

Ladybridge Community Primary School

Broadford Road, Deane, Bolton, Lancashire BL3 4NB

Inspection dates

17–18 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leadership of the early years and subject leadership, other than in English and mathematics, are weak. Most leaders are new to their roles and have yet to show a measurable impact on improving pupils' progress.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils make good progress across a wide range of subjects as they move through the school.
- Leaders do not make frequent enough checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress across the wider curriculum. The checks they do make are not effective in identifying weaknesses so that they can be swiftly tackled, because they do not focus sufficiently on evaluating what pupils have and have not learned.
- Children in the early years do not have enough opportunities to use their imagination and explore the world around them while they play. This limits their development.
- Too often pupils forget what they have learned in some subjects, including religious education and French, because too much time elapses between units of study in some subjects. This means that pupils cannot build systematically on their skills and sometimes repeat work unnecessarily.
- Pupils' progress is variable between classes and subjects because teachers do not always make effective use of their assessments to plan for the next stages in learning. Too many lessons are not challenging enough to move pupils on in their learning.
- Governors bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the school. They provide challenge to school leaders on pupils' progress in English and mathematics, but have yet to do so in other subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- Standards and progress in reading, writing and mathematics show significant improvement over time.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They work and play together harmoniously, listen well to instructions and are polite and courteous.
- The school provides good support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and those who are more vulnerable.
- The teaching of phonics is good, and the vast majority of pupils reach the required standard in the Year 1 check.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership by ensuring that:
 - there is effective direction and guidance for all subject areas and key stages in the school
 - leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress across the curriculum are rigorous and any weaknesses are swiftly tackled.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by making sure that:
 - the design of the curriculum supports pupils' continuing progression in skills, knowledge and understanding across all subjects
 - lessons are consistently challenging enough and pupils do not waste time unnecessarily going over work they have already grasped.
- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good by:
 - making sure that the good practice seen in the best English and mathematics lessons is applied across all subjects and in all classes
 - ensuring that teachers make effective use of their assessments of pupils' prior learning to plan for rapid progress across the full range of subjects, and not just in English and mathematics.
- Improve provision in the early years by ensuring that teachers make full use of the indoor and outdoor areas to support children's developing understanding of the world around them through imaginative and explorative play.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Recent staff changes mean that most school leaders, apart from the headteacher, are inexperienced or new to their roles. Other than in English and mathematics, subject leadership is weak or in the earliest stages of development. As a result, there is too much variation in pupils' progress across a wide range of subjects and the level of challenge in lessons is not high enough.
- Checks on the quality of teaching and learning focus too heavily on the teaching of English and mathematics. In other subjects, checks on teaching are infrequent. Analysis of the quality of work in pupils' books happens only occasionally and lacks detail. Consequently, senior leaders do not have an accurate picture of pupils' progress across the curriculum and their evaluation of the school's overall performance is too generous.
- Coverage of some areas of the curriculum, such as French and history, is patchy. Long gaps between some units of work mean that pupils sometimes spend too long going over prior learning before they are able to move forward. For example, pupils have French lessons intensively every afternoon for only one week in every academic year in key stage 2. This limits their opportunities to develop their oral and written skills in the language.
- Leaders recognised that the dip in pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2016 national tests at the end of Year 6 had to be addressed urgently. They made improving outcomes in reading and writing the first priority and introduced new strategies, including staff training and development, which resulted in pupils' accelerated progress in these subjects and improved outcomes in 2017.
- Too few of the most able pupils performed beyond age-related expectations in the 2017 test outcomes. Inspection findings and the school's own information indicate that this is being addressed and the proportion of pupils reaching higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics is increasing. However, this is yet to be seen in other subject areas.
- The deputy headteacher is also the special educational needs coordinator. Her actions to improve the school's provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities show a very positive impact on accelerating the progress of these pupils from their starting points.
- The headteacher has developed strong links with parents and carers, who really appreciate how well the school cares for their children. Parents typically comment that they feel welcome in school and know that pupils feel safe and valued as individuals. Parents further comment on the positive impact of the school's work in building pupils' confidence, particularly that of vulnerable pupils.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively through helping pupils understand and celebrate the wide range of faiths and cultural traditions within the school. This is enriched through visits to a range of places of worship within the local community. The curriculum is further enhanced by a range of interesting visits and visitors to the school, including a residential trip to Wales.

