

Icknield School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	116609
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	379274
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2012
Lead inspector	Ronald Hall

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	11
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jayne Condie
Headteacher	Ms Sharon Ghiacy
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 December 2008
School address	River Way Andover Hampshire SP11 6LT
Telephone number	01264 365297
Email address	headteacher@icknield.hants.sch.uk

Age group	3–19
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Introduction

Inspection team

Ronald Hall

Additional inspector

Veronica Young

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons or parts of lessons, taught by eight teachers spanning over four hours. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including that relating to pupils' progress, school improvement and the safeguarding and care of pupils. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body, and informally with pupils. The inspector took account of the views of 38 parents and carers who returned the questionnaires sent out prior to the inspection and those returned by staff.

Information about the school

Icknield is a smaller than average-sized school for pupils who have severe learning difficulties and/or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Almost all pupils have associated communication difficulties. Pupils are aged between 3 and 19 years and generally come from Hampshire or the neighbouring authority of Wiltshire. They attend Icknield with a statement of special educational needs or for initial assessment. A number of pupils are deemed to be 'high dependency', with additional needs such as challenging behaviour or significant medical requirements. A minority of pupils have an autistic spectrum disorder. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and the great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. The sixth form is also good. Pupils enjoy attending, achieve well and their behaviour is exemplary. It is well thought of by all stakeholders. It is not outstanding because teaching does not, as yet, promote outstanding achievement.
- Although attainment is low, progress is good and for some pupils, outstanding, ensuring good achievement overall. On entry to the school, pupils' communication skills are limited, yet they make good progress and gain nationally accredited qualifications in Year 11 or in the sixth form. The curriculum in the sixth form is also highly individualised, leading to good progress.
- Teaching is good. The curriculum is personalised, matching the needs and abilities of each individual. High priority is rightly given to communication and language skills. Lessons are enjoyable and pupils respond with high levels of concentration and motivation. Good assessment of pupils' progress includes, where possible, discussion with pupils. Pupils have a good understanding of how well they are doing and how to improve. Targets are precise and highly challenging. The teaching of phonics (linking letters with the sounds) is inconsistent as teachers' and other adults' skills in this area are not yet strong enough.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. The school provides a harmonious learning environment where pupils help and support each other. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and they have a very good understanding of right and wrong. The promotion of pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures is another strength.
- Leadership and management are good, led by an inspirational headteacher. She is assisted by an enthusiastic senior team and a well-informed and challenging governing body. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders have created an inclusive school where every pupil is highly valued. Teaching and performance management are led well and have been instrumental in promoting consistently good teaching.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be outstanding by:
 - raising the percentage of outstanding teaching to 75% by April 2013
 - improving the quality of the teaching of reading by developing the phonic skills and knowledge of both the teachers and teaching assistants to ensure it is taught accurately.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' progress throughout the whole school is good. Although attainment remains below the national average, all groups of pupils, with differing, varied and complex needs, make at least good progress and many far surpass national targets for rates of progress. The school works successfully at identifying and closing any gaps in achievement between different groups. Progress in acquiring communication skills is excellent for all pupils. Pupils often enter the school with very little skill in communication or even understanding of the role of language. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's needs are analysed and assessed using exemplary procedures, and specific individual interventions are put in place. As a result, all children make excellent progress, particularly in their communication skills. Although a number of pupils can read, their skills are below those expected for their ages at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. They make good progress, however, from their starting points.

The school's ethos of promoting collaboration and communication between pupils has a strong impact on their confidence and progress. In an outstanding music lesson, each pupil had the opportunity to sing, sign or use their aids to communicate and play instruments. Their support for each other was remarkable and this motivated the pupils as well as promoting their communication skills. As pupils move up through the school, they take more responsibility for their learning, playing an important role in managing and assessing their own work and behaviour.

Due to the highly personalised curriculum when students reach the sixth form, they are fully prepared to leave and accept the responsibility of managing their own work on further education courses. Pupils in Year 11 and students in the sixth form successfully gain a range of ASDAN, Entry level and Functional Skills qualifications. Parents and carers are very happy with how well their children are progressing and this is fully supported by the evidence.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is characterised by the very high level of support given to every pupil. Teachers are skilled in adapting their questions to meet the different levels of pupils'

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understanding. Together with well-trained assistants, they spend time with each individual, discussing and commenting on pupils' work and helping them improve. Teachers use a range of communication modes effectively and adapt the language, complexity and speed of delivery to meet the needs of the pupils. Communication is specifically planned into every learning activity, as is an emphasis on collaboration. This greatly increases pupils' understanding and skills and ensures they enjoy each lesson. Pupils acknowledge and welcome each other's preferred mode of communication and this helps them develop tolerance, to respect the rights of others and greatly aids their social confidence. As a result, the impact of teaching on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. In addition, the considerable breadth and balance of the planned curriculum add significantly to pupils' experience of school. Teaching assistants often play an important role and effectively support pupils. This enables pupils to maintain concentration and take a full and active part in lessons. Parents and carers overwhelmingly support the school's work and, rightly, affirm teaching to be good.

