

Ludlow Junior School

Clee View, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1HX

Inspection dates

14–15 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since her appointment in September 2017, the headteacher has wasted no time in addressing weaknesses in the school. As a result, the school has improved rapidly in a short space of time and standards have risen.
- School leaders, the local governing body and the trust are aspirational for the school and the pupils. The trust provides effective support and challenge to the school.
- Senior leaders are now more strategic in their roles. They make a valuable contribution to improving teaching and learning and outcomes for pupils. Middle leaders are beginning to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the individual subjects and areas they are responsible for.
- The quality of teaching is good because teachers know where pupils are in their learning and what they need to learn next.
- Pupils are confident to write and edit their work to improve it. Teachers address misconceptions and provide pupils with helpful feedback. However, spelling is weak and, on occasion, pupils do not correct errors in spelling accurately.
- Pupils enjoy reading, read regularly and make good use of their school library.
- Pupils apply their mathematical skills in reasoning and problem-solving activities. However, some pupils' fluency in number is not well developed, especially in Years 3 and 4. On occasion, teachers do not have high enough expectations for the most able pupils and they are not challenged in a timely manner.
- Pupils enjoy a rich and varied curriculum, enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum motivates and engages pupils in their learning. The broad curriculum, and the many opportunities it offers, contributes to pupils' personal development.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They work hard and their behaviour is good. The relationships between staff and pupils are strong and supportive so that pupils are confident to try hard.
- Safeguarding practice is exemplary and the culture of safeguarding is strong. The safeguarding team provides exceptional support to pupils and families. Pupils' well-being is a high priority in the school and, as a result, pupils feel safe and secure.
- Parents and carers appreciate the well-rounded education their children receive.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing the roles of middle leaders to strengthen leadership capacity further.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - teachers address pupils' weaknesses in spelling effectively
 - a whole-school approach is consistent across all year groups and classes in mathematics so that the most able pupils in mathematics are challenged sooner
 - pupils develop greater fluency and helpful strategies in number to help them in their calculations.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since joining the school, the headteacher has introduced a significant number of changes. These have been managed successfully to achieve maximum impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning, and outcomes for pupils.
- Staff are well trained and are well supported to deliver high-quality teaching. Where teaching is less strong, teachers reflect on their practice and help each other to improve. They appreciate the professional development they have received and are highly aspirational for the future of the school.
- The headteacher has strengthened the leadership of the school to ensure that the strong improvements already made continue to be sustained. Senior leaders are now developing their leadership skills to help them have an increasingly positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and standards across the school.
- The profile of middle leaders has been raised. The development of the subject leader role is relatively new. Subject leaders have action plans in place and they are now beginning to monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching and learning in their subject areas and consider the progression of skills in subjects across the curriculum.
- The headteacher has introduced a new assessment system to ensure that pupils' progress and attainment are closely monitored and the outcomes of individuals, classes, year groups and key groups, such as disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils, are carefully analysed. Through regular pupil-progress meetings, leaders and staff respond swiftly to identified needs to ensure that pupils make as much progress as possible. Consequently, current pupils in the school are making good progress.
- The well-planned curriculum ensures that pupils have access to a broad range of learning in all subjects. Pupils enjoy visits out to places but also welcome visitors to school to enhance their learning. They have taken part in arts projects, Greek days, a Stone Age day and local enterprise workshops, for instance. Pupils develop skills in music through learning the ukulele and a brass instrument. The wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as gardening, art, film, and sports, contribute to the rich

curriculum. Strong links to the community ensure that pupils get involved in local events such as poppy planting, the local foodbank and charity fundraising.

- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is threaded throughout the curriculum. Assemblies focus on values and themes, such as respect and tolerance. Pupils learn about other cultures and religions and visit different places of worship.
- Additional funding, such as pupil premium and the physical education (PE) and sport premium, is used well to support pupils. The difference between outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally is diminishing. An increased number of pupils participate in physical activity.
- Leaders ensure that the funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is used well. The identification of pupils with additional needs is now increasingly accurate so that pupils receive the right support and are helped to make progress. Leaders carefully monitor the impact of support and interventions on outcomes for pupils to ensure that they are effective.
- Parents speak highly of the school. They recognise the positive improvements that have been made recently, in particular the high expectations for behaviour and a strong work ethic. They value the broad curriculum and the range of extra-curricular activities on offer.

