

Ladywood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106618
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	287564
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Joyce Taylor

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr C Sykes
Headteacher	Miss Clare Grainger
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002
School address	Nancy Road Grimethorpe Barnsley South Yorkshire S72 7JX
Telephone number	01226 711488
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ladywood Primary School takes its pupils from the local area which suffers from considerable social and economic disadvantage. The majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. A tiny proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is higher than average. An average number have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or statements of special educational need. The school has experienced an extended period of staffing disruption which is still not fully resolved. This has included five acting headteachers in four years. Two posts are still filled by temporary staff.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Ladywood Primary School provides its pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. The school is strengthening as long-standing staffing difficulties are resolved. It gives satisfactory value for money. Pupils' personal development is good and staff work effectively to raise pupils' confidence and help them develop the skills to get on well together. The vast majority of pupils settle sensibly to their work and try hard. Their understanding of healthy lifestyles is good. They talk knowledgeably about the effects of sensible eating and share this information with their parents. The thoughtful approach of providing breakfast for all pupils to ensure they are ready to learn improves behaviour and helps them concentrate on their work. Care, guidance and support of the pupils are good and are particularly strong for vulnerable learners. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and the range of additional activities the school provides and are happy in school.

Children start in the Nursery with much lower levels of attainment than are typical for their age. By the end of Reception, the levels most children reach are still below average but, because of effective teaching they have made good progress. In Years 1 and 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average overall and progress is good. In Years 3 to 6, whilst standards are below average, they are rising from the exceptionally low level of the past few years. Pupils' achievement across Key Stage 2 is now satisfactory and it is better than it has been for several years. One or two pupils have made outstanding progress but some of the higher attaining pupils have not done as well as they could. Standards in English are higher than in mathematics, which retains features of earlier weaknesses not fully tackled by the school. For the most part, standards are higher for girls than for boys. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their work is closely matched to their needs. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make progress at the same rate as their peers.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with very strong teaching to support the pupils' personal development and their learning in literacy. New, highly effective assessment procedures and teachers' higher expectations are beginning to highlight when pupils' progress slips and are contributing to the higher standards. However, learning is less effective if, as in a small minority of instances, the pace of lessons slows and the management of pupils' behaviour falters. Generally, the tasks teachers prepare for pupils are interesting and ensure most pupils find their work stimulating and challenging but lesson planning does not always take account of the needs of the most able.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Despite significant strengths in the way most subjects are organised, the provision for mathematics has shortcomings that undermine the older pupils' achievement. Themed events and links between subjects contribute strongly to pupils' enjoyment and their improving standards. A wide range of extra activities and links with different groups, which involves many pupils and increases their enjoyment of school, adds significantly to their academic learning and their social and cultural development.

The headteacher and senior staff provide strong leadership. Since the staffing has stabilised a newly formed and effective leadership team has implemented wide ranging plans for school improvement in a very short time. As a result, the reviewed English curriculum is improved. Opportunities for pupils' personal development help them learn more effectively than before. Checks on pupils' achievement are detailed and are becoming more effective. The work to raise

