

Istead Rise Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118452
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358351
Inspection dates	30–31 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Robin Gaff

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Warren
Headteacher	Caren Gardner
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2008
School address	Downs Road Kent DA13 9HG
Telephone number	01474 833177
Fax number	01474 834474
Email address	office@istead-rise.kent.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	30–31 March 2011
Inspection number	358351

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, observing 10 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with staff, pupils, members of the governing body, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at planning and evaluation documents. They scrutinised the school's self-analysis of pupils' attainment and progress. A total of 63 questionnaires completed by parents and carers were received and analysed, as were questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

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

- The extent to which the rise in pupils' attainment is being maintained and their rates of progress improved.
- The success of the school's strategies for reducing the proportion of persistent absentees over time.
- The impact of partnerships on pupils' achievement.
- The extent of the school's success in improving engagement with all groups of parents and carers.

Information about the school

Istead Rise is an average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils in the school from minority ethnic groups is below the national average but has risen in recent years. There are a small number of pupils of White Travellers of Irish heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than that found nationally. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement, is just above the national average, and has increased in recent years. These pupils have a wide range of additional needs, with the largest group being those who have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils who join the school at other than the normal time for transfer is above average. In recent years there have been a number of changes in the composition of the senior management team. The current Chair of the Governing Body was elected to the position in September 2010. The school operates breakfast and after-school clubs which run during term-time only. ♦ A pre-school, as well as a rural schools virtual children's centre, both run by outside organisations, operate on the school premises. These facilities are subject to separate inspection arrangements.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Istead Rise is a satisfactory school which has improved steadily since its last inspection. It provides a highly inclusive, secure and caring environment, and fulfils its aim of helping its pupils to become well-rounded individuals with a positive attitude to learning. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start to their education. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community, for example by taking on positions of responsibility within the school and by supporting children in a school in Africa. They develop their natural curiosity about the world around them, behave sensibly and responsibly, and relate well to each other and to their teachers. The school's imaginative curriculum enhances pupils' enjoyment of school, and gives them good opportunities to develop team-working and problem-solving skills that will serve them well later in life. Pupils' attainment has risen substantially, but their learning and progress are uneven. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or difficulties make good progress thanks to the well-targeted support they receive from teachers, teaching assistants and specialist professionals.

Teachers ensure that pupils remained focused on their work and make progress in line with their capabilities. Most teachers provide pupils with interesting and varied tasks which enable them to learn independently and from one another, and they make good use of resources, including information and communication technology (ICT). However, progress is more limited in some lessons because teachers do not always ensure that pupils understand clearly what they are to learn, and how they can improve their work. The school has improved the accuracy of its systems for assessing pupils' performance, and intervenes quickly and effectively when pupils are at risk of underachieving. The curriculum is tailored well to meet pupils' needs. Pupils' interest is sparked by the opportunities they have to learn from topics that enable them to develop their creative as well as their communication skills. The school helps pupils to settle in quickly, including those who begin school at other than the normal start time. Staff work well together and with outside professionals to ensure that potentially vulnerable pupils develop in self-confidence and are well equipped for future learning.

The school has improved in several respects since its last inspection, most notably with regard to the standard of pupils' attainment and their behaviour, the effectiveness of its care, guidance and support systems, and the quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision. The headteacher and the governing body have a clear vision of what they want the school to achieve, and they successfully communicate this to staff. Leaders accurately evaluate the school's work and use this evaluation to inform development planning, which is well focused on improving outcomes for pupils. The governing body understands the issues facing the school and its own responsibilities. It has yet to ensure that detailed evaluation results in improvement in all areas of the school's performance. These factors indicate that the school's capacity for further sustained improvement is satisfactory.

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

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rate of pupils' progress by ensuring that:
 - pupils have a clearer understanding of what they are going to learn in lessons
 - all teachers give pupils sufficient information, including detailed written advice, so that they know the next steps to take to improve their work
 - all lessons include an appropriate level of challenge.
- Accelerate the pace of the school's improvement by:
 - increasing the proportion of good and outstanding teaching
 - ensuring that the governing body is more effective in systematically evaluating the school's performance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' attainment by the time they leave the school, as represented by their results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, has been broadly average, with a rising trend over the last three years. In 2010, it was above the national average overall and in mathematics. Pupils' levels of attainment when they begin Key Stage 2 have been variable in recent years. Inspectors' judgement that pupils make satisfactory progress overall endorses the school's own evaluation. Pupils work steadily in lessons and their good behaviour contributes positively to their learning. They show particular enthusiasm in lessons where they are given engaging and enjoyable activities in which they can relate their learning to the topics they are studying. Year 5 and 6 pupils were keen to show their work, including writing, graphs and images they had designed, based on the geography of, and ways of life in, India or Japan. Pupils' learning is less secure in lessons when they do not clearly understand what the teachers intend them to learn, or when activities are either too easy or too difficult to provide an appropriate level of challenge. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or learning difficulties make good progress. This is because teachers give these pupils tasks which are well suited to their interests and abilities, and teaching assistants enable them to participate fully in classroom activities. ♦

