

Ickniel Primary School

Birdsfoot Lane, Luton, LU3 2JB

Inspection dates

31 January 2013–1 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress from their starting points and a large majority make better than expected progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has improved. Teaching is typically good with some that is outstanding. Teachers create an environment where all pupils are really well cared for and particularly encouraged to give increasingly of their best.
- There has been a steady rise in pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics since the last inspection.
- The resource base is managed well and pupils with hearing impairment make good progress because their needs are well provided for.
- Behaviour is outstanding in and around the school. In this highly supportive setting, relationships between pupils and adults are excellent.
- Pupils are happy at school, where they feel safe. Since the last inspection, attendance has improved and is now average.
- The driving force behind the school's recent rapid improvement has been the strong leadership of the headteacher. She has been well supported by the deputy headteacher and governors. They are determined to raise pupils' achievement and improve the quality of their learning further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teaching is good or outstanding so that pupils make accelerated progress and some tasks are not sufficiently demanding to enable pupils to reach the higher levels in their work.
- Some leaders and managers have not yet developed a rigorous enough use of data that records pupils' progress. Feedback to teachers after their teaching has been observed is not always sharp enough to ensure outstanding achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in every class led by 28 teachers including those in the hearing impairment resource base. Three of the lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with staff, groups of pupils, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of information including: the school improvement plan; the tracking of pupils' progress; and monitoring reports. They listened to pupils read and looked at the work pupils were doing in their books.
- The school's records on teachers' performance were scrutinised, as well as safeguarding policies and subject development plans.
- Responses from 41 staff questionnaires were taken into account.
- Inspectors took account of the 22 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire survey, and the views of parents and carers who responded to the school's own survey.

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Margaret Louisy	Additional Inspector
Kathleen Yates	Additional Inspector
Alan Jarvis	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school, and a large majority of pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds.
- There is specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. This consists of a hearing impaired resource base in the school with 30 places for children aged three to 11 from various parts of the local authority.
- The proportions of pupils of minority ethnic heritage, those who speak English as an additional language and those at the early stage of learning English are higher than found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, additional funding provided by the government, is average.
- The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs at school action is above average as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. Pupils' needs relate mainly to moderate learning difficulties, behaviour, emotional and social difficulties, speech, language and communication needs, autistic spectrum disorder and physical disability. The highest proportion has hearing impairment, which reflects the hearing impairment unit situated within the school.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection, a number of teachers have left the school and new teachers have joined, including five newly qualified teachers who were appointed to the school from 1 September 2012.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and accelerate the rate of progress for all pupils by:
 - planning challenging activities which are always matched to pupils' different levels of ability, especially the more able
 - ensuring that teachers do not talk for too long in lessons but give pupils ample time to undertake independent work
 - removing the variation in teaching by sharing the best practice that exists in the school
 - improving the consistency of provision across the Early Years Foundation stage.
- Strengthen leadership by:
 - developing the skills of senior leaders and managers so that they can use the information on pupils' progress more rigorously and provide sharper feedback to teachers to help them support pupils' learning more effectively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The great majority of children start school with levels of attainment that are below those expected for their age. They get off to a good start, are well taught and settle quickly into school routines.
- Standards are rising and the previous slightly lower trend in mathematics has been successfully reversed. School data show that the current Year 6 pupils are in line to reach broadly average standards this year. The progress pupils make from their starting points, including those from minority ethnic heritages and those learning English as an additional language, is good. There are times when those pupils who could do more challenging work are held back because they spend too long listening at the start of the lesson. This means they do not achieve as well in these lessons as they should.
- Children in Reception do well in improving their speaking and listening skills as a result of the many opportunities they have to talk about their activities with each other and with an adult.
- Most children's early counting skills are secure. However, across the three Reception classes, access to learning outdoors lacks consistency owing to the way the classes are sited in different parts of the school.
- Effective tracking systems have been introduced and this ensures that appropriate support is provided for those pupils at risk of underachieving. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in the main school make good progress. They receive good support in lessons and the well planned interventions carefully match their needs.
- The school's own data, including the teacher assessments, show that increasing numbers of pupils are making even better progress than previously. Even so, not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels in their work. This is because not all lessons are good or outstanding and on occasions tasks for more-able pupils are not sufficiently challenging.
- In reading, attainment is broadly average at Year 6 and pupils' progress is improving consistently because staff have done a great deal to raise the profile of reading across the school. Pupils use several strategies such as sounding out and breaking up words to help them pronounce difficult words. These strategies also help pupils at the early stages of learning English to develop reading skills rapidly and make good progress. Pupils show enjoyment in reading a range of books and texts. They read with expression and enjoy talking about the author and content of their books.
- Pupils with hearing impairment in the enhanced provision make good progress in their work because their needs are provided for well in a structured and caring environment. Those supported by the pupil premium are catching up and making better progress than previously. This is because the quality of their learning and what the school offers these pupils is improving.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching across all year groups so that almost all lessons are good or better.
- Pupils are encouraged to talk about their learning with each other and discuss how they can

improve their own work. A good example of this was seen in a mathematics lesson; pupils were eagerly discussing their answers when they were practising the doubling of numbers.