- Pupils are keenly aware of British values. They demonstrate their understanding of tolerance and respect for rules in their good behaviour, and know that taking a majority vote is a fair way of making decisions.
- Pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics prepare them well for the next stage in their education. Leaders are less effective in promoting pupils' personal and academic development in other subjects before they leave the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors are very well informed on pupils' progress and on the standards pupils reach in reading, writing and mathematics in comparison with national averages. Governors recognised the dip in 2016 key stage 2 outcomes and give focused attention to checking progress on the school's actions to improve.
- Governors bring a wide range of skills and experience to their roles and make the most of opportunities for further training. They are unafraid to ask probing and challenging questions that effectively hold school leaders to account, including through their rigorous performance management of the headteacher.
- However, governors do not give sufficient emphasis to challenging school leaders on the design of the wider curriculum. They have not checked how well it meets pupils' needs in relation to their progress and systematic development of skills, knowledge and understanding across a wide range of subjects.
- Governors ensure that the school gives good value for money and that decisions about spending or saving are taken bearing in mind the main priorities for school improvement. They ensure that the pupil premium funding and special educational needs funding are carefully targeted at disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and are used effectively in accelerating these pupils' progress. Equally, governors make certain that the physical education (PE) and sport premium is used to increase pupils' participation in physical activity and support pupils' physical and emotional well-being.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Policies and procedures to ensure pupils' safety, including employment checks, are up to date and rigorously followed.
- Leaders ensure that staff receive appropriate training in child protection and understand what to do if they suspect that a child may be at risk of harm, including from radicalisation.
- The school site is well maintained and secure. It provides a safe and nurturing place for pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good throughout all year groups, classes within year groups and across the full range of subject areas. This is reflected in pupils' variable

rates of progress across different subjects and between classes as they move through the school.

- Pupils do not always build systematically on their prior levels of skills, knowledge and understanding in a range of subjects. This is because teachers sometimes do not make full use of information from their assessments to plan lessons with the right level of challenge to move pupils forward in their learning. In history, for example, there is little difference between the level of work pupils are expected to complete in Year 4 and in Year 6, and progress is patchy.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics has improved. In the best sessions, teachers have good subject knowledge and use skilled questioning to encourage pupils to think hard about their responses and to extend their vocabulary. Class discussions are lively and pupils are keen to contribute their views. Pupils who rapidly grasp new learning swiftly move on to more challenging work, particularly in mathematics lessons.
- This good practice is inconsistent. Some teachers in key stages 1 and 2 are less skilled in identifying when pupils are ready to move on. As a result, pupils sometimes repeat work unnecessarily or spend too long doing tasks that are not sufficiently demanding.
- Teaching of phonics is strong. Teachers recognised that pupils could recognise letters and sounds in words but needed more help in developing their understanding of what the words mean and why writers use words in so many different ways. A school-wide focus to address this means that pupils are now building on their strong start in phonics, and standards in reading are rising.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- From their earliest days in the school, pupils feel very safe and secure. This is because staff are approachable, always willing to listen and help, and give lots of praise to build pupils' self-esteem and confidence as learners.
- Effective use of the PE and sport premium funding means that pupils have increased access to a range of sporting activities and events both during and after the school day. This supports pupils in learning how to keep themselves fit and healthy.
- Pupils say that there is very little bullying of any kind, and are confident that adults will always listen and intervene to put a stop to any unkind behaviour.
- Leaders ensure that pupils understand how to keep themselves safe from harm, including when they are using the internet.
- The school provides good support for families at the beginning and end of the school day with a breakfast club and a range of after-school clubs.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are eager to learn. They are very proud of their school and take care to present

their written work neatly and tidily.