Pupils feel safe in school and are not unduly worried about bullying because they say it has decreased, and that the school deals with it well when it does occur. They have a good understanding of potential dangers, including those related to using the internet.

♦ Pupils show a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle through their take-up of the wholesome food which the school provides at lunch-time, and their enthusiastic participation in sporting and other physical activities. They benefit from many opportunities to take responsibility, for example as house captains, play leaders and members of the school council and eco-committee. They play an active part in maintaining and enhancing the school environment and take a strong interest in local issues, such as the impact of local road widening plans. They raise considerable sums of money for charity and help to support a school in Zambia. This, together with the school's links with

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

other countries in Africa, as well as in Europe and America, enables pupils to gain a good understanding of life in very different communities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
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?

Teachers plan their lessons carefully to include a variety of activities so that most lessons proceed at a good pace. They establish good working relations with pupils and have high expectations of them with regard to behaviour. In a lesson about writing a letter of invitation, pupils, most of whom had special educational needs and/or disabilities, gained a good grasp of appropriate vocabulary and structures. This was because of the teacher's clear explanations, good use of questioning and use of well-structured group and pair activities. In weaker lessons, teachers did not give sufficient examples to ensure that pupils understood what to do in order to produce successful work. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and thoroughly, but their use of detailed, specific comments, designed to give pupils a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work, is inconsistent. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets current requirements and recommendations, for example in giving all pupils the opportunity to learn French. It has, in recent years, introduced an enquiry-based approach to learning by linking the development of communication and mathematical skills to cross-curricular topics. This gives pupils good opportunities to develop their ICT skills, for example by carrying out internet-based research and making animated films, and to cooperate in

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

completing joint projects which they then present to adults and other pupils. This initiative has been successful in engaging pupils' interest and developing leadership and enterprise skills. Enrichment activities, such as the Business Challenge week, enhance pupils' enjoyment and give them a good insight into the world of work. The school has recently adopted more flexible groups for literacy and numeracy classes, which is beginning to have a positive impact on the rate of pupils' progress. The school offers a range of extra-curricular clubs, but participation rates are relatively low. The breakfast and after-school club offers a safe and secure environment for pupils. Parents and carers, as well as pupils, comment approvingly on the wide range of activities that are available, particularly in the afternoon session.

School staff work effectively with many outside agencies to enable pupils, especially those who have additional needs, to receive expert care and support, enabling them to make good progress and play a full part in school life. The school has succeeded in reducing the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent. It has well-established systems for promoting good behaviour, and there have been no exclusions in recent years. One parent or carer commented that 'the traffic light system the school has in place for discipline works exceptionally well.' The school has good procedures for ensuring that pupils make smooth transitions to, from and within the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

Leaders, including the headteacher and the senior staff, are passionate about improving the performance of pupils, especially those who face considerable barriers to their learning. Senior leaders, several of whom are relatively new to their posts, are knowledgeable and highly enthusiastic about the initiatives they have developed, for example with regard to monitoring pupils' performance and sharing good practice in teaching and assessment. These have not yet, however, borne fruit in terms of consistently good or better teaching and improved achievement. The governing body brings a good range of expertise and experience to the school, but its members are not yet all fully involved in rigorously evaluating all aspects of its work. The school cooperates well with other organisations, including local businesses and the sports partnership, although this collaborative work has had a greater impact on pupils' personal development and well-being than on their academic achievement. The school has introduced a number of new ways of communicating with parents and carers, such as its attractive and informative website, as well as regular newsletters. It has succeeded in engaging with parents and carers from groups that are traditionally hard to reach. A few parents and carers continue to voice their discontent about provision for their children and the way in

