

# Irk Valley Community School

10 Waterloo Street, Lower Crumpsall, Manchester, M8 5XH

**Inspection dates** 29–30 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although attainment has improved at the end of both Key Stage 1 and 2, pupils' progress is not good enough as it is uneven with good progress in some classes but not in others.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement because too often teachers do not plan work at the right level for individual pupils. Sometimes it is too easy and sometimes too hard. Teaching is of inconsistent quality across the school. In some classes it is good but in others it is weaker.
- Leaders and managers have not made sure that teaching is consistently good or better across the school and that all pupils achieve as well as they should. The systems the senior leadership uses to check on and improve the quality of teaching and learning and the progress made by all groups of pupils are not effective enough.
- Governors have not been rigorous enough in checking on the school's work and on why pupils have not been achieving as well as they should.

### The school has the following strengths

- This is a very caring school that is much valued by parents and the community. Pupils from a wide range of cultures are helped to settle quickly. Pupils say everyone 'is welcome here from anywhere in the world'.
- Children are given a good start to their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Attainment has improved in reading, writing and mathematics and is average by the end of Key Stage 2.
- High-quality, positive relationships support pupils' eagerness to learn and their good behaviour in and out of lessons well.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team are fully committed to improving the school and teamwork and staff morale are strong.
- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupils whose first language is not English are supported well and settle quickly.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 teachers covering 23 lessons, scrutinised pupils' work and listened to them read.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a wide range of documents including the school's improvement plans, monitoring files, minutes of the governing body meetings, data on pupils' past and current progress and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 16 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own surveys of parental views.

## Inspection team

Chris Maloney, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Steve Rigby

Additional Inspector

Clare Henderson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a much larger than average-sized primary school. The number of pupils on roll has increased significantly since the last inspection as the school has settled into its new premises.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children from service families.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average. The proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been significant changes in staffing and membership of the governing body since the last inspection.
- A large number of pupils join or leave the school at other than standard times.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, by:
  - reducing the amount of time teachers spend on explanations so that pupils have enough time to do their work and practise their skills
  - ensuring that teachers check regularly on how well pupils are doing and use this information to make sure that work is not too easy or too hard
  - ensuring that pupils know how to improve their work and have time to respond to the advice given
  - reducing the use of worksheets that are too limiting, so that pupils have more opportunities to work things out for themselves and explain their ideas in writing and how they have solved problems set for them
  - making sure the skills of teaching assistants are used well throughout the whole lesson.
- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics and accelerate pupils' progress by:
  - increasing the proportion of pupils who exceed expected progress, and accelerating the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, especially in Key Stage 1
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and develop their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects
  - raising expectations so that pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that plans to improve the progress of all pupils are clear and measurable
  - ensuring that information on the progress of all groups of pupils is used to improve their achievement
  - checking more rigorously on the quality of teaching so that staff know exactly what needs to be improved
  - improving the skills of subject and middle leaders and providing more opportunities for them to check on the quality of teaching and whether pupils are making enough progress
  - ensuring that governors have enough information to help them to check on the work of the school rigorously, particularly the quality of teaching and whether all pupils are achieving well enough, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below and often well below those typical for their age, especially in their language skills. They settle quickly and confidently due to the very caring staff, well-established routines and a stimulating well-resourced environment. As a result, children do well in all areas of their learning, especially in their reading and personal development.
- Children quickly build their reading skills due to good quality teaching and the effective early introduction to systematic phonics (the regular practising of linking letters and sounds). Pupils in the rest of the school develop their reading skills systematically. In Key Stage 1, pupils are also getting regular practice of linking letters and sounds but are catching up because previously reading was not taught as well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils are now reading with more fluency in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils continue to make uneven progress through Key Stage 1, and despite the improvements seen in 2012, pupils usually leave Year 2 with standards below those expected for their age. This is because the work they are set does not always enable them to make the best possible progress.
- Attainment rose sharply in 2012 in Key Stage 2. Thus, by the end of Year 6, pupils reached standards similar to those expected nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Current Year 6 pupils are making similar progress.
- Inspection evidence and the school's own data show that from class to class and week to week, while pupils' progress is sometimes good, at other times it slows. The consequence of this is that pupils' skills and understanding are not built up securely and systematically. Thus by Year 6 some pupils are struggling to write sentences that fully explain their ideas and are not confident in solving mathematical problems. There are also weaknesses in pupils' presentation skills.
- In Key Stage 2, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs sometimes make rapid progress when their needs are identified early, and met effectively by skilled and targeted additional support, but this is not always the case in Key Stage 1. Pupils who join the school with English as an additional language benefit greatly from the skilled staff appointed to support them.
- Pupils who are eligible for extra funding through the pupil premium have targeted support but their progress is also inconsistent across the school.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- There is much teaching that is good and no inadequate lessons were seen by inspectors. However, it is not consistently good enough across the school, resulting in pupils not always achieving as well as they should.
- There are strengths in teaching throughout the school. Staff are very caring and make sure they have positive relationships with all pupils that boost pupils' self-confidence and their eagerness to learn.
- In the best teaching, teachers show good subject knowledge and plan work that suits the learning needs and abilities of all pupils. In these lessons, teachers use teaching assistants well, helping pupils to learn quickly and build up their skills. Such lessons involve interesting, creative activities that help to motivate pupils and give them opportunities to work together and learn from each other. Pupils particularly benefit from the skilled use of equipment like the 'visualiser' which helps the teacher to share examples of good work with the rest of the class.
- In an example of the best teaching, Year 6 pupils in an English lesson were working on an exciting writing activity, imagining they were a stream flowing down a mountain to the sea. The teacher used skilled questioning, clear guidance on what good quality writing should look like and praise and reward to encourage pupils to do their best. As a result pupils were motivated

well and produced some high-quality writing such as 'I was so frustrated because no matter how hard I tried gravity made me go only one way...my poor little banks cascaded down into my clear azure water'.

