

Ifracombe Church of England Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113381
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	357332
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Kevin Jane

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	418
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison McCann
Headteacher	Catherine Cox
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors saw all teachers at least once and observed 23 lessons. They also held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at information about pupils' performance, the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and school policies, curriculum planning documents and monitoring files. In addition, 109 parent and carer, 28 staff and 100 pupil questionnaires were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas:

- The progress made by all groups of pupils in the school, but particularly higher attaining pupils by the end of Key Stage 2.
- The extent to which the quality of teaching and learning is consistent across all classes and between year groups.
- The organisation and planning of the curriculum for progression in knowledge, skills and understanding and how this contributes to academic achievement.
- The effectiveness of the governors in setting the strategic direction of the school and holding it to account.
- The barriers preventing attendance improving and the effectiveness of the school's strategies to improve attendance.

Information about the school

Ilfracombe Church of England Junior School remains a larger than average junior school serving this seaside town in North Devon. The number on roll is currently fewer by over 60 pupils than when the school was last inspected and pupils are currently organised into 14 single-age classes. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average, as is the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The great majority of the pupils are of White British backgrounds. Since the school was last inspected, staff absences and changes have reduced and become more stable.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Ilfracombe Church of England Junior School is successfully meeting its aims to provide a 'happy, secure, stimulating learning environment in which all members of the school community can grow in their self-esteem and develop their potential'. ♦ Significant improvement has taken place since the last inspection and it is now, securely, a good school. Some aspects, such as the role of the school in its community and the care taken by the school to ensure equality of opportunity, are outstanding. Other aspects of the school's provision, such as the quality of teaching, aspects of leadership and management, and the curriculum, are also improved and account for the good progress that pupils make by the end of Year 6. Pupils enjoy their time at school and are rightly proud of it. Equally, the school enjoys the confidence and support of the great majority of parents who report that they are also very pleased with the school. Comments such as: 'My child was warmly welcomed and was made to feel a valued member very quickly. She has grown more confident and independent, her teachers have been nothing short of the very best, and academically she is exactly where she needs to be', were typical of those parents who wrote positively in response to the questionnaire.

♦ Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are generally above national averages and leave with standards also above the national averages in tests at age 11. This demonstrates that the pupils make good progress overall, especially as there are now greater numbers achieving the higher levels in English and mathematics. Also, differences between the rates of progress among the various groups of pupils at the school, relative to their starting points, are minimal. This is because the precision of monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress based on teacher assessments and test results is more consistent and accurate, and this helps with identifying where intervention is necessary to ensure all pupils make good rates of progress.

♦ Although the school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and is committed to continuous improvement, it is not yet able to say with certainty that the range and extent of initiatives that support the school aims and priorities are contributing to improved performance because precise evaluation is limited. Nevertheless, the headteacher is continuing to provide determined leadership and is fully supported by the staff, governors and the community. The sense of team work and common purpose in the school is tangible. The school has rightly maintained its focus on improving pupils' standards and the track record of pupils' academic performance has been improving over recent years and demonstrates that the school has a good capacity for further improvement. This bodes well because further work is required to improve attendance rates, which remain stubbornly average. In addition, there is also scope for further

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improving the consistency in the quality of teaching by optimising the use and deployment of all adults.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to improve the consistency of teaching still further and to maintain the improved standards and progress that pupils make in their learning:
 - ensure that all adults are deployed to optimum during lessons, including contributing more fully to the assessment of learning.
- Improve attendance rates by adopting a 'zero tolerance' approach to casual, persistent absence or term-time holidays and ensure that this is understood by parents and carers where appropriate.
- In the school improvement plans, leaders and managers should ensure that:
 - self-evaluation is informed by more rigorous and quantifiable measures to determine more precisely the success of initiatives and priorities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is generally above the national average and by the end of Year 6, over the last two years, pupils' attainment has exceeded the national average in English and mathematics. The school has been successful in ensuring that the rates of progress for all pupils are good and there are no discernable differences in the progress made by boys or girls, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those known to be eligible for free school meals. While these are the largest groups in the school, there are also small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those in the care of the local authority. These too make good progress because the school has good systems to assess, monitor and track their progress. The regular pupil performance reviews and flexible grouping arrangements, for example in mathematics, ensure that pupils at risk of underachieving are diagnosed for additional support early. Whole-school attention, as a priority in the school improvement plan, towards the more-able pupils has also resulted in greater numbers of pupils attaining the higher levels in English and mathematics over the last two years.

