

# Ilam CofE (VA) Primary School

Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124337
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380863
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Stafford

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	71
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rachel Linton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carol Gunn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 July 2009
<b>School address</b>	Ilam Ashbourne DE6 2AZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01335 350316
<b>Fax number</b>	01335 350316
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@ilam.staffs.sch.uk

---

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](mailto: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 information 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'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2011



## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons and observed seven teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, the school's strategic plan for improvement and development, lesson and curriculum planning and procedures for keeping pupils safe. Questionnaires from 44 parents and carers were scrutinised by the inspection team, who also spoke with a number of them.

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

- Do pupils make consistent progress across the school in English and mathematics?
- How do teachers use information from assessment and adapt the curriculum to help pupils make progress in their learning?
- How effective are school leaders' strategies for improving pupils' progress?

## Information about the school

The school is much smaller than average. All of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, with most of these pupils having moderate learning difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a mixed-age class and there are three other classes of mixed-age pupils. The school has gained a number of awards including Activemark, and has achieved Healthy School status. The current headteacher took up the post in September 2010. The Senior Teacher, and the teacher in the Early Years Foundation Stage took up their posts in September 2011.

**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

Ilam primary is a good school that serves its community well and prepares pupils very well for the next stage of their lives. Pupils feel exceptionally safe in the warm, family environment and their behaviour is outstanding. The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support and a happy atmosphere in which pupils grow into confident and mature young people. Parents and carers are very pleased with the quality of education the school provides. Typically, one parent wrote, 'The school provides a nurturing environment with staff that genuinely care. The class teacher knows exactly where my children are academically and as individuals too.'

Since the last inspection, the school has maintained pupils' good progress and achievement, and has improved the learning environment and the quality of pastoral care. As a result, pupils' outcomes are now outstanding. The school's robust use of its tracking system to identify quickly any pupils making slow progress has supported these improved outcomes very effectively. Any underachievement has been successfully tackled through effective improvement plans and the determined leadership of the headteacher. Consequently, pupils' academic progress and achievement are good. Progress is particularly rapid in Key Stage 2. Attainment has been variable by the end of Key Stage 1 but is improving. Attainment by the end of Year 6 has been above levels seen nationally for a number of years. The curriculum is good. The great variety of activities offers pupils very valuable experiences. However, teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunities to write for a range of purposes in subjects other than English. The leaders' drive to improve the school is clearly articulated and enthusiastically embraced by staff, especially in literacy and numeracy. Leaders' rigorous monitoring of the school's performance in all subjects and areas of its work provides them with secure and accurate information for self-evaluation. Their subsequent actions have brought about steady improvement. This leadership record shows that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

The quality of teaching is good. There are many signs that teaching and learning have improved, especially through the use of information and communication technology and as a result of focused professional development for staff. Teachers plan interesting and relevant work. As a result, relationships are strong and pupils have very positive attitudes to their work and try hard. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning through the well-timed use of their expertise in supporting those who need help with literacy and numeracy. This is particularly evident for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities whose

**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

achievement, consequently, matches that of their peers. Many good lessons were seen across the school. Occasionally, however, teaching is less effective. This is because teachers do not always plan work that closely matches the needs of different pupils in the class, especially the most able. Marking is good, regular and up to date, and accurately reflects the school's rigorous requirements.

Pupils enjoy lessons, school clubs and meeting friends. The interest and challenge that the curriculum provides supports their enjoyment and progress. For example, writing contributions for the village guide book and the regular use of computers and games across the school engage them well. Pupils share in celebrating a range of religious festivals and have strong links with schools locally, and also in Kettering and Finland. This, and communication links with children in Romania, Ghana and India, give them an excellent insight into cultural diversity and supports their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Almost all pupils come to school regularly and attendance is above average.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Strengthen teaching so that the level of challenge and progress in lessons is consistently good or better by always setting work that closely matches the needs of each pupil.
- Extend the variety of opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to write for a range of purposes.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****1**

All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enjoy learning and their achievement is good. The progress of boys in English has accelerated and they now make the same progress as the girls. Pupils are keen to learn, try their best and take pride in their work. Their research and planning skills improve quickly and many are becoming proficient at managing their own learning. Pupils enjoy discussing ideas in small groups and with their class, which promotes their self-confidence, communication skills and understanding. This was seen when younger Key Stage 2 pupils were enthralled by producing colourful paper masks based on their studies of Greek mythology. Vocabulary about the power of gods and other characters in the myths was discussed as a class and with partners, and deepened pupils' appreciation of this new topic. At the close of the session, they were clearly excited by how well their masks had turned out and how much progress they had made.