Governance of the school

- The trust delegates statutory responsibilities to the local governing body.
- The local governing body understands the role of the trust as the accountable body. They attend termly meetings with heads and chairs of governors within the trust to share knowledge and expertise with each other. Governors took a conscious decision to join a trust due to the changing educational landscape and to support the school in moving forward. Governors chose the trust they wished to be part of and appreciate the security that the trust now provides. Although accountable to the trust, the local governing body has an appropriate level of autonomy which it values.
- The trust knows the school well. Clear structures, systems and lines of accountability ensure that the trust monitors the impact of leaders rigorously. For example, the trust receives all minutes of governors' meetings and these are checked by the academy effectiveness officer. An academy improvement partner visits regularly to support school improvement. The trust is outward-looking and utilises expertise from outside the trust, as well as within it, to provide valuable support and challenge for school leaders and staff.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that staff are trained and fully informed. Robust systems are in place for the recruitment of staff and the recording of concerns. These are clearly understood and used by staff. Staff are clear about how to report and escalate concerns. They appreciate the importance of reporting small concerns that might contribute to a

'bigger picture' of wider concerns. They stand by the phrase, 'If it is enough to make you think, it is enough to report it.'

- The safeguarding team works closely together. Staff respond to concerns in a swift and timely manner, and liaise appropriately with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the right support at the right time. Staff know their families and ensure that vulnerable pupils are continually monitored. The high levels of vigilance and support ensure that children are very well cared for. For example, family support workers base themselves in 'The Acorn Room' so that they are easily available to pupils to provide emotional support for those who need it.
- Pupils looked after by the local authority receive good support. Their attendance, progress, attainment and emotional health and well-being are carefully monitored. Funding is spent appropriately to ensure their specific needs are met. For example, singing, dancing and horse-riding lessons help to develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- The safeguarding governor visits school regularly to check safeguarding procedures and records, such as the single central record for the safe recruitment of staff. The trust ensures that all governors are appropriately trained in safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good because learning is carefully planned and pupils are supported effectively. When pupils join the school, leaders identify gaps in learning quickly. They have taken swift action to improve progress and attainment in writing, especially for boys. For example, leaders discussed with boys what support they needed for writing. Leaders adapted lesson structures and questioning to support boys who preferred to write in short bursts. Boys now have more pride in their work and this is evident in their books.
- Pupils' work is neat and well presented. Most pupils demonstrate good handwriting and, where handwriting is weaker, it is improving over time. Teachers have the same high expectations for writing in all subjects across the curriculum as they do in English.
- Pupils use and apply the grammatical skills they have been taught well. Teachers address misconceptions and ensure that pupils receive helpful feedback to move their learning forward. Some pupils' spelling, however, continues to be inaccurate.
- Pupils read fluently and enjoy reading. A love of reading and reading for pleasure are well supported. The library is a hive of activity, with a wide range of reading material available to cater for pupils' different interests. The school newspaper, 'Children's Choice', ran a survey to find out what boys liked to read. Pupils read often and, as a result of good teaching and developing vocabulary, demonstrate good comprehension skills.
- The work that teachers set for pupils is mostly well matched to their ability so that pupils are engaged and motivated. Teachers build on pupils' prior learning effectively. On occasion, the most able pupils do not move on to more challenging work when they are capable of doing so, especially in mathematics.
- The content of lessons is interesting and engages pupils in their learning. For example,

in Year 5, after attending workshops about Ancient Greece, pupils used the experience to support them in writing a Greek myth. In a history lesson in Year 6, pupils discussed items they would put in their suitcase as an evacuee. When writing a letter home as an evacuee, they were encouraged to write in language appropriate to the relevant time period.

