

Irlam Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105898
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	377317
Inspection dates	14–15 May 2012
Lead inspector	Peter Cox

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karl Wood
Headteacher	Valerie Ruddy
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Peter Cox
Gordon Alston
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Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Fifteen teachers were seen and 32 part lessons observed. In addition, inspectors visited an assembly and observed the behaviour of pupils arriving to school, at breaks and during lunchtimes. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body including the Chair and members of staff. A telephone conversation was held with the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, monitoring records regarding the quality of teaching, and information on pupils' current achievement. The inspection team also considered an analysis of 88 parent and carer questionnaire responses and others completed by pupils and staff. In addition, inspectors analysed the responses of 157 parents, from a very recent parental survey undertaken by the school.

Information about the school

Irlam Primary is a larger-than-average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below that usually found; so, too, is the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The number of those pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is below the national average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a Nursery and two Reception classes. There is an after-school club on site run by another provider, which did not form part of this inspection.

The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school is an accredited dyslexia-friendly school and has achieved a number of national awards including Basic Skills and Healthy School status.

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	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Pupils achieve well overall and obtain significantly above average standards at the end of Year 6 in English. The school is not outstanding because achievement in mathematics has lagged behind that of English and, while the gap is closing, overall attainment remains broadly average.
- Teaching is good and there are examples of outstanding practice. This good teaching has secured overall good achievement over recent years. However, occasionally teachers spend too much time introducing the learning rather than allowing pupils to get on with it.
- Behaviour and attitude of the pupils towards learning are good. Pupils are polite, inquisitive and very positive about their school and teachers. Attendance has improved over time and is now average. The school does everything it can to reach the very few parents who allow their children to be persistently absent. The school is a well-ordered and safe environment with a large, secure school field where pupils play together harmoniously during lunch under the supervision of adults. Behaviour is generally good in lessons; however, when teachers talk for long periods concentration levels tend to drift.
- Leadership and management are good overall. A collegiate approach permeates across classes and subject areas with a clear focus on pupils' achievement. However, procedures for ensuring the quality of teaching are not as robust as other aspects of good leadership and the governing body does not receive sharply focused information on pupils' achievement in order to increase its level of challenge to the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics and increase pupils' understanding and use of basic mathematics by developing pupils' skill and confidence further, enabling them to tackle more complex mathematical questions and answering them more accurately in the subject and across the curriculum.

- Ensure that all teaching is at least good and a higher proportion is outstanding by reducing the amount of teacher input at the start of the lesson so that pupils have more time for active learning.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - increasing the rigour in the monitoring of teaching and learning by senior leaders to set clear targets for improvement, and to check that identified improvements are made
 - ensuring that tracking procedures are refined in order to provide a clear picture on pupil progress so that the governing body can hold the school to account more rigorously.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The vast majority of parents, carers and pupils who responded to the questionnaires consider that pupils make good progress. Inspectors confirm this; at least good progress was seen in all lessons observed. In most classes the range of pupil abilities is well met. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson, where the teaching was outstanding, rapid progress was seen because of the carefully planned tasks, which enthused and motivated pupils of all abilities. In this lesson, which was exploring narrative and descriptive writing under the topic of 'highwaymen', basic literacy skills were constantly reinforced and every minute used effectively. Clear cross-curricular links were evident, too, such as history. Learning was carefully orchestrated to secure pupils' understanding of social and moral issues and the effect of unlawful acts.

Children arrive into Nursery with the skills and abilities expected for their age. The very caring, committed and skilled team of teachers, assistants and volunteers ensures that children progress at a good rate during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Effective learning indoors and outdoors supports their good rate of progress. Despite the wet and windy weather during the inspection, children were well protected when outside and enjoyed riding their trikes through puddles, connecting the sounds of words learned earlier in the lesson to the noise made when riding through the water.

Good progress is maintained throughout Key Stage 1. Literacy and numeracy are reinforced at every opportunity and pupils' work, as seen in their books, shows good coverage of basic skills. There is a focus on punctuation, sentence structure and a range of writing styles evident. The standard of reading at the end of Year 2 is above average. Overall attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is above average.

By the time pupils leave school they have capitalised on their good progress and in 2010 and 2011 left with overall attainment being significantly above national averages. There are, however, differences in the attainment of English and mathematics. In 2011, pupils attained significantly above the national average in English and broadly in line with the national average in mathematics. The school recognises they have, for some time, concentrated on

