

Ludlow Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123426
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	340336
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Declan McCauley

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	264
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neville Stephens
Headteacher	Sally Swann
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the majority of their time looking at learning. They visited 27 lessons, observed all 10 teachers teaching and held meetings with the chair of the governing body, staff, and groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's documentation relating to safeguarding, its improvement plans, reports on its work, governing body minutes and records of pupils' progress. They considered the responses in questionnaires from staff, pupils and 104 parents and carers.

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

- the quality of teaching and its impact on the progress made by all pupils
- how well senior managers are working to bring about increased attainment by the end of Key Stage 2
- how well assessment is used to support pupils in their learning.

Information about the school

The school is an average sized junior school. Almost all of the pupils have White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. A high proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or learning disabilities. A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.

The school has gained a large number of awards in recognition of their many successes. These include the Healthy Schools Status, Activemark, International Schools award, Artsmark, Safer Schools and the Financial Management Standard.

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

Ludlow Junior is a very welcoming and happy school which provides a satisfactory education. The headteacher has made many improvements and the vast majority of parents are pleased with their children's experiences of school. Pupils are provided with opportunities to learn in a safe environment. All pupils are exceptionally well cared for and guided in school. This particularly helps those from weaker starting points to make the progress expected of them while at the school. Teaching quality varies. It is more effective at the end of Key Stage 2 than in some of the younger classes. There are some inconsistencies in teachers' use of assessment and the amount of challenge they provide, particularly in classes at the start of Key Stage 2. As a result, progress is slower in these classes because the pupils are not taking an active enough part in lessons. From the time pupils join the school, with average levels of attainment overall, until they leave they make satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is around the national average. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) by pupils in many lessons is of a high standard.

The school's self-evaluation procedures provide the senior leaders with broadly accurate knowledge of where improvements are needed. Collectively, the governing body and headteacher recognise the need to focus on improving pupils' attainment and progress. Governors are very supportive of the school but recognise that they have not been sufficiently focused on holding it fully to account for standards of attainment and rates of progress. Since the previous inspection, improvements have been made in the quality of writing produced by pupils. This has been brought about through the use of the 'Big Writing' programme. The school has not done as much as it should to extend pupils' awareness of cultures and beliefs beyond their own everyday experience. Nevertheless, given the improvements which have taken place and the emphasis on raising attainment and increasing progress, school leaders have demonstrated a satisfactory capacity to make sustained improvement in the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve the progress made by all pupils in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring greater consistency in the quality of teaching throughout the school so that all pupils are set challenging work that is matched to their capabilities
 - improving the pace of lessons to ensure that all pupils are engaged fully in learning and make consistently good progress

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- ensuring that all teachers use marking consistently to identify the next steps in learning for all pupils
- making sure that all teachers allow greater opportunities for pupils to engage in more active learning activities during lessons.
- Strengthen the impact of the governing body in challenging the school to improve further by:
 - holding the school fully to account for pupils' progress and attainment
 - ensuring that rigorous and systematic evaluation fully informs strategic planning where this is not already the case
 - taking responsibility for tackling identified weaknesses decisively.
- Develop pupils' awareness of ethnic diversity beyond their immediate locality.
- 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**

Pupils are very positive about school and enjoy being involved in aspects of school life. They particularly enjoy exciting, engaging, well-planned lessons that help them to make progress in their learning. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is average in science and slightly below the national average in English and mathematics. In most of the lessons observed, pupils made at least satisfactory progress and achieved their learning goals. In many lessons, activities are planned well to meet the individual needs of the pupils. Support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. Teaching assistants have a good understanding of these pupils' needs but the progress that the pupils make is variable. In lessons, some boys with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make as much progress as girls because are they not sufficiently challenged.

Pupils are caring and very supportive of others. In lessons and around school all pupils are well behaved. The school is successful in encouraging pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles. In 2006, the school was recognised as a Healthy School and is currently in the process of applying for revalidation. The curriculum is well organised and provides effective learning opportunities for pupils. A broad range of activities are run after school and these are enjoyed by pupils. All pupils are well cared for by the school and very well supported by the adults in school. The pupils say they feel safe and well-cared for at school. They are very confident that they can talk to adults if they have any concerns and that these will be resolved promptly. They enjoy taking on responsibilities and participate enthusiastically in fundraising activities which benefit those less fortunate than themselves. The school council contributes successfully to the life of the school. Pupils' attendance is above average and, coupled with their good grounding in the use of ICT, this prepares them well for their future. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are considerate of others' feelings and emotions in and around school and in the wider community.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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?

The quality of teaching throughout school is variable. In the best lessons, teachers maintain a good pace of learning and ensure that activities are matched well to pupils' abilities. In the majority of lessons teachers use questioning skills to provide an appropriate level of challenge for pupils. This helps teachers understand the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning. ICT is used in many lessons to very good effect, inspiring pupils' enthusiasm for learning. When teaching is less effective, pupils do not all make as much progress as they could because work is not always matched precisely to their needs. Teachers do not always move the pupils at a fast enough pace to enable them all to be engaged fully in their learning. In some lessons, teachers expect pupils to spend too much time sitting on the carpet listening to them instead of engaging them in active learning tasks. Most teachers assess how the pupils are learning and the progress they are making in lessons. Target cards are used by some pupils to monitor the progress they are making, although their use is not apparent in all classes. Marking of pupils' work is satisfactory overall. At its best, marking is used to identify the next steps which pupils must take to improve their work, and some pupils assess the work of their

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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peers. However, in the majority of classes, marking is not as well focused on improvement as it could be.