Without doubt, pupils enjoy their learning in lessons and the wider opportunities afforded to them. This is reflected in the secure relationships between adults and pupils, in their consistently good behaviour and the good quality teaching that is now present throughout the school. In the best lessons seen, care was taken to provide suitably challenging and relevant tasks which motivate pupils' interests. For example, in a Year 5 art lesson, pupils were taught observation and drawing skills of a still-life composition and were challenged to make their own picture in the manner of a Second World War propaganda poster which linked to their topic work in history. Care was taken to use technical vocabulary in context which extended their literacy skills. The pupils were captivated by watching the teacher model how to observe light, create different tones and look at perspective. The pupils responded with great concentration and adopted a mature attitude in making the choices offered to use different art materials to compose their own picture and made good progress in the course of a single lesson.

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- ◆ In a Year 6 English lesson, the stimulus of a 'smoking metal object found in the garden' motivated all the pupils to make good progress in their written reports and they were confident in their use of a thesaurus to extend their vocabulary in finding interesting ways to describe the events surrounding the mystery object. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, good subject knowledge, employing the use of the interactive whiteboard, and expert questioning by the teacher, drawing on their prior learning, enabled all the pupils to make good progress in collecting, organising, presenting and interpreting data and to construct line graphs. This lesson was marked by the ability of the pupils to investigate ideas independently and collaboratively and the task was well matched to the different ability groups in the class.
- ◆ The school has secured a good balance of attending to academic attainment, progress and personal development. The social and moral development of pupils is good and provision through the curriculum subjects, as well as arts and music community events, is supporting their cultural development well. The pupils are aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and they also report feeling safe and are confident that adults will listen to them and resolve problems fairly and swiftly. The pupils report that they have sufficient opportunities to make decisions in the school, which they appreciate, and they take pride in supporting their chosen charitable events. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their educational lives as a result of attention to basic skills and the responsibilities they are given. Their involvement in the local community and in the school is outstanding and reflected in the high numbers of pupils who attend after-school clubs.
- ◆ Attendance has remained stubbornly average for the past four years despite concerted efforts by the school working in partnership with support agencies and parents to promote and encourage the importance of regular attendance. Nevertheless, persistent absence, term-time holidays and acceptance of historical attitudes among a minority of parents in the community remain barriers to preventing the school increasing attendance rates further.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved and it is now consistently good throughout the school. The senior and year team leaders undertake robust and accurate lesson observations to monitor the quality and consistency of teaching and learning and this is making a strong contribution to improving the academic performance of the pupils. As a result, a high degree of consistency in lesson planning, the organisation of interesting tasks matched to the pupils' abilities, the teachers' use of subject knowledge and the effective use of good quality resources were observed. These characteristics serve to enthuse and motivate the pupils so that they are willing to learn and make good progress. The pace of lessons is typically brisk and the teachers use a range of good assessment techniques to evaluate and inform next steps in learning. Clear, individual targets for each pupil and consistent marking help them to know how well they are doing in their work and what they need to do next to improve. Support for individuals and groups by other adults also makes a good contribution where this is deployed precisely although is less successful when the class is taught as a whole and pupils' role becomes more passive. Where this is the case, their contribution to, for example, the assessment of learning and engagement by pupils results in limited effectiveness.

◆ The curriculum is particularly strong in supporting the personal development of the pupils but the academic curriculum is balanced well with this and as a result the needs of the pupils are well met. Theme-based topics sensibly align subjects and care is taken to

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ensure that the learning is relevant and interesting. Curriculum planning is comprehensive but flexible, and ensures full coverage of the National Curriculum subjects. Importantly, it is planned well for progression in the knowledge, skills and understanding required. Relationships with other schools in the Learning Community initiative seek to ensure that transition to and from other schools builds on prior learning and helps to prepare the pupils well for the next stage. This, together with a good range of clubs, residential and other educational visits and visitors in to school, enriches and enhances the experiences that pupils have.

