

The Ilsleys' Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 109813 |
| Local Authority | West Berkshire |
| Inspection number | 377989 |
| Inspection dates | 14–15 September 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Keith Sadler |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 64 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Linda Curson |
| Headteacher | Kate House |
| Date of previous school inspection | 15 May 2009 |
| School address | Church Hill East Ilsley Newbury Berkshire RG20 7LP |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who observed ten lessons led by six different teachers and practitioners. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation. The documentation included the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school transformation plan, leaders' monitoring records and pupils' work. Questionnaires from staff and from 29 parents and carers and pupils in Key Stage 2 were analysed and their responses taken into account.

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

- The strength of pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6, particularly in writing, and whether current Year 6 pupils are on track to attain their targets.
- Whether the pace of learning is sufficiently brisk and how well teachers ensure that work is suitably challenging for all groups of pupils.
- The extent of the role that teachers with responsibilities play in the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures.

Information about the school

The Ilsleys' is smaller than the average primary school. Most children live in the villages of East and West Ilsley, although an increasing number travel from other nearby villages. The very large majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most of those pupils have learning difficulties. The school has three mixed-age classes. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage share a class with Year 1 pupils. There is another class for pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 and a third with pupils in Years 5 and 6.

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

The Ilsleys' is a good school. It has maintained many of the strengths found at the time of the previous inspection and consolidated important aspects of provision that have resulted in increasing rates of progress and rising attainment. The continuing improvements are the result of the headteacher's determination and commitment to strengthen the life chances of all pupils. Pupils achieve well and attainment in English and mathematics is now above the national average at the end of Year 6. Strategies to improve writing have been implemented successfully. Even so, achieving consistently high standards is hampered by pupils' relatively weak spelling skills. Parents and carers are highly supportive and are unanimous in the response to the inspection questionnaire in saying that their children enjoy school and that, overall, they are happy with their children's experience at the school. One parent reflected the views of many by writing 'My child thoroughly enjoys being at school and comes home with enthusiasm. He can't wait for the weekend to be over.'

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils behave well, feel safe and have positive attitudes. They approach their learning with confidence and enthusiasm and, as one Year 6 pupil said, 'We have a day that is crammed packed with very good things and activities to do.' The positive features are the result of the good levels of care and support that are provided by all the staff. Because pupils know all the staff well, they have confidence that, should they be upset or troubled, they can turn to any of the adults for help. Pupils' above-average basic skills, when linked to their well-developed inter-personal skills, ensure that the pupils are prepared well for their move to secondary education and life beyond.

Teachers create attractive and positive environments for learning in their classrooms. Lessons are consistently good and all three classrooms present a calm and purposeful atmosphere where pupils are taught well. The staff are particularly adept at ensuring that lessons are interesting, with a good range of activities being provided. A successful emphasis on strengthening teachers' skills in the assessment of learning has enabled staff to ensure that lesson activities are suitably demanding for all groups of pupils. However, there are some inconsistencies and rightly the school has a target to make sure assessment procedures are embedded across all classes. For example, the assessments of children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage are thorough and comprehensive, although learning is not tracked against the required curriculum. In the other two classes, although work is invariably provided at different levels, on occasion, the activities set are too easy for the most-able pupils. The re-vamping of the curriculum means that the well-chosen topics and

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themes enliven pupils' learning. Pupils say that they like the way that their teachers encourage them to raise questions to be answered as part of their topic, such as the theme of 'What our World is Like' in which Year 5 and 6 pupils are currently finding out about pollination.