English and to a lesser extent mathematics. This is now a priority within the school development plan and a more focused approach to securing higher levels of attainment in mathematics throughout the school is evident. However, further work needs to be done on equipping pupils with the skills to tackle complex mathematical problems within the subject and across the curriculum. The school's accurate monitoring indicates a high proportion of pupils are likely to exceed the expected levels of progress in English but a lower proportion is expected to do so in mathematics. The small number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, of which half have dyslexia, also make good progress, due to the targeted support they receive. The standard of reading in Year 6 is above average.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good overall, with a small proportion outstanding. The strength of teaching supports the consistently good progress over time, the high attainment in English and the improving picture in mathematics. Teachers are committed and enthusiastic. They care much for the development of the pupils and often carefully plan and deliver engaging learning activities. Relationships are strong between teachers and pupils. The development of pupils as independent learners is evident in most classes as is group working. Pupils demonstrate good levels of oracy when asked to explain their work to others and when answering teachers' questions. Reading is taught well and contributes to better than average attainment. Pupils who require additional support, including those who are disabled and those with special educational needs, are well provided for. They were seen to receive effective teaching in class and outside by other teachers and adults, which helps them learn at least as well as others. Parents, carers and pupils consider teaching to be good. However, occasionally teachers take too long in explaining the purpose of the lesson at the beginning. Pupils talk of wanting to get started on the much-enjoyed active learning more quickly. Pupils talk of enjoying school and say they learn a lot in every lesson. The vast majority of parents and carers consider their children to be well taught at school, pupils and inspectors agree.

Marking of pupils work across classes is variable. There are some good examples that give pupils information on the next steps to take to improve their work. In contrast, the less effective marking is generally an acknowledgement of work seen with little or no comment on how to improve. Teachers assess pupils' work accurately and generally use this information to plan further learning accordingly. However, some of the plans seen in classes did not always provide challenging learning opportunities for all levels of ability.

Pupil progress data are accurate and meaningful to class teachers and enable them to set appropriate targets for each of their pupils. This was an area for improvement at the last inspection, which has been secured. However, as a tool to help drive whole-school improvement, they lack consistency in their presentation and do not help the monitoring and evaluation by others, particularly those not directly involved in day-to-day teaching. The teaching of mathematics across other subjects within the curriculum is patchy and pupils currently have limited opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour of pupils seen during the inspection was good as were attitudes to learning allowing pupils to make a good contribution to the safe and secure learning environment. Occasionally, when the teaching is less engaging, pupils' attention begins to fade. The school's records show very few incidents of poor behaviour occur over time. When these do

occur, pupils speak of the school dealing with them quickly and appropriately. Pupils show good moral and social conduct in lessons and around the school, although some innocent boisterousness was seen on the corridors at lunchtime. On these rare occasions, pupils were sensitively reprimanded by adults and quickly corrected their behaviour. Pupils understand the different forms of bullying and have a zero tolerance towards any type of discrimination. Almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were highly positive and consider the behaviour of pupils to be good. There were very few parental concerns regarding behaviour and pupils also consider it to be good. Pupils are considerate of each other and convincing when voicing their opinions. One pupil proudly presented an inspector with a hand-drawn poster proclaiming, 'We are not a good school, we are a great school!' This comment was echoed by a parent who wrote, 'Irlam Primary is the only school in the area that I would allow my children to attend. It is not just a school but a community that works together to achieve success.'

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers, including governors, are successful in managing the school's performance and maintaining the overall above-average attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. This demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve. The quality of teaching is monitored periodically and areas for development established. However, senior leaders recognise the need to establish a more rigorous process of monitoring and evaluation in order to improve the quality of teaching further.

Training is provided for teachers' development often through the reciprocal relationship with a network of other schools in the area. Further training of teachers and other adults ensures skills are up to date. For example, one subject leader is undergoing accreditation as a dyslexia specialist and shares their knowledge with others for the benefit of the pupils. The governing body provides a degree of well-informed challenge and support. It would benefit from more regular and accurate understanding of the achievement of cohorts and groups of pupils, through more sharply focused and easily presented data.

The curriculum is well constructed and delivered; it promotes basic skills well and provides good opportunities for the use of information and communication technology. The theme-based approach engages pupils well and provides a platform for teachers to work together in a highly collegiate way. Pupils talk of there being many activities provided after and during school. Procedures to promote equality are evident and all pupils are allowed to thrive. Adults are good role-models. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well and is seen through pupils holding positions of responsibility and engaging in a variety of ways, including whole-school singing. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Irlam Primary School, Manchester, M44 6NA

Thank you for making us welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed our time with you and were very impressed by your good behaviour and attitude to learning. Thanks to those of you who spoke to us on the corridors at lunchtime and in lessons. You told us you go to a good school and we agree. You do well by the time you leave Year 6. This is because the teaching is good overall and those who lead and manage the school do a good job too.

There are a number of areas where we think your school needs to make further improvements. We have asked the governing body and the headteacher to make sure that the proportion of good and outstanding teaching is increased and that the level of your mathematical knowledge and skill is increased so that you can apply this knowledge to other subjects across the curriculum. We have asked that the information the school holds about your learning is given to the governing body more frequently, and in a way that is more easily understood, so they can regularly check your progress.

You can help your school get even better by continuing to attend regularly, challenging yourselves and supporting your teachers to help you do your very best.

It was a pleasure to have visited you and we wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Cox
Lead inspector

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