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

which the school responds to their concerns. Arrangements for safeguarding children are robust, including procedures for vetting staff appointments and ensuring that all adults receive up-to-date training. The good progress made by pupils who belong to groups which are recognised nationally to be at risk of underachieving, as well as the absence of racist behaviour, indicates the success of the school's promotion of equality of opportunity. There is no evidence of any discrimination. The school is a harmonious community, and it comfortably meets all requirements with regard to the promotion of community cohesion. Pupils acquire a good understanding of, and learn to respect, the different faiths and traditions represented within the United Kingdom, and benefit from the links which the school has established with establishments elsewhere in the world. ♦ ♦

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's attainment by the time they complete the Early Years Foundation Stage is broadly in line with age-related expectations. This indicates that they make good progress from their starting points, which are currently below those found nationally when they join the Reception class, particularly with regard to communication skills. Adults provide children with interesting and enjoyable activities, such as an Easter egg hunt which engaged their curiosity and enabled them to develop their counting skills. Children make good progress in learning to link sounds to letters, for example when they worked together to help Mrs Dog (the teacher's glove puppet) to write a simple shopping list. They benefit from a spacious and well-maintained learning environment, including an outdoor area to which they have access in all weathers. The good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities enables them to develop their independence skills. Staffing ratios meet requirements, but opportunities for children to benefit from, for example, outdoor facilities are limited at certain times of the day. Adults use observations well to judge the

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

stages that children have reached in their learning and development and to shape the provision accordingly. Leaders have improved systems for assessing children's attainment. These are now more reliable, which makes it easier for adults to provide activities which match the development of all the children. ♦ Adults work well with parents and carers, as well as with the on-site pre-school and other Early Years Foundation Stage settings, to ensure that children settle in quickly when they join the school and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. ♦

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was lower than that found nationally. Most agree that their children enjoy school, that it keeps them safe and helps them to have a healthy lifestyle. The inspection supports these views. A very large majority believe that teaching is good. However, inspectors judged that teaching and assessment are satisfactory, with scope for improvement in some specific areas. A large majority of parents and carers believe that the school meets their children's particular needs, and that their children are making sufficient progress and are well prepared for the future. A large majority also believe that the school is well led and managed, are pleased with the way the school informs them about their children's progress, and agree that the school helps them to support their children's learning. A small minority do not agree that the school deals effectively with poor behaviour or that it takes account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors judged pupils' behaviour to be good, and that the school's systems for promoting this are effective. However, inspectors also found that, although the school has introduced new ways of seeking and acting upon parents' and carers' views, these have not been effective in allaying the concerns of all groups. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about specific issues. Inspectors discussed these concerns, in confidence, with school leaders.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Istead Rise Primary 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 63 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 256 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	54	23	37	4	6	2	3
The school keeps my child safe	38	60	22	35	2	3	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	11	17	30	48	16	25	4	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	16	35	56	10	16	5	8
The teaching is good at this school	21	33	31	49	7	11	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	25	27	43	10	16	6	10
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	24	39	62	6	10	0	0
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)	12	19	31	49	8	13	5	8
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	19	38	60	8	13	3	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	17	29	46	12	19	5	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	10	29	46	11	17	6	10
The school is led and managed effectively	12	19	27	43	10	16	9	14
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	41	22	35	10	16	2	3

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



2 April 2011



Dear Pupils




Inspection of Istead Rise Primary School, Gravesend DA13 9HG



Thank you very much for the welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing what you had to tell us.



Istead Rise gives you a satisfactory standard of education. You say you feel safe there because there is not much bullying and the school deals with it well if it happens. You behave sensibly in lessons and around the school and you understand how important it is to have a healthy lifestyle. You get on well together, and you respect and value different cultures. You make an excellent contribution to the school and the wider community, by taking on responsibility in school, showing you care about the environment and raising a lot of money for the school you support in Zambia  well done! You learn a lot about different ways of life in this country and around the world.



You work hard in lessons, and make satisfactory progress in reaching the levels expected of you. Teachers give you a good range of things to do in lessons. You enjoy taking part in special events such as the Business Challenge week. Adults look after you well and keep you safe.



The headteacher and all the staff, as well as the governing body, are working hard to make the school even better. To help them do this, we have asked them to do the following things.

- Make sure all the teachers help you understand what you are going to learn and what you have to do next to improve your work.
- Take care that all lessons include activities which help you all to make good or better progress.
- Make sure the governors check carefully on how well the school is doing.



We wish you all the very best for the future.



Yours sincerely



Robin Gaff

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.