- In mathematics, pupils have regular opportunities to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding in reasoning and problem-solving activities. However, some pupils, especially in Years 3 and 4, have not developed a fluency in number and do not use efficient ways of calculating. They do not readily apply what they already know and this can hinder their progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning because teachers have high expectations and the curriculum engages and motivates them. Pupils and staff have strong relationships with each other. Pupils are confident to ask questions and share their ideas.
- Pupils take a pride in their work and work hard to improve it. There is a strong learning culture in school that pupils 'buy in to'. Teachers ensure that pupils receive helpful feedback and pupils respond well to it.
- The health and well-being of pupils are high priorities in the school. Pupils are encouraged to think about how to improve their own well-being by considering, for example, 'How can we be happy?'
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and know that adults in school will help and support them. They demonstrate a clear understanding of tolerance and respect. They readily accept their differences and say, 'We are treated equally.'
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online. Through the curriculum, pupils learn about fire safety and healthy lifestyles, for example.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- At breaktimes pupils play together happily, and in lessons they collaborate with each other in their learning. During unstructured times or when carrying out activities independently, such as changing books in the library, pupils are sensible and responsible. They move around the school calmly and quietly and respond well to adults because routines are well established and pupils are respectful, in the dining room, in the library, and in assembly, for example.
- Pupils are clear about the new behaviour system and they know what is expected of them. Pupils who may have difficulties in managing their own behaviour are supported sensitively. Parents say behaviour is good and inspectors agree.

- Attendance is above the national average. Persistent absence has risen but remains broadly in line with the national average. Leaders monitor attendance rigorously and challenge poor attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes have improved and are good because teachers have developed a more accurate understanding of age-related expectations through the moderation of pupils' work with other schools. Leaders ensure that they establish an accurate baseline for pupils when they join the school. Leaders and teachers check the progress and attainment of pupils regularly. They use this information to adapt teaching to meet pupils' needs and improve progress. In line with the school's assessment policy, teachers provide pupils with helpful feedback to move them forward in their learning.
- Attainment has improved in all subjects, significantly so in reading. Attainment in mathematics and reading is now above the national average at both the expected and higher standards. Writing has improved closer to the national average at the expected standard and is broadly in line with the national average at greater depth. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils is now broadly in line or close to other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics.
- Provisional data for 2018 shows that progress in reading and mathematics is in line with the national average. Although progress in writing remains below the national average, it has improved. Inspection evidence and work in pupils' books show that current pupils in the school are making good progress in all subjects. Some pupils make strong progress.
- Pupils with SEND are supported sensitively to enable them to contribute to learning and make progress. Leaders provide helpful support for disadvantaged pupils and, as a result, outcomes are improving.
- Progress and attainment have improved for the most able pupils so that they achieve outcomes at the higher standard at least in line with other pupils nationally. However, on occasion, the most able pupils currently in the school are not challenged sufficiently.

School details

Unique reference number	143801
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10067154

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Judith Tinsley
Headteacher	Kate Mather
Telephone number	01584 873602
Website	www.ludlowjuniorschool.co.uk/
Email address	admin@ludlowjuniorschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to an academy in December 2016.
- The school is part of the Bishop Anthony Educational Trust (BAET). The trust delegates statutory responsibilities to the local governing body.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2017.
- The school is an average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium grant is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes and looked at pupils' work. Senior leaders joined inspectors for some observations.
- Inspectors observed pupils in the playground and in the dining room, talked to pupils formally and informally and listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior staff, middle leaders and the office manager.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the local governing body and two other governors, the chief executive officer of the trust, and spoke to the academy improvement partner by telephone.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the beginning and end of the school day, and considered 36 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including nine written comments. Twenty-four responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and eight responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire were also considered.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised including: the school's own self-evaluation; the school's improvement plan; information on pupils' progress and attainment; records of behaviour and attendance; monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning; minutes of governing body meetings; the single central record of staff recruitment; and safeguarding information.

Inspection team

Sue Cameron, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Emma Titchener

Ofsted Inspector

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