Leadership and management are good. Systematic self-evaluation leads the school to know its strengths and development needs well. New and rigorous systems for the tracking of pupils' progress enable staff to ascertain quickly when any pupils are in danger of dropping behind expected progress towards their targets. The governing body is committed to improvement and supports the school satisfactorily. Currently, it is over-reliant on the headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body for information. Whilst the governing body has plans in place to strengthen its monitoring and evaluation role, at present it is not in a good position to challenge the school to improve further because too few members of the governing body visit the school often enough. That means also that it is not in a position to find out whether agreed policies are being implemented systematically. Improvements in the school's provision and the raising of attainment to above-average level demonstrate a good capacity for sustained improvement in the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that work is consistently challenging for the more-able pupils
 - raising the standard of pupils' spelling skills
 - linking assessments of children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage to the required curriculum areas.
- Strengthen the governing body's role in the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures by improving the range and frequency of members' visits to the school so that it can find out whether agreed policies are being implemented systematically.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Small year groups mean that children's skills and abilities on entry to school vary from year to year. Generally, the children's abilities and experiences are broadly in line with expectations for their ages, though their personal and social development is above expected levels. Inspection findings confirm pupils' good progress in all three classes and that pupils enjoy taking an active part in their learning. The pupils make good progress in their speaking and listening and also their personal skills because of the well-planned opportunities provided for them to discuss their learning in pairs or in groups. They enjoy the good range of books available for them and make good progress in reading. All groups of pupils achieve well. Those with learning difficulties are supported well by the team of teaching assistants, both in small groups and individually in lessons. As a consequence, their achievement matches that of their classmates. Successful action has been taken to improve pupils' performance in writing. For example, Years 5 and 6 pupils were highly engaged as they discussed

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their 'story maps' when planning writing in which they met the lesson objective of using sophisticated connectives well. Lesson observations and pupils' work show that, in both mathematics and English, most Year 6 pupils are already meeting the attainment levels expected of them at the end of Year 6, with some exceeding them.

Pupils demonstrate positive personal qualities such as cooperation, honesty, respect for others and responsibility. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and many parents and carers commented on how well pupils support each other. They play together well and older pupils enjoy looking after younger ones, including a number of older pupils playing games or reading to younger pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress as well as their classmates because provision for them is well founded and they receive good support from learning support staff.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are happy, confident and willing take on responsibilities including acting as monitors. Year 6 pupils are looking forward to their training to be playground helpers. They have a good understanding of the need to pursue a healthy lifestyle. All these qualities contribute to the harmonious school community.

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 | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is consistently good and lessons are planned well, with staff ensuring that there are many practical tasks and time for pupils to work independently, in pairs

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

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and small groups. Planning takes account of pupils’ different abilities and the change to grouping pupils by ability in six groups across Years 2 to 6 is paying dividends as progress is accelerating, particularly in writing. Even so, occasionally, the work set is insufficiently challenging for the more-able pupils. Work is marked carefully and pupils understand how to improve and what they need to do to meet their targets. The pace of learning in all lessons is brisk and this was evident in a good Years 3 and 4 numeracy lesson, when pupils were learning to partition numbers. There was a good level of challenge in the task set and higher-ability pupils enjoyed working together greatly and they partitioned five digit numbers successfully.

The curriculum promotes good academic progress and contributes well to pupils’ personal development. The promotion of independent study and research skills is well developed. The revised curriculum means that subjects are now brought together successfully into themes and this promotes purpose and meaning for the activities being taught. Pupils’ information and communication technology skills are promoted well because good use is made of computers in units of study. Additional activities are satisfactory. There is an adequate range of after-school activities and trips and visits out of school contribute appropriately to pupils’ learning.

Good attention is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support, with adults placing the pupils’ well-being at the heart of the school’s work. Pupils, parents and carers appreciate the very well-organised, safe and secure environment provided.

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?

The headteacher and staff have successfully created a positive school atmosphere for pupils to learn and develop. Under the committed leadership of the headteacher, there is a shared determination to raise the school’s effectiveness. The staff work together closely to promote good-quality provision and positive outcomes for pupils. Because the staff team is small, teachers cooperate together and take joint responsibility for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning. The strategy is successful and all make a good contribution to the school’s comprehensive self-evaluation processes. Safeguarding arrangements meet regulatory requirements and the governing body ensures that the accommodation and site meet health and safety requirements. However, the governing body is not sufficiently diligent in ensuring that policies are reviewed regularly and ratified and so the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements is satisfactory, rather than good.