Assessment is a strength of the teaching process. Teachers and pupils work together individually to discuss work and to assess progress. This further motivates pupils to work hard and adds substantially to their rate of progress. In an excellent history lesson, older pupils experienced what it was like during an air raid and pupils were able to fully explain their feelings and how people may have felt during the war. As a consequence of good teaching across the school, a relatively high proportion of pupils achieve formal accreditation before leaving the school. However, the percentage of outstanding teaching is not yet high enough to bring about outstanding achievement for the majority. This mainly revolves around the fact that not all teachers and teaching assistants have a high level of skill to teach phonics in a way that consistently enables pupils to build up words effectively when reading.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils have contributed to the safety of the school by suggesting improvements to the buildings and grounds, and these have been implemented. Rapid improvements in the way adults deal with behavioural issues have ensured that pupils effectively control their own behaviour. All pupils are very positive about behaviour. As one put it, 'Behaviour is great, we are all happy here.' All feel, rightly, that behaviour in lessons is excellent. Pupils make an exceptional contribution to their own learning. They respond very positively to opportunities to work independently and collaborate extremely well on group tasks. During the inspection, nothing but exemplary behaviour was seen across the whole school and this is said by parents, carers, pupils and staff to be typical.

Meticulously kept records show that there are only very occasional instances of misbehaviour, and no exclusions. There have been no instances of bullying of any kind, and pupils confirm this and recording documents are accurate.

There have been no issues relating to racism, sexist or homophobic behaviour. Pupils unanimously say that staff deal with all types of issues very well. A programme of

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family support is extremely well implemented by staff to help parents and carers in their efforts to improve their children's learning and behaviour.

Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. They take great pride in their work and try hard to do their best in lessons. As far as possible, pupils are fully involved in assessing their own performance and that of others. They are encouraged to make choices in different situations, to be focused on achieving their targets and have respect for all. This strong practice is underpinned by a positive reward system that reflects progress. Attendance is average against national data but higher than found in similar schools and the work carried out by the school ensures this continues to rise. Pupils and staff feel very safe and parents and carers unanimously and justifiably concur.

Leadership and management

The school is led well by the headteacher. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have coached and mentored the leadership team, who are now increasingly effective in monitoring and evaluating each aspect of pupils' performance and the school's provision. Policies and procedures are very clearly documented and rigorously adhered to. This consistency substantially adds to high staff morale. All staff are involved in monitoring each aspect of the school's work and in creating detailed action plans to improve performance and provision. These in turn are fed into the school's overall development planning, resulting in clear targets for improvement which are very regularly monitored, adapted and reviewed. The views of parents and carers and the professional judgements of outside consultants are fully incorporated into planning. Self-evaluation is detailed and accurate and is used effectively to drive improvements.

Teaching standards are monitored frequently, resulting in consistently good teaching, with an increasing amount outstanding. In turn, this has led to good and increasingly better progress. This is accompanied by a detailed programme of performance management of teachers, leading to extensive staff training. The excellent curriculum is broad and balanced and enables pupils to gain a range of accreditation in Year 11 and the sixth form. Teachers and senior staff have revised planning to give an even greater emphasis on communication across all aspects of teaching and learning. The work given to pupils is adapted successfully to take their differing learning abilities and needs into consideration. Pupils thrive on activities which challenge them to make even more effort but always with short-term achievable goals. Pupils have detailed care and progress plans and they are extremely well supported by specialists to help them quickly learn to communicate. School leaders ensure that the promotion of equality is very effective and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

Provision for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. There is a detailed programme of personal, health and social education. Pupils care for and support each other; they have a good understanding of risks both inside and outside of school. Leaders and staff ensure that safeguarding arrangements are good. Child protection procedures are exemplary

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throughout the school and the governing body and representatives of the local authority monitor these closely. Absence is very quickly followed up and has resulted in a steady rise in attendance since the previous inspection.

The governing body provides clear strategic leadership based on a good knowledge of the school. Its members are regular visitors to classrooms and they are kept very well informed of the results of the school's monitoring. As a result, they supply a good level of support to the school and are able to challenge effectively. Leaders at all levels are acutely aware of the school's strengths and of where provision can still be improved. There is an excellent track record since the previous inspection of improving the pupils' attainment and rates of progress and in offering a wide range of challenging accreditation. Standards of behaviour, attendance, teaching performance and curriculum development have continued to improve. The improvements since the previous inspection show there is a strong capacity for further improvement.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



16 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Icknield School, Andover SP11 6LT

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We came to inspect your school and judge how well you are getting on. What we saw was good. We were pleased to find out that you feel very safe and that you feel the school is helping you to improve your work. It was good to hear you say that your teachers expect you to work hard and always do your best. We agree.

We saw you making good progress in all of your lessons. You are achieving well across the whole rapidly improved curriculum. You show excellent attitudes to learning and behaving exceptionally well. Teaching in Icknield School is good, some of it outstanding. We have asked the headteacher to improve this further by ensuring that more teaching is outstanding, and to improve your teachers' skills at teaching reading so that you can make even quicker progress.

Icknield School operates on two different sites and provides a wide range of outstanding support to your families. This results in all of you being involved in the school and achieving well.

Yours sincerely

Ronald Hall
Lead inspector

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