- In the weaker teaching, teachers spend too much time explaining tasks and teaching assistants are not always used well, especially during the introduction of lessons. In these lessons, pupils are often asked to complete work that is too easy or too hard, resulting in not all pupils making the best possible progress. In addition, some teachers use worksheets far too often, limiting pupils' opportunities to practise their presentation skills and their ability to explain logically how they solve problems, especially mathematical ones.
- The marking of pupils' work is helpful, especially in writing, but some teachers do not provide specific pointers on how pupils can improve their work or enough opportunities to follow up any advice given. This holds back pupils' understanding of their work and the amount of progress they make.
- Pupils are not always provided with enough opportunities to use their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects, thus slowing the development of these skills.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils have positive attitudes to each other, enjoy school and feel safe. They say staff are caring and 'look after us like our mums and dads'. They say that someone is always on hand if they have a problem. 'Everyone feels safe' is a typical comment from pupils. They are courteous and well-mannered and are caring and friendly towards each other.
- A strong feature of the school is the inclusive ethos and how well all pupils get on, support each other and welcome those who often arrive at different times of the year from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. 'It's really interesting mixing with children from all over the world, we learn a lot about the lives of other people', was a typical comment made by a pupil to inspectors.
- The very positive relationships with adults ensure that pupils are keen and eager to learn and this is further supported by the improvements in attendance and punctuality. Pupils say they enjoy the many clubs and activities on offer like learning French or being a welcome buddy to new pupils. They particularly enjoy their work on the Eco-Council in looking after the environment where systems have been introduced to save electricity and to gather rain water to use around school.
- The behaviour of pupils is checked regularly and records show that any misbehaviour is dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils know what is meant by bullying and the different forms it can take and say the anti-bullying weeks really help them with their understanding. They say that, even though bullying does happen, it is rare and is quickly sorted out by staff, especially the headteacher.
- Pupils play happily and safely together and if anyone is feeling sad or unhappy they are helped by other pupils who act as playground buddies. They say that behaviour is best in lessons that provide fun and exciting work and they get a chance to work with others.
- Pupils know a great deal about staying safe and the dangers that can be posed by the internet. Parents agree that their children feel safe.
- Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now average. It is promoted well throughout the school with rewards and good relationships with parents.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- Leaders, including governors, have not taken sufficient steps to ensure that the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching are consistently good across the school. The headteacher, ably assisted by the two assistant headteachers, has successfully led and managed a number of changes since the last inspection. Staff morale is high because senior leaders have ensured that all new staff have been welcomed into the 'team' which is fully committed to improving the

school further.

- Senior leaders and governors have worked hard and been successful in improving attendance by raising its importance and through better communication and rewards. The Parent Support Adviser has been particularly successful in helping parents and families support their children and overcome the difficulties they sometimes face.
- There have been some successful changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage. The appointment of a new leader has already helped to make improvements to the quality of teaching and the progress children make.
- Although there are plans aimed at improving the achievement of all pupils and the quality of teaching across the school, these are not precise enough to help bring about the improvements needed. Furthermore, the effectiveness of planning has not been gauged fully to show whether actions have been successful.
- The progress of different groups of pupils across the school has been checked more rigorously recently but not enough has been done with the information gathered. This has resulted in underachievement being missed for various groups, including for example, those eligible for the pupil premium. Targeted support for these pupils has been provided but the leaders have not checked its effectiveness closely enough.
- Teaching is observed regularly and some good training is being provided, including the opportunity to learn from good teachers in school and in other schools so that teaching has improved. However, the recent improvements to the rigour in the way in which the performance of teachers is managed and linked to their rise up the salary scale have not had time to ensure that teachers are held fully to account for whether all pupils in their class are making the best possible progress.
- Subject and middle leaders, including those recently appointed, are starting to do a better job, but need more training to develop their skills along with opportunities for them to check on the quality of teaching and whether pupils are achieving as well as they should.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and is enriched with clubs and partnerships with local schools and schools in Pakistan with which pupils communicate via emails and letters. The school has also undertaken impressive work helping the pupils understand about the lives of others via topics on the Olympics and on African culture. The school also benefits from extensive links with local football clubs.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory guidance. The school ensures that rigorous checks are made on all staff and visitors to help keep pupils safe.
- Although a small number of parents were critical of the school, the vast majority were supportive. Indeed, the school works well with parents and this strengthens the partnership between home and school.
- The local authority has provided some effective intensive support since the last inspection which has helped the school to improve the quality of teaching and the tracking of pupils' progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are enthusiastic and supportive of the school and determined to help it improve. They have effectively ensured that the appointment of significant numbers of new staff and governors since the last inspection and the management of the high numbers of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at expected times has not disrupted learning more than could be reasonably expected. However, although they ensure that performance management is in place, they are not fully involved in monitoring the impact of this on pupils' achievement because they do not gather enough information to guide their judgements. Governors have not been robust enough in checking on the school's work, particularly the quality of teaching and the progress of different groups of pupils across the school.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105452
<b>Local authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	404993

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	464
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Maureen Kennedy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gary Schofield
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 February 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 245 7201
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 795 9362
<b>Email address</b>	admin@irkvalley.manchester.sch.uk



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