Pupils are confident that the extremely rare cases of bullying will be quickly resolved by the school. They know precisely how to keep themselves and others safe. All pupils learn to swim, part of the active lifestyle promoted by the school and complemented by pupils' strong understanding of the importance of a balanced, healthy diet. Pupils are keen to take responsibility and participate as fully as possible which supports their outstanding contribution to the school and wider community.

**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

For example, pupils are exchange partners with pupils at a school in Kettering, participate with their families in events and celebrations in the village, and take part in joint ventures across the country and the world. Pupils collect generously for charity. Older pupils act as ‘buddies’ for younger children at playtimes and represent their peers’ views through the highly regarded school council. Positive attitudes, opportunities to understand finance, and rising standards in basic skills, including computer skills, mean pupils’ preparation for secondary school and future work is good. Pupils reflect maturely on their own feelings and those of others. They appreciate their own beautiful environment and have established strong working links with the National Trust to help them learn how to preserve it. This complements their efforts at recycling and working in the school garden. A strong moral code supports their outstanding behaviour. Pupils celebrate each other’s achievements in assembly and work productively in teams. Such opportunities contribute very effectively to their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan interesting work that engages pupils well. They generally have high expectations of the effort and progress that pupils can make and make good use of resources, such as interactive whiteboards, to develop learning. The impact of consistently good teaching is evident in the rapid progress made by Key Stage 2 pupils in lessons. In these classes, teachers’ questions and the tasks they set make pupils think hard. The school acknowledges that the challenge provided by teaching is less consistent in Key Stage 1. Pupils have a good understanding of their targets,

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

**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

but the teachers’ advice on how to improve their work is not always followed up consistently.

The curriculum is good because it supports pupils’ academic and personal development especially well. Cross-curricular topics provide pupils with good opportunities to develop creative skills and knowledge of the world, and to pursue personal interests. However, opportunities are missed for pupils to write for a range of purposes in subjects other than English. Recent changes to the English and mathematics curriculum to involve more active learning have given these subjects greater appeal. The school exploits the rich resources found within its boundaries to extend opportunities to study the natural world. A good range of well-attended clubs and many educational visits, including three residential stays for three different year groups, add to pupils’ enjoyment of school and widen their horizons. The curriculum promotes pupils’ healthy lifestyles well, as reflected in the school’s Activemark award and Healthy School status.

Staff use their detailed knowledge of each pupil expertly to provide them with outstanding pastoral care. Pupils with a concern turn confidently to an adult knowing that it will be quickly resolved. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive sympathetic, effective support and suitable learning programmes that mean they join in all that the school offers. The school’s targeted support for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is very effective. It works closely with many external agencies to promote pupils’ education and welfare. The good attendance figures over recent years shows that the school’s hard work with pupils, parents and carers to sustain high attendance is proving successful.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders, particularly the headteacher and the senior teacher, articulate clearly to staff their ambitious targets and their plans to make the school better. This commitment to improvement is shared by the staff team. The English and mathematics subject leaders take a high level of responsibility for checking standards in their areas and ensuring that they are improving. Leaders have accurately identified areas for improvement and have, for example, provided successful training that has sharpened teachers’ skills. This has led to teachers’ better understanding of how to plan to make English and mathematics lessons more interesting and relevant. Governance is good and the governing body is very supportive of the school.

**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

Members’ good understanding of data means that the governing body is able to challenge the school over its performance and it rigorously holds leaders to account.

