

Inspection of Ladysmith Infant & Nursery School

Ladysmith Road, Exeter, Devon EX1 2PS

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

The school was last inspected 15 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to attend Ladysmith Infant and Nursery School. They know it is important to follow their school rules. In the corridors, pupils use their 'walking feet' to move sensibly and politely around the school. In lessons and the playground, most pupils behave well. Yet, for a small number of pupils, disruption to learning and poor focus are more common.

Pupils do not fully understand what bullying is. However, when this is explained to them, they are confident that bullying happens rarely. They all agree that adults sort out any worries or concerns well. Pupils benefit from the care and nurture they receive from staff. Parents and carers agree that the school is a welcoming place. This helps pupils to feel safe and most pupils attend regularly and on time.

Pupils are keen to learn. However, they do not benefit from a good quality of education in some subjects. Pupils enjoy opportunities to enrich their learning. For example, older pupils visit a local church and mosque. Pupils visit the school's wooded area to learn forest skills. They are beginning to benefit from a range of extra-curricular clubs, including football and gymnastics.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have a clear vision for the school and have plans in place to make the necessary improvements. However, in many subjects, this work is in its infancy. Therefore, it is too early to see the impact of leaders' actions. Subject leaders do not yet have sufficient oversight of the subjects they lead. In these subjects, pupils do not learn an ambitious enough curriculum.

Leaders do not identify the important knowledge that pupils need to understand and remember. In some subjects, staff do not have the knowledge and expertise they need to teach the curriculum well. Staff do not check carefully what pupils know so that pupils' learning builds over time. Where the curriculum is more cohesive, pupils learn better. For example, in art and design pupils talk about the work of Beatriz Milhazes and Julian Opie with confidence.

Leaders prioritise reading. Pupils get the help that they need to become fluent readers. Pupils in the early stages of learning to read follow a well-sequenced, coherent curriculum. Pupils remember the phonics sounds that they learn. They use these to read carefully selected books. Children in the Nursery and Reception Years enjoy listening and joining in with stories and rhymes. Pupils love to read. One older pupil commented, 'Reading takes me to another world.' Many pupils agree.

Staff do not have high enough expectations for all pupils. Sometimes, pupils do not take pride in the quality of their work. This leads to pupils making careless mistakes, which impedes their future learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils with English as an additional language benefit from well-planned support for their social and emotional needs. For some pupils, there is precise support to help them learn the curriculum. For others, this is not effective.

Children in the Nursery Year become independent and confident. For example, they ably change from indoor to outdoor shoes or select resources they need to join in with activities. They cooperate well with their peers and with adults. However, the teaching of the curriculum in the early years is sometimes not effective. Children are not supported to use what they know independently or extend their learning into areas beyond their own preferences.

The curriculum for personal development is new. Staff are beginning to use this curriculum to address gaps in pupils' knowledge, particularly for religious beliefs and how other people live. Pupils respect each other's differences. They know that 'being a good friend means not being unkind'. Pupils learn about being physically and mentally healthy. They take their responsibilities as school councillors and playleaders seriously.

Staff are positive about the support they receive. Staff are confident that leaders consider their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff and governors receive regular safeguarding training. There are clear systems for reporting any concerns. Staff are vigilant in using the school's systems to inform leaders of worries. Leaders regularly engage with external agencies to get the right help for pupils and their families. Leaders corrected some minor administrative errors in the single central record during the inspection.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. When using online technology, they know not to share any personal information. 'Kelso the frog' supports pupils to make choices to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Many subject leaders do not have sufficient oversight of the subjects that they lead. They have not considered carefully enough the important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember, including in the early years. Leaders, including those responsible for governance, should ensure that subject leaders have the expertise to evaluate the quality of education in all subjects.

- Staff do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve or how they behave. Therefore, pupils do not always display positive attitudes towards their learning. Low-level disruption goes unaddressed. Leaders need to ensure that staff have sufficiently high expectations of all pupils.
- In some subjects, staff do not have the knowledge and expertise they need to teach the curriculum well. As a result, some pupils learn better than others. Leaders should ensure that staff have the support they need to implement the curriculum successfully.
- The needs of some pupils, including pupils with SEND and those with English as an additional language, are not considered well enough. Sometimes, the support provided and the targets set for pupils are not precise enough. Leaders need to ensure that all pupils receive support that is well matched to their needs.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	113080
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10228994
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	328
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-chairs of governing body	Annie Fletcher and Tom Butcher
Executive Headteacher	Mark Wilkinson
Website	www.ladysmithfederation.net
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 April 2008, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average infant school.
- The school has above-average numbers of pupils with English as an additional language.
- The school has a breakfast club for some pupils.
- The school has a nursery provision for children aged three and above.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, two assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator and the early years leader. The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing body and the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, religious education and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector spoke with the designated safeguarding leader and the deputy designated safeguarding leader to discuss the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe. She considered the school's recruitment procedures, staff induction and training, records of concern and engagement with external agencies. The inspectors spoke with staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Parents also spoke to an inspector in the school playground. Inspectors considered responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Donna Briggs, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jo Hicks	Ofsted Inspector
James Gentile	His Majesty's Inspector

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