majority of the pupils are White British, with a very small proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds, including a very small percentage who speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special education needs, is below the national average. The school works in partnership with the Sure Start children's centre located in the grounds of the school. This provision is inspected separately. The school has also received a local authority Quality Mark for its work in involving parents in their children's education.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school has a number of strengths. When children in the Early Years Foundation Stage start school their skills are below those expected for their age. They make good progress because adults have a good understanding of how young children develop and learn. Adults work collaboratively to ensure that learning is fun. They carefully observe and record children's achievements in their learning journeys and use this information, together with the children, to plan activities tailored to their varying needs and abilities. Teachers use data effectively to plan children's next steps in learning. They make good use of tracking information to identify areas of learning where there is underachievement. Parents and carers make valuable contributions to their children's learning. This ensures that children's progress within the Early Years Foundation Stage is good.

The school's relationship with parents and carers is very positive. They receive regular and timely information about their children and other aspects of the school's work. Moreover, staff listen to and act on their views. The senior management team has fully embraced extended partnerships with parents and carers as co-educators. Effective two-way communication results in continuity of care for children as they enter the Early Years Foundation Stage. Consequently, the school gives the children a good start to their education. However, the effectiveness of the children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not continued in Years 1 and Year 2. As a result, outcomes for children are satisfactory.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, because of the satisfactory but inconsistent quality of teaching. Some teachers skilfully plan, adapt and refine activities so that every pupil is sufficiently challenged. In effective lessons, pupils show enjoyment of their learning. For example, in a spelling lesson, topical links to the World Cup and the weather were used well to engage pupils in an activity to improve their skills in punctuation and editing. Pupils enjoyed working with their learning partner, made good progress and showed positive relationships. However, these pockets of quality teaching are not yet evident in all year groups.

The following factors influence pupils' variable progress:

- the school's curriculum planning does not always build systematically
- upon pupils' prior experience or look ahead to the next stage of their learning
- the pace of learning slows when teachers do not use assessment
- information to match activities to pupils' different abilities
- teachers do not always provide pupils with specific guidance about how
- to improve their work and achieve their learning targets

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- much of the school's assessment and tracking of pupils' progress is
- confusing and difficult to follow.

The school is satisfactorily led by the headteacher, who is committed to driving through improvements in the school. The governing body makes a welcome contribution to the work of the school. However, governors are not entirely successful in ensuring that the school's policies, systems and procedures are carefully checked for compliance with regulations. Moreover, the monitoring and evaluation activities carried out by senior and middle leaders are not sufficiently rigorous because they do not always focus on outcomes for pupils. Systems to secure greater consistency in teaching and learning are only moderately successful because monitoring does not ensure that agreed developments or whole-school policies have been fully and properly implemented. Therefore, pupils' experiences in different classes are uneven, but satisfactory overall. The headteacher has been instrumental in making improvements to the learning environment and fabric of the building. Also there has been some degree of success in increasing the proportion of pupils who reach the higher level 3 in national assessments by the end of Year 2. This demonstrates that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure better learning and progress for pupils and increase the proportion of good teaching across the school by:
 - ensuring teachers make very clear to pupils what they are going to learn and how their success will be measured
 - ensuring that lesson planning makes effective use of assessment information to enable teachers to plan lessons that provide work at the right level for children of all abilities
 - ensuring that, when they mark pupils' work, teachers explain what pupils must do to reach the next level in their learning.
- Leaders and managers should improve the effectiveness of the school's work by:
 - setting a clear direction for the school that focuses on improvements to achievement and the quality of teaching by strengthening the role of all leaders and holding all staff accountable for their work
 - setting clear expectations and guidance for what the school wants to see in lessons and establishing robust systems to ensure that all staff adhere to them
 - refining the tracking of pupils' progress to determine the rates of progress made by different groups, particularly higher attaining pupils and those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - add specific quantifiable and timed targets in all strategic plans so that progress towards them is measurable and can be reported accurately
 - ensuring that the school meets its statutory duty to promote community

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cohesion.

- Secure rapid and sustained improvements in the school's systems for promoting pupils' health, safety and well-being by ensuring the governing body monitors policies, systems and procedures regularly and with rigour.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

While pupils' attainment is average, there has been a slow but steady decline in standards over the last three years. This is because the effective arrangements in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not sustained as children move on within the school. Inspectors observed high levels of pupils' engagement, enthusiasm and enjoyment in learning where teaching was effective. For example, in a Year 2 spelling lesson, all pupils made good progress in proof-reading editing sentences and correcting punctuation because there was specific challenge in the tasks that pupils were provided with, matched to their ability. Consequently, pupils responded positively and were eager to work together. However, this is not the case in all lessons and pupils experience a varied quality of learning experiences.

Intervention and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are adequate. They respond positively to the extra support they are given, particularly in support groups outside lessons, where their learning is broken down into small steps. However, their needs are not fully met within lessons because lesson planning does not take account of their specific learning difficulties and this lessens some pupils' progress. Pupils develop a good understanding of safety and how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, they learn about e-safety, road safety and the dangers of railway lines. An effective anti-bullying campaign has raised pupils' awareness and the importance of sharing concerns with staff. Pupils are polite, well-mannered and many are eager to engage socially with visitors. However, a few incidents of low level disruptive behaviour in lessons and reported incidents of physical altercations between pupils show that behaviour is satisfactory overall.