- Pupils are respectful of one another, polite and courteous with staff, and welcome visitors in an open and friendly manner.
- Attendance and punctuality are improving because leaders do everything they can to support families in bringing children to school regularly and on time. Historically, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities was lower than that of other pupils in the school. Leaders' work to improve this has been successful, and the attendance of these groups of pupils shows significant improvement.
- Pupils know what is expected of them in terms of how they behave in lessons and as they move in and around the school. They say that teachers are always fair and that any consequences for poor behaviour are consistently applied. Disruption to lessons is extremely rare.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Historically, progress across key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was not good enough and standards were well below average in the 2016 national tests. Standards improved, and in 2017 the proportion of pupils reaching age-related expectations was above average. However, a lower-than-average proportion of most-able pupils reached the higher standards, and pupils' progress in reading was weaker than that in writing and mathematics. Partially, this was because the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics was too variable across the school.
- In key stage 1, standards improved between 2016 and 2017, although the proportion of pupils reaching the standards expected of their age remained below average.
- Inspection evidence gained from observing lessons and looking at work in pupils' books shows that the trend of improved standards by the end of key stages 1 and 2 continues and progress is accelerating, particularly in reading. The proportion of pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 working at a greater depth and reaching higher standards in their work is increasing.
- In other subjects, including science, history, geography, computing and French, pupils' progress is slower than it should be because not all teachers hold high enough expectations and plan work that is sufficiently challenging to pupils.
- Pupils' progress is also limited by the long gaps of time between studying some subject areas.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well from their individual starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. The differences in the proportions of these pupils reaching expected standards compared with others nationally have reduced and are currently insignificant due to the good support they receive to catch up in their learning.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make as much progress from their starting points as other pupils in the school owing to tailored support for their individual needs.
- Teachers promote pupils' development of language well, particularly for those pupils who are in the early stages of learning to speak English. As a result, these pupils make good progress and most reach average standards by the time they move on to

secondary education.

- Most children have a sound grasp of basic skills by the end of Reception. However, too few reach expected standards in those areas of learning that include their understanding of the world and expressive arts and design.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the Year 1 phonics check is well above average owing to strong teaching in this subject.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children’s skill levels on entering Reception are typically lower than those found in children of a similar age nationally. Staff are very welcoming and children swiftly settle into the school’s routines, learning to be kind to one another, share toys and listen carefully to instructions.
- At the end of the early years, an average proportion of children reach the expected standards. However, children’s progress in reading, writing and number work is stronger than in some other areas of learning. This is because teachers do not always use the indoor and outdoor areas effectively to encourage children to explore the world around them and develop their ideas through play. The outdoor area is particularly attractive and enticing for young learners and is very much underused.
- Sometimes, when children are engrossed in play, using their imagination and chattering to one another about their interests, adults step in too quickly to move them on to different tasks. This means that adults miss out on opportunities to help broaden pupils’ vocabulary and extend their thinking, and it also limits children’s creativity.
- Changes in school leadership and staff movement mean that the oversight of the early years has been less effective than in previous years. The headteacher is aware of this and has plans in place to strengthen leadership of this key stage.
- Leaders are keen to support new teachers in Reception in their professional development and have scheduled visits to other settings where they may observe good early years practice and further improve their teaching skills.

School details

Unique reference number	105169
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10037772

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	389
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicola Burgess
Headteacher	Colin Watson
Telephone number	01204 333646
Website	www.ladybridgeprimaryschool.co.uk/
Email address	office@ladybridge.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 May 2013

Information about this school

- Ladybridge is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average, as is the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language.
- The school provides daily breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all year groups.
- Inspectors talked with pupils about the school and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders and members of the governing body, and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. They also took account of 23 responses to the online staff survey.
- Inspectors spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day and took account of the 33 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation of its current performance, the school's most recent information on the attainment and progress of pupils, information relating to the safeguarding of pupils, and the school's most recent information relating to the attendance of pupils.

Inspection team

Jan Corlett, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Eithne Proffitt	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Ward	Ofsted Inspector

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