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The school is committed to promoting equal opportunities for all the pupils. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and the school works well in partnership with parents, carers and outside agencies to remove any barriers to learning. The school has a very good understanding of the needs of its local community. It is very cohesive; pupils respect differences and are inclusive in their attitudes. The close relationship enjoyed with the local partnership of schools enables pupils to join in activities with others. The school seeks to extend pupils' experiences both within this country and globally by study of specific countries and different faiths.

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 | 3 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly and well into school because of good induction arrangements and their very positive relationships with the adults. Even though the children had only been in school for one week at the time of the inspection, they had a good understanding of routines and were confident and secure in their learning. They make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because of the considerable attention that adults give to their care and welfare. They benefit also from sharing their class with Year 1 pupils, who enjoy caring for younger children.

A good selection of interesting activities is provided. For example, children enjoyed greatly a good lesson in which they were putting into chronological sequence the events of their visit to the church next to the school. Staff ensure that there is a good balance maintained between activities that the staff direct and those that the children choose for themselves. Children have, therefore, good opportunities to explore, be creative and work independently. A good emphasis is placed on

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developing the children’s language skills and so the children make good progress in speaking and listening. Recent improvements in the outdoor area mean that there is good potential for ensuring a rich and high-quality environment to promote learning across all the required areas. However, it is not yet the case at this point in the term as outdoor provision is hampered by a relative lack of resources. Even though assessments are not matched sufficiently well to the required curriculum, generally, activities meet the children’s needs well and ensure good progress across all areas of learning. By the time that they leave the Reception Year, almost all children reach the required goals.

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 completed the questionnaires was greater than in most schools. Parents and carers expressed satisfaction with the school and were unanimous in saying that their children enjoy school, are kept safe, that teaching is good and that, overall, they are happy with their children’s experience at the school. There were many positive comments, with parents and carers expressing their pleasure at having chosen Ilsleys’ for their children.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Isleys’ 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 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 64 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 19 | 66 | 10 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 19 | 66 | 10 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child’s progress | 10 | 34 | 16 | 55 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 11 | 38 | 15 | 52 | 2 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 12 | 41 | 14 | 48 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child’s learning | 9 | 31 | 15 | 52 | 2 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 13 | 45 | 10 | 34 | 3 | 10 | 1 | 3 |
| 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) | 11 | 38 | 13 | 45 | 2 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child’s particular needs | 11 | 38 | 16 | 55 | 2 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 10 | 34 | 15 | 52 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 7 | 24 | 14 | 48 | 3 | 10 | 1 | 3 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 13 | 45 | 12 | 41 | 3 | 10 | 1 | 3 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school | 12 | 41 | 15 | 52 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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 | 43 | 47 | 10 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 6 | 46 | 42 | 6 |
| Secondary schools | 14 | 36 | 41 | 9 |
| Sixth forms | 15 | 42 | 41 | 3 |
| Special schools | 30 | 48 | 19 | 3 |
| Pupil referral units | 14 | 50 | 31 | 5 |
| All schools | 10 | 44 | 39 | 6 |

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



16 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Ilsleys' Primary School, Newbury RG20 7LP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed seeing you working hard in lessons and getting on so well together. We think that you are very lucky to have so many different play spaces and decked and adventure playground areas to enjoy during break and lunchtime. The many of you who were kind enough to speak to us showed how proud you are of your school. You are right to be because yours is a good school.

We found that you enjoy school, behave well, attain above-average standards in tests and make good progress in your personal development. You know all about how to stay safe and to live healthy lives. Your headteacher runs your school well and she has good support from all the other staff. They understand how they could make it even better. Your teachers do a good job too. They teach you well and make sure that your topics are exciting and interesting. Everyone makes sure that you are well cared for.

Even in a good school, such as yours, there are always some things to do to make it better. We have asked your headteacher and the governing body to do two things. First, to make your good learning even better so it becomes outstanding by improving your spelling skills, making sure that work is always challenging for those of you that find learning easy and also for the assessments of children in the Reception Year to be improved. Second, we have asked that members of the governing body visit the school more often so they can find out for themselves how well you are doing.

You can help by making sure that you take great care with your spelling when you are writing. We hope that you continue to enjoy your education as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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