The partnerships that have been established between teachers, pupils and families lead to good engagement with parents and carers. Valuable help and advice given to them are examples of the school’s support for families, especially in how they can help with their children’s education at home. The school actively involves partners, for example from the cluster of local schools, in pupils’ education. The thorough way that the progress of different groups of pupils is checked reflects the school’s good commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. This approach is at the centre of its ethos. The success of the school’s plans to remedy previous gender differences in progress shows that its strategies for improvement are having a strong impact. The contribution that the school makes to promoting community cohesion is outstanding. A plan with clear, implemented actions promotes pupils’ understanding from a local perspective extremely well. Links with other schools and agencies are harnessed very effectively, and the school understands its own context very well. Consequently, it has expanded its links to provide national and global perspectives. Pupils have video links with children in West Africa and have raised funds to help the education of children in a Romanian orphanage. Safety and safeguarding are given high priority and stringent checks are made of all adults on entering the school. Safe recruitment procedures are rigorous. Staff are very vigilant about child protection, ensuring that procedures are robust and extend beyond those demanded by the current regulations. Their training is regularly updated and fully meets safeguarding requirements.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage



**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

Current evidence shows that progress is accelerating and boys and girls are now making similarly good progress in all areas of learning because teaching is good in this well-run provision. Most children join the school with skills in line with those expected for their age. Although their attainment has been broadly average by the time they start Year 1, this is an improving picture and some children’s basic skills are above those expected for their age, particularly in numeracy. Children are well behaved and polite to each other and to adults, and their personal development is good. Parents feel well informed about their children’s progress and are happy with the advice they are given about how to help their learning at home. Children are very safe and well cared for in the classrooms and stimulating outdoor learning area.

Teachers’ good planning ensures that there is an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities which promotes good learning. For example, children built on their previous learning during role play in ‘grandmother’s’ well-equipped kitchen. They readily entered into lengthy discussions with each other about what should be cooked and how it should be served. They confidently shared ideas and showed their awareness and understanding by comments such as ‘Here’s your strawberries’, ‘I need to cook with some pepper’ and ‘This pan is going to get really hot’. The teacher expertly introduced the children to new vocabulary such as restaurant, cutlery and blender that stimulated further discussion about what was happening in the kitchen. The children concentrated and collaborated well to extend the role play. Their progress was noted and photographed by the teacher to contribute to planning for individuals’ next steps in learning. Just occasionally, learning slows when the learning needs of some children are not consistently addressed.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 response to the inspection questionnaire was higher than normally found with the majority of parents and carers returning a questionnaire. These showed they are generally very happy with the school’s work. They overwhelmingly agreed that their children enjoyed school, behaved well, and were well prepared for secondary school. Many added positive comments about how confident they are about their child’s safety and that they believe the headteacher leads the school well and that teachers are welcoming and approachable. Inspection findings endorse these positive comments. A very small minority expressed individual concerns that were discussed with the headteacher.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ilam CofE (VA) 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 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 71 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	66	15	34	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	61	15	34	2	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	23	52	15	34	4	9	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	57	12	27	4	9	2	5
The teaching is good at this school	26	59	14	32	3	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	25	57	17	39	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	55	17	39	2	5	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)	26	59	14	32	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	25	57	11	25	7	16	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	61	14	32	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	48	17	39	5	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	52	14	32	6	14	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	24	55	14	32	3	7	1	2

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](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



13 October 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Ilam CofE (VA) Primary School, Ashbourne, DE6 2AZ**

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. I especially enjoyed hearing you singing with such enjoyment in assembly. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on so well together. Ilam Primary is a good school and it is improving. Here are some of the things we found out.

- Your teachers make sure that you get off to a good start in Reception.
- You told us you enjoy school and feel very safe and secure.
- You try your very best to eat a healthy diet and take plenty of exercise.
- Your behaviour is excellent.
- You are very good at playing your part in making your school a good place to learn because your views are taken seriously.
- You get on well with your teachers and you try hard for them.
- The curriculum provides you with exciting lessons, clubs and visits, which you enjoy.
- Adults look after you very well and are always ready to help you.
- The headteacher and staff are working hard to make the school even better.

We have asked the school to do two things to help you do even better in your learning:

- make sure teachers always provide you with work that is neither too hard nor too easy, so that you make even better progress
- give you more opportunities to use writing in lots of different ways.

All of you can help the school by continuing to try your best in lessons, behaving well and supporting your classmates. We wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Stafford  
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](http://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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**