

# Ludgershall Castle Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126489
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	301261
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Curtis

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	266
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Karen Vaughan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andy Bridewell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 May 2006
<b>School address</b>	Short Street Ludgershall Andover SP11 9RB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01264 790375
<b>Fax number</b>	01264 791329

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is slightly larger than the average primary school. Most pupils are White British, with a very small proportion from minority ethnic families. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Attainment on entry is below average in the key area of communication, language and literacy. Three new teachers were appointed in September 2006 including two senior members of the school's leadership team. The school was placed into special measures in May 2006. It received monitoring visits in September 2006 and February 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has made significant and rapid progress since it was placed into special measures in May 2006. The most telling aspect of its improvement is summed up by a parent who said, 'There is joy in the air as you walk into school.' This joy is most evident in pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils enjoy school and are ready and willing to learn. Attendance has improved significantly and is just above the national average. Behaviour is good and pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming to visitors. Pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard because teaching and learning are good. Work is matched carefully to pupils' individual learning needs. As a result, most make good progress in lessons in all year groups, including the Foundation Stage, and achievement is good, whereas a year ago it was inadequate. Standards are broadly average and there is a clear and continuing upward trend, especially in English and science. The rate of improvement in mathematics is slower because pupils' skills in mental recall of number facts are not sufficiently well developed.

The key factor in the school's improvement, and in its good capacity for further improvement, is good leadership and management. The headteacher, with the very strong support of the school's curriculum and assessment team, governors and the local authority, has worked tirelessly to remedy the significant weaknesses identified in the last report. The critical thing that has been put in place is a rigorous system for tracking pupils' progress. The school has for each pupil an accurate picture of the levels at which they are working, and it sets realistic but challenging targets based on this information. Progress against these targets is measured termly. Any pupil who is identified as not being on track is given immediate support to address underachievement. The data for the end of this school year shows the vast majority of pupils meeting their targets, with 25% exceeding them.

As a result of this rigorous assessment and tracking, teachers are in a much stronger position to plan work which is relevant to pupils' needs. This is recognised by pupils. As one said, 'I am really challenged now and I am really made to think.' Parents too recognise that teaching is good and is impacting positively on their children's progress. However, occasionally teachers stick too rigidly to their lesson plans, rather than responding flexibly to pupils' learning needs, and this can limit progress.

The good curriculum and good care, guidance and support underpin the strengths in pupils' personal development and improving achievement. The very good curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) has a significant impact on pupils' good understanding of healthy lifestyles and the need to be safe in school, in the community, and when using the Internet. However, the curriculum is not providing pupils with sufficient time in which to develop their understanding of life in multicultural Britain. Pupils understand and value the way in which they are given clear targets for improving their work. Teachers' marking tells them how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in mathematics across the school, especially in pupils' mental skills and in the rapid recall of number facts.

- Ensure that lessons do not adhere rigidly to what is planned, but are adapted to take into account pupils' learning needs.
- Improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of life in a multicultural society.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good and pupils achieve broadly average standards by the time they leave school. The results of the teacher assessments for pupils in the current Year 2 confirm the year on year improvement in reading, writing and mathematics. In the current Year 6, the initial results of the national tests show significant improvement in English and science. In English, the school has achieved its best ever results in the percentage reaching the expected Level 4 and above. However, the rate of improvement in mathematics has not been as fast. Current initiatives to improve pupils' skills in explaining their mathematical thinking are bearing fruit. However, weaknesses remain in mental arithmetic skills and in pupils' ability to recall number facts quickly.

Standards in reading have improved as the result of significant improvement in the quality of teaching of guided reading. The school's current focus on speaking and listening is having a positive impact on the way in which pupils explain their ideas clearly and confidently.

Progress in the Foundation Stage is good. By the end of Reception, most children are on course to meet the goals they are expected to achieve, except in the writing aspect of communication, language and literacy. Children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.

Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress against the targets in their individual education plans.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a real awareness of environmental issues, as is shown in their commitment to walking to school rather than coming by car. Their awareness of life in a multicultural society is underdeveloped. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to keep safe and know of dangers related to road safety and substance misuse. Through the school council, the playground design team, and acting as reading buddies, pupils play very important roles within the school community. They really appreciate the weekly achievement assemblies and being rewarded for their hard work and good behaviour. Pupils are motivated to attend school regularly through rewards, including having 'Strawberry the Rabbit' in their class for a week and certificates and prizes for the best individual attendance. They regularly take part in exercise, with many attending school sports clubs. The multi-media presentation made by three pupils from Year 6 made a significant contribution to the school achieving national Healthy School status. Rapidly improving academic skills, together with good social and inter-personal skills, show that pupils' preparation for their future economic well-being is good.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good, with a balance of adult led activities and those children choose for themselves. In Years 1 to 6, teachers plan carefully to build systematically on pupils' previous learning and aim to make lessons enjoyable. Lessons give pupils plenty of opportunity to discuss their work in pairs and explain their ideas to the class. Pupils are keen to learn, confident to participate and tackle the activities their teachers set them. They make good progress in most lessons. Pupils are inspired by lessons which present exciting challenges and opportunities for them to make decisions for themselves. There is some excellent use of information and communication technology (ICT) which is rapidly being developed more widely in the school as it is proving so effective in capturing pupils' enthusiasm and helping pupils to learn. Teaching assistants support and guide pupils with learning difficulties effectively, knowing when to intervene and when to encourage pupils to try things by themselves. Teachers usually make regular checks on pupils' understanding in lessons, adapting their teaching as necessary to ensure that pupils make good progress. However, on occasions teaching is not adapted sufficiently well to meet pupils' needs and this hampers the progress pupils make. The quality of marking and feedback to pupils is generally good.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. It ensures that all six areas of learning are covered effectively, including good provision for outdoor play. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is carefully planned to meet pupils' needs and enable them to enjoy their learning. Whilst priority is given to developing pupils' key literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, there is an effective programme for promoting their personal development. The consistent approach to developing pupils' thinking and explaining skills makes a significant contribution to improving achievement, particularly in writing. The recent approach to structured group reading sessions, where older pupils act as buddies for younger ones, is developing a strong sense of belonging to a community besides improving reading standards. Although the curriculum for mathematics is resulting in an improving trend in standards, there is insufficient focus on developing pupils' mental mathematics skills in a progressive way throughout the school. Consequently, many pupils are not quick enough at recalling number facts and calculating in their heads. The school recognizes the need to improve its provision for the development of pupils' multicultural awareness.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The school is committed to ensuring pupils are safe and secure and that they enjoy school and achieve well. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are robust and risk assessments are undertaken where appropriate. The school takes great care to assess and monitor how well pupils are progressing and takes swift action to support pupils who are not achieving as well as they should be. The school works effectively with parents and outside agencies where appropriate to ensure that vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties are fully included in school life.

Pupils are clear about their individual learning targets and are helped to understand these through the 'learning ladders' in their classes. Although the targets are not shared with parents in the annual reports on their children's progress, the school is reviewing the way it shares this information with parents. The individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties are carefully constructed and written in a language that the pupils themselves understand. Parents are involved in reviewing and updating these plans.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The significant and rapid improvements made in the last year are testimony to the hard work and determination of the headteacher and the senior leadership team. Pupils are much happier in school, especially as there is no longer any bullying and playground behaviour is good. Parents recognise the vast improvements and see the impact reflected in the way their children talk more enthusiastically about school.

Over the last year new initiatives, such as improving the teaching of guided reading, have been taken on board and these have been monitored and amended successfully to meet the needs of pupils. Governors have provided good support, with members having a designated responsibility for each of the four issues identified by the previous report. As a result, they have maintained a sharp focus on school improvement and provided a level of challenge which has contributed to the significant improvement made.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
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

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

9 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ludgershall Castle Primary School, Andover SP11 9RB

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. As many of you remember, this was my third visit to your school since September. I am delighted to tell you that your school is no longer in special measures and that it is now a good school. You are to be congratulated for your part in this great news. You have really improved your attendance and you enjoy school and your lessons much more than before. Well done! These are the things which are especially good about your school.

- Most of you make good progress in lessons and your work in English and science is improving all the time.
- Your behaviour is good and you get on well with each other.
- In most lessons you are expected to work hard.
- You enjoy attending after school clubs.
- You really appreciate having targets for your learning and being rewarded for good work, good behaviour and good attendance.
- Your headteacher and all the staff at your school work hard to improve your school.

There are a few things we have asked them to do to make your school even better. These are:

- to help you get better in your mental maths work, especially in learning your number facts
- to make sure teachers do not stick to their lesson plans if they see that you are not making progress
- to give you a better understanding of the range of different cultures and communities in your country.

You can help by carrying on with all the good things you have done over the last year. Keep up your good work too.

Yours sincerely

David Curtis Lead Inspector