The curriculum is well matched to the interests of the pupils. Boys were inspired by their teacher to write a radio broadcast in a literacy lesson because they were able to focus on football as this was of particular interest to them. Pupils are given opportunities to link their learning into a wider world context through their environmental work linked to the bee garden. A good range of visits, visitors and after-school clubs enhance the curriculum well. The progress made by pupils while at the school is enhanced by the depth and coverage of the curriculum. The school works well with a range of partners, both locally and nationally, to successfully support the learning and well-being of pupils. Members of staff work closely with outside agencies, resulting in increased support for the more vulnerable pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by teaching assistants in lessons and at other times during the school day. This has a positive impact on their learning and progress. Staff at the school know the pupils well and take very good care of them. The school supports pupils very effectively. This is a feature of the school that is widely appreciated by parents and carers. The work which the school does with pupils, their families and a range of outside support groups has a very positive impact on the ability of pupils facing challenging circumstances. It enables them to make progress which would not be possible without the well focused support. This is particularly true of many lower ability pupils. Transition arrangements from the feeder schools and year groups work smoothly because of careful liaison between staff. Pupils are well prepared for their move to the next stage of education at the end of Year 6.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's development plan sets out improvement priorities which are carefully identified and relevant to school improvement. These have been discussed in detail and are focused clearly on bringing about improvements. The school's senior management team is working to improve attainment and the progress made by pupils. So far it is too early to judge the impact of initiatives. Senior managers have recently worked with staff to develop the use of assessment for learning in lessons. The impact of this initiative on learning is apparent in many lessons. Teachers are held to account for the progress made by their pupils through regular meetings with the headteacher but, again, it is too

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soon to be able to measure the impact of this initiative. Monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out regularly and is used to identify areas for improvement. The governing body is very supportive and has an understanding of the workings of the school. Governors have in place informal procedures through which they endeavour to hold the school to account for its work but these do not have sufficient impact because they are neither systematic nor rigorous enough. This means that governors have not ensured that identified weaknesses have been tackled sufficiently. However, governors can point to success in ensuring that effective procedures are in place to keep all pupils safe.

Relationships with parents and carers are good, and this was very apparent when inspectors spoke with a number of them on the playground. The school seeks the views of parents and carers and acts upon them. They were consulted, for example, about the after-school activities and their views were acted upon. The use of a mobile phone text messaging service demonstrates the school's commitment to working closely with parents and carers by sharing information to benefit the pupils' development. The school promotes full equality of opportunity but, sometimes, in lessons, boys with special educational needs and/or learning disabilities are not challenged sufficiently to make the same progress as girls. The school makes an important contribution to the local community, but pupils have relatively few opportunities to experience and learn about different cultures and beliefs across the United Kingdom and the wider world.

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
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	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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

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Over a third of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. A very large majority of these parents and carers were overwhelmingly positive about the school and its work. A small number also wrote comments to expand upon their views. Many spoke in appreciative terms about the work of the school and praised the staff for the help their child had been given. One of the comments made by parents was, 'Ludlow Junior School has offered my son a very positive and happy learning experience.' This comment typified the responses. A very small number of parents raised concerns about provision for pupils to wash their hands in the toilets. The inspection team investigated this and found that the school provides appropriate products for hand cleaning in toilets.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ludlow 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 104 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 264 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	52	48	46	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	58	56	46	44	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	49	47	54	52	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	46	54	52	1	1	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	53	51	51	49	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	40	61	59	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	40	62	60	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)	50	48	49	47	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	38	63	61	0	0	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	30	65	63	5	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	30	62	60	5	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	41	39	60	58	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	43	59	57	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



5 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ludlow Junior School, Ludlow, SY8 1HX

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors so warmly when we visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and talking with you to find out about your school. Also thank you to everyone who completed the pupils' questionnaires; they provided us with a great deal of information about your views. It is clear that you go to a friendly and welcoming school. It provides you with a satisfactory education and it has many good features, which you enjoy.

These are the main things that we found out about your school.

You behave well at all times.

You like lessons that are interesting and help you to learn.

You enjoy school and always want to do your best.

You make more progress in your learning in some classes.

The programme of learning planned by your teachers is of a high standard.

You know how to eat healthily and understand why that is important.

You care well for others, both at school and in the wider community.

You are very well cared for, supported and guided in everything that you do.

You know that all the adults care for you and this makes you feel safe and gives you confidence to talk to them if you have any worries.

We have asked the school's leaders to do three things to help make it even better.

Improve the progress you make in your learning at the school.

Improve how the governors work to make your school even better.

Give you more opportunities to learn about communities and cultures beyond your local community.

We have many good memories about your school and hope that you achieve all the ambitions that you shared with us.

Yours sincerely

Declan McCauley

Lead inspector

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