standards, especially in Years 3 to 6, is proving successful through a very effective whole-school focus for improvement. Strong teamwork is a significant factor in the school's good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in mathematics.
- Ensure learning is made more accessible for some of the boys.
- Ensure the above average learners are challenged more effectively.
- Bring all teaching up to the high standards of the best.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Good progress in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, particularly in developing speaking skills, ensures pupils get off to a good start. In 2006, standards at the end of Year 6 were well below average because many of the older pupils lost a lot of ground during disruptions to the school. Currently, progress is accelerating in Years 3 to 6 and standards are close to the challenging 2007 targets. Achievement is satisfactory overall and good for a rising proportion of pupils. In English, very effective strategies, particularly to develop writing skills, are proving successful and contributing to rising standards. Standards in mathematics are not rising so quickly. Skills in calculation and rapid recall of number facts are weaknesses that the school has already begun to tackle but there is still some way to go. Older boys achieve noticeably less well than girls and, although the school has begun additional support for them, the problem persists. Above average learners often work at the same task as many others in their class and are not achieving as well as they could. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is checked closely and many interventions are put in place to support them and to enable them to achieve well. Achievement for pupils who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory and they are given good support to learn English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The vast majority of pupils behave well, they are polite and very friendly and their attendance has improved and is now satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A small minority of pupils, who have, in the past, found it hard to sustain good behaviour and make relationships work, are supported successfully. As a result, pupils appreciate the respect teachers show them and are showing that they are tolerant towards others. Most pupils thoroughly enjoy learning because they feel involved and are proud of their achievements. They feel safe in school and say that on the very rare occasions that bullying occurs, it is dealt with promptly. Children in the Foundation Stage make great strides in learning to work and play independently and alongside others. Older pupils undertake many responsibilities with pride and confidence. For example, they are very involved in school life through the school council, peer mentoring and acting as play leaders. As a result, their understanding of how to be good citizens is developing well. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to stay healthy and enjoy competing for the Healthiest Snack Award and taking part in the many sporting tournaments and clubs available.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers successfully teach the skills pupils need in order to learn well. They share the purpose of lessons with pupils, teach them to think logically and to accurately measure their own success. This good quality provision is speeding the progress of most pupils. There are times, however, when the more able do the same work as the rest of the class before they tackle something which suitably challenges them and this slows their progress. Teachers are generally very effective at helping pupils feel good about themselves and as a result, most pupils behave well and try hard. Throughout the school, pupils find lessons fun because teachers make good use of such devices as computer linked whiteboards, problem-solving activities and games. Reading and writing skills are taught well and the teaching of mathematical skills is strengthening. Occasionally, where teaching becomes less effective, the pace of learning slows and pupils are off task. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities because they pay close attention to their needs and question their understanding closely.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Good provision for Foundation Stage children ensures that they have a secure basis on which to build. In Years 1 to 6, staff have adapted the curriculum to develop 'hands on' learning, which links subjects, particularly with writing for the older pupils. Uncertainties still remain about exactly what pupils need to learn next in mathematics and what their targets should be, leading to the pupils making slower progress than in English. As a result, the overall inspection judgement of the curriculum is lower than the school's judgement. Some good quality curriculum activities are specifically designed to suit the needs of certain pupils. For example, the school has links with the local football club in order to provide a different and stimulating environment where certain older boys take some of their lessons. A good range of extra activities, trips, visits and visitors to the school further engages pupils' interest and supports their personal, social and cultural development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has an outstanding network of support services for pupils and parents, especially the most vulnerable, involving not only the teachers and teaching assistants but also 'experts' from reputable agencies. As a result, pupils feel they are listened to and that there is always someone to help them. Procedures to keep pupils safe are robust and managed well. Attendance is monitored closely and pupils now attend more reliably and punctually. Good behaviour is promoted extremely well. The systems to track pupils' achievement are very good for literacy and are used effectively to raise standards. Whilst assessment systems for other subjects are satisfactory, they are due to be upgraded to match the strategies used for literacy. The excellent breakfast session during registration periods means that pupils are fit and ready for learning and their understanding of healthy living is consistently reinforced. Pupils' personal and social development is taught well through effective programmes and they benefit from very good community support from the police, fire and nursing services.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's leadership and management provide the school with strong direction. Together with the senior staff, who provide high quality support for colleagues, a rapid pace for improvement has been set, particularly during the past year since staffing settled. Initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise standards have been a top priority. The school focused first on improving literacy through a new approach to teaching and by introducing new, very effective assessment strategies which clearly flag up weaknesses. As a result, standards in literacy are higher and the senior team who supported the developments are now focusing on improvements in mathematics. The pupils' strong personal development and care are key features in enabling pupils to learn well and specific staff, who have responsibilities to support vulnerable learners, play a key role in improving learning opportunities for pupils. Using its effective system of checking and evaluating provision, the school has a very clear view of its own strengths and weaknesses, which are very close to the inspection judgements. However, the nationally available data recording its evaluations are slightly out-dated and give an overall picture of a less successful school. Governance is satisfactory and developing strengths. Many governors are newly appointed but they support the school and are beginning to seek answers to questions about provision.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Ladywood Primary School, Barnsley, S72 7JX.

Thank you on behalf of Mr Clark and myself for your help when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed watching you work and talking with you in your classes and around school. Yours is an improving school. At the moment it gives you satisfactory opportunities for learning and it is getting better all the time.

You have an enthusiastic and hardworking staff. You work hard and as a result, your standards are beginning to go up in literacy. You now need to make the same progress in mathematics. Some of the boys have been left behind and need to try extra hard to catch up. And some of you who already work well could reach even higher standards. Across the school, you enjoy your lessons and you are making a huge effort to behave well and get on with each other. Lots of your parents say they are pleased you come to this school because it helps you do well.

I have identified four areas for the school to improve. This will help you do even better in all areas of learning.

- Reach even higher standards, especially in mathematics.
- Expect even better work from pupils who usually do well.
- Make sure boys do not get left behind.
- Make sure all the teachers help you move forward quickly in your learning.

You are enthusiastic about your school and we hope you carry on enjoying lessons and making Ladywood Primary School such a happy place for learning.