Effective links with the local police, church, and a residential care home, enable pupils to make some positive contributions to the local community. For example, they took part in a litter picking project and received media attention in recognition of their efforts. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is satisfactory. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to explore relationships and are developing respect for other people's feelings and values. However, their understanding of cultural diversity is weak because they have limited understanding of contrasting communities beyond Ludlow.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
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	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Some innovative teachers are using imaginative methods and approaches to support pupils' learning, particularly for the youngest children. Effective teaching within the school includes clear explanations to pupils about what they will be learning, with targets for success. Relationships between pupils and staff are generally positive and strong where the teaching is good. Teachers assess pupils' levels of attainment with some precision. However, the weak system for collating the data about pupils' progress masks under-achievement. Assessments and marking do not inform planning or pupils' next steps in learning. Consequently, some work offered lacks challenge, particularly for pupils with special educational needs/and or disabilities and those pupils who are more able. This results in a few pupils not making the progress of which they are capable.

Children really enjoy the extra-curricular activities such as the gardening club and regular visits to places of interest. Care and guidance are sufficient to promote pupils' learning, personal development and well-being satisfactorily. However, the arrangements for entry into Year 1 are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure the children's continued good progress. There is evidence to suggest that this results in a lack of continuity for the pupils and hinders their progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4

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	
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has identified the downward trend in attainment and is taking appropriate action to stem further decline. The school has taken positive steps to raise the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 3 by the end of Key Stage 1. However, opportunities are missed to enable the school's best teachers and leaders to demonstrate their skills for others to emulate. In addition, strategic planning, although satisfactory in identifying the areas for improvement, lacks specific quantifiable targets, detailed actions or accountabilities and this adversely affects the leaders' ability to embed ambition and drive improvement.

Governors' understanding of how well pupils are doing in relation to national expectations is improving. They are actively involved in setting and monitoring the school's priorities. Nonetheless, there are weaknesses in the rigour with which governors monitor the work of the school resulting in some key requirements only being partly met. Therefore, although leaders and managers take health and safety, and safeguarding issues seriously, there are important areas where the school has failed to keep aspects of policy, procedure and training up to date. For example, its documentation on the assessment of potential health and safety hazards has not been updated. The school procedures regarding children's health welfare and safety have been reviewed in response to parental concerns and the school has drawn up an appropriate action plan.

Not enough work has been done in relation to promoting community cohesion. The school recognises that it is important for pupils to be adequately prepared for life in a multicultural and multi-faith wider community. Yet, little has yet been done other than tenuous links with other schools where different cultural traditions, faiths and ethnicities are represented. This is not strong enough to ensure pupils are well prepared to take their place in modern Britain. The school is generally inclusive and promotes equal opportunity satisfactorily. Pupils are taught to develop respect for themselves, others, staff, the school and the wider community. Every child accesses the whole curriculum and early identification and intervention strategies support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3

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	
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children form good, caring and trusting relationships with each other and with adults. They are excited and motivated to learn. They are confident to try new activities. Behaviour is good and the consistent use of praise and encouragement helps children to develop positive self-esteem. Arrangements to promote children's health and safety are robust, and all welfare requirements are met, which ensures that children feel safe and are happy in school.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good and result in a clear vision and plans for future improvements. The curriculum provides positive experiences for children and covers the six areas of learning well. Children have unlimited access to outdoors, where their learning is extended. Activities provided for children are a healthy mix of child-initiated and adult-led. Opportunities for children to explore new experiences independently are very good. For example, during outdoor play one child prepared a pictorial checklist including flowers, fish, and insects and undertook an audit of these items found with the area. However, the lack of large outdoor climbing equipment limits children's physical development.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

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The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who completed the inspection questionnaire, and who spoke to inspectors during the inspection, are supportive of the school. A very small minority of those who completed the questionnaire expressed some concern about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour and the leadership and management of the school. The inspection evidence indicates that these are not significant causes for concern.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ludlow Infant 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 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 234 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	64	31	35	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	64	31	35	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	41	47	44	50	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	55	36	41	2	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	54	61	31	35	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	50	41	47	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	55	38	43	0	0	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)	38	43	45	51	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	53	39	44	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	40	46	52	3	3	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	45	45	51	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	41	47	39	44	6	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	64	32	36	0	0	0	0

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.



25 June 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Ludlow Infant School, Shropshire, SY8 1HG

You may remember that I visited your school recently with two other inspectors. We really enjoyed our two days at Ludlow Infant School. I particularly enjoyed the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor play and seeing the younger children singing and dancing to the music. It was great fun! I am writing to thank you all for being so friendly and helpful. I thought you would like to know what we found out.

You are receiving a satisfactory education. The good things about your school are:

- you told us that you feel safe in your school
- all of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are making good progress and learn and play outside throughout the day
- the school premises have been improved with new toilets; a covered outdoor play area for the reception classes; and several rooms have been redecorated
- this year, more children in Year 2 attained Level 3 in their learning.

There are several things that we have asked the school to work on so that in time it becomes a good school. We have asked that:

- teaching becomes even better so that you all enjoy good lessons and learn as much as you can as fast as you are able
- leaders and managers help teachers to improve your lessons so you learn more, especially about different people from around the world
- governors make sure the school meets all its responsibilities.

Your teachers and the governors are working to make the school even better. You can help too by working hard in every lesson and by taking great pride in all of your written work. I wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Udakis

Her Majesty's Inspector

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