- Pupils are supported well to read widely and frequently through the whole-school programme to improve achievement in reading. Pupils at the early stages of learning English are supported particularly well so that they quickly acquire strategies to read fluently.
- Teachers and other adults create a motivating learning atmosphere and establish warm relationships with pupils so that they are keen to achieve well. This is particularly strong in the hearing impairment resource base where skilful teaching provides good quality learning experiences. Across the school, pupils cooperate well with each other, as well as working independently to complete the given tasks.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and more often than not provide comments on how well pupils have done and what they can do to improve. Pupils are increasingly encouraged to respond to teachers' comments and this helps to extend their learning.
- Teaching assistants make sure that pupils understand what they are being asked to do. They are skilled at asking questions and they support pupils' learning well. Those eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils, those with special education needs and those at an early stage of learning English benefit from high quality one-to-one and small group work.
- Planning has improved. For example in mathematics the school planning focuses on one of the '6Rs' -rehearse, recall, refresh, refine, read and reason. This means that work is matched more closely to the different ability groups. Many staff sequence their lessons in terms of 'assess, plan, teach, practise, apply and review'. However these good systems are not consistently applied across the school so that some more-able pupils do not always receive challenge at the right level.
- Although most teachers create a good balance between the time they spend explaining the learning activities and the time the pupils have to spend working on their own, some teachers talk for too long. As a result, in these lessons, teaching is not always at a fast enough pace for pupils to make accelerated progress.
- Although the proportion of good and outstanding teaching is increasing, the school needs to remove the variation in teaching to ensure that more pupils reach the higher levels in their work. The school is aware of the need to share the good and better practice that exists and has comprehensive plans in place.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils show exemplary behaviour at all times. They are proud of their school and how they each play a part in making it such a welcoming and warm environment. The pupils who attend the resource base are integrated exceptionally well into the life of the school. All pupils sign in assembly to welcome each other and the 'Sign to Sing celebration' is seen by the pupils as a high point in the school year.
 - Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and want to do well. They play happily together and there is strong evidence of mutual respect. Pupils report that they feel extremely safe in school. They are well aware of different forms of bullying and that they need to speak to an adult if they are aware of bullying. All pupils have been made aware of internet safety at a level which is
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appropriate for their age.

- Pupils understand how to keep themselves and others safe. Ways of managing unsafe situations are shared in assemblies as well as in class. The school monitoring records show that incidents of uncooperative behaviour are rare with no recorded incidents of bullying. There have been no permanent exclusions for many years.
- This school creates an atmosphere where families are well supported. Parents and carers clearly trust the way the school looks after their children and they all say that behaviour is excellent.
- Teachers have excellent strategies for managing behaviour. They hold high expectations of their pupils, who live up to these expectations extremely well.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection. The great majority attend regularly unless prevented from doing so by illness.

The leadership and management are good

- The strong partnership between the headteacher and the deputy headteacher is the driving force behind the substantial improvements that have been secured at the school since the last inspection.
 - With the governors, they have worked extremely well together to establish a vision that has motivated staff and pupils to do their best. They focus consistently on improving teaching and ensure that staff use assessment information to improve the rate at which pupils progress.
 - Accurate self-evaluation underpins future planning and the actions taken have led to good improvement, demonstrating the school's good capacity to improve further.
 - The head of the hearing impairment provision leads her team well and the teachers in the resource base effectively share their knowledge, experience and skills across the school.
 - The school's programme of training for teachers is focused on supporting teachers to develop their skills, ensuring that teaching meets the needs of all pupils. All teachers are fully aware of the school's expectations, and have the support to put these into practice.
 - Leaders observe lessons frequently to assess their quality and identify possible areas for improvement. This monitoring has been key to school improvement. However, not all managers share a common understanding of how teaching can lead to outstanding achievement. This is connected with the inconsistent rigour with which they use the data to highlight groups or individuals who are making slower progress.
 - The curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs and interests of all pupils and includes a good range of after-school activities. Pupils are taught a broad range of subjects, and are also supported effectively with a wide variety of visits and visitors into school. The development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the curriculum is a strength.
 - The local authority has provided some effective support in self-evaluation, data analysis and in strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning. They will continue to maintain a watching brief.
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■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governors support the headteacher and provide challenge to ensure that all pupils are well cared for and receive a good education. They are aware of the necessary links for teachers' pay between the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. In partnership with senior leaders, the governing body uses the pupil premium grant wisely, for example, to provide additional expertise in teaching reading and number to enable the relevant pupils to increase their progress. Governors are aware of what goes on in school, are knowledgeable about the school's priorities and how well the school does compared with others nationally. They are increasingly confident to ask challenging questions of the headteacher and senior staff. Governors are committed to see the school improve further and make good use of training to support their own development. Statutory duties are met well. Systems to safeguard and protect pupils meet requirements. The school's finances are effectively deployed and carefully scrutinised and audited.
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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

Unique reference number	109579
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	405244

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	630
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Perrott
Headteacher	Lyn Lyman
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2011
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