◆ A particular strength of the school is its caring and supportive atmosphere. It accounts for why the great majority of pupils feel safe and happy in school. Pupils accept responsibilities willingly and take their roles seriously, such as the film crew who documented the recent diversity project. The school knows its pupils and their respective needs very well as individuals and the priority given to their care and support accounts for why all pupils make good progress in their learning. Those pupils and their families who require additional support are provided for very well through, for example, The Haven and Thrive initiatives, and work with external agencies and partners ensures that their needs are well met. ◆

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Judged to be satisfactory at the time of the last inspection, leadership and management are now securely good as is the capacity for further improvement. The headteacher and deputy headteacher continue to provide focused and determined leadership and this serves to influence a strong sense of common purpose and strengthened teamwork with the senior leadership team, staff and governors. Clear priorities for improvement are born out of rigorous monitoring and these are focused appropriately on raising standards and improving learning and progress. The priorities are widely known and understood by all who work in the school. Plans to support the priorities are well structured although evaluation is limited by the absence of precise, quantifiable success criteria against which to measure success. ◆◆◆

◆ The governing body is active in, and clearly supportive of, the school. Governors are knowledgeable about how well pupils are progressing in their academic performance because they are kept well informed by senior leaders and undertake routine monitoring activity to inform themselves. They play their part in determining the strategic direction of the school and provide suitable challenge, for example, over plans to restructure the

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senior leadership team and distribute responsibility and accountability more widely. However, the level and degree of challenge are not yet sufficiently transparent in the published minutes of the governing body's meetings. They meet their statutory duties well and take their responsibilities seriously such as in the targeting and management of financial resources.

◆ The school strives, very successfully, to be an inclusive one and is outstanding in its efforts to ensure that all pupils have equality of opportunity to improve in their academic performance and personal development. The safety and security of pupils are given a suitably high priority and policies and procedures meet government requirements. Partnership work with outside agencies and other schools adds good value to both the academic performance of pupils and to their welfare and care. The school is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers and this is reflected in the high degree of satisfaction, confidence and support that parents have in the school.

◆ The school has very good knowledge of the context of the pupil population. A considerable range of activity supports the school's drive to be fully involved in the community and there are established links with national and international communities. However, actions and initiatives have not yet been robustly evaluated for their effectiveness. While it is clear that this work adds richness to the school's role in the local and wider community, its impact on the personal and academic performance of the pupils is unproven and a comprehensive strategy to promote community cohesion remains at an early stage of development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Views of parents and carers

The great majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are supportive of the school and the quality of education that their children receive. Most cite how much their children enjoy school, the safety and security of their children while at school and the way the school encourages a healthy lifestyle as particular strengths. This accounts for the strong profile in how parents are happy with their overall experience of the school. Evidence from the inspection endorses these views. A minority of parents reported that they were less happy with the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour, the way in which the school is led and managed and the progress that pupils make, but as will have been seen earlier in this report, inspectors found no evidence to substantiate these criticisms.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ilfracombe Church of England Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 109 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 418 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	44	41	47	6	7	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	37	43	47	54	1	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	31	36	44	51	8	9	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	25	42	48	11	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	34	47	54	3	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	33	44	51	9	10	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	40	48	55	0	0	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	32	37	42	48	5	6	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	36	44	51	5	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	30	37	43	9	10	5	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	26	46	53	6	7	5	6
The school is led and managed effectively	25	29	41	47	9	10	8	9
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	40	44	51	5	6	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 November 2010

◆ Dear pupils

◆ Inspection of Ilfracombe Junior School, Ilfracombe, EX34 9LW

◆ I would like to thank you for being so helpful to us when we visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed talking with you in lessons, around the school and sharing some of the super opportunities you have for learning and hearing about how much you enjoy school. You told us how proud you are of your school and you are right to be so! Our inspection found that Ilfracombe Church of England Junior School is a good school and here are some of the things we were particularly impressed with:

- Your headteacher and the other adults are working hard to make sure that you all have every opportunity to improve in your school work and in your personal development. This is resulting in improved standards and better progress for all of you, well done!
- Your behaviour and attitudes towards each other are good.
- You work hard in lessons and respond well to your teachers who plan interesting activities so that you make good progress in your work.
- You have outstanding opportunities to make a contribution outside the classroom and in the local community, which extends your knowledge and understanding of the world around you and helps you develop as young people.
- You told us that your teachers look after you very well, keep you safe and help you to understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and we agree with you.

Your headteacher and the other adults are working hard to make the school even better and we have asked them to improve three things:

- Make sure that all the adults in the school play a full role in helping you to make as much progress as you can in your lessons.
- Make sure that the headteacher and the senior teachers measure closely how they know that all that they do in the school is benefiting your academic standards.
- Improve your attendance so that all of you can make the most of your time in school. You can all help here by making sure that you attend regularly and be ready to learn every day.

Yours sincerely

◆ Kevin Jane

Her Majesty's Inspector

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