

Iver Heath Infant School and Nursery

Slough Road, Iver Heath, Buckinghamshire, SL0 0DH

Inspection dates 13–14 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well. Pupils' attainment is above average by the end of Year 2.
- Teaching inspires pupils to do their best. Teachers plan exciting and engaging work that moves learning on quickly.
- Teachers make excellent use of outdoor facilities such as the Forest School. These give pupils many memorable experiences, help them to develop a love of learning and bring subjects alive.
- Good use is made of support outside lessons to help pupils who are in danger of falling behind to catch up.
- Pupils work extremely hard, behave exceptionally well at all times and develop a love of learning. They greatly enjoy school and feel very safe.
- The headteacher has ensured that the school has continued to improve over the last two years. There is no complacency. The headteacher, other senior leaders and the governing body have good understanding of what they need to do next and have already made a start to tackling the remaining priorities.
- Parents and carers are very pleased with the school and support it very well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Pupils' progress is more uneven in writing than in reading and mathematics because some do not spell well enough. Not all pupils in Key Stage 1 learn to apply their knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) when spelling new words.
- Middle managers are not sufficiently involved in checking the quality of teaching and how well pupils are progressing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons, of which seven were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, members of staff and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 45 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The inspectors also read letters from parents and carers and talked to some at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, heard some pupils read, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress, planning and monitoring documents, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding information.
- The inspectors analysed 25 questionnaires from staff.

Inspection team

Mike Capper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maura Docherty

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than the average-sized infant school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds but a small number speak English as an additional language.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery and two Reception classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding given to the school for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families) is below average.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2011 and the deputy headteacher in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' spelling in Key Stage 1 by:
 - ensuring that phonics groups are not too large so that work can be pitched at the right level for all pupils
 - making closer links between phonics and spelling when pupils are writing.
- Strengthen the role of middle managers in checking teaching and the progress of pupils by ensuring that responsibility for doing this is spread more widely.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school. When they start school in the Nursery or Reception classes, few pupils are working at the expected levels for their age. Attainment rises as they get older and is above average by the end of Year 2.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children learn new skills quickly. In the Nursery, children make marks on paper, recognise some letters and the sounds they make (phonics) and accurately count small numbers. By the end of the Reception Year, children are beginning to write short sentences about, for example, owls. They read confidently for their age and add together numbers when working in the 'vets' or building bridges outside.
- Children make outstanding progress in personal, social and emotional development. Work builds well on their natural curiosity and takes excellent account of their own interest. Children very sensibly self-select where they are going to work and show very good independence.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in most areas, although attainment in writing is slightly lower than in reading and mathematics. Pupils write enthusiastically and present their work neatly, but their spelling is not always accurate. Some lack confidence in applying their knowledge of phonics to help them spell new words or to check that words have been spelt correctly.
- Speaking skills are especially strong by the end of Year 2. Older pupils are very articulate and talk confidently both in small and large groups. Pupils read widely and make sensible selections when they use the library. In mathematics, pupils explain clearly how they solve problems and have good calculation skills.
- The school ensures that all pupils do equally well. The gap between the attainment of pupils who benefit from the pupil premium and others varies from year to year as numbers are small. In 2012 at the end of Year 2, eligible pupils were attaining about two terms behind their classmates in both English and mathematics. The gap is smaller in the current year as fewer pupils have special educational needs and they are making the same good progress as others.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs quickly acquire new skills. Most reach the nationally expected Level 2 by the end of Year 2, reflecting their good progress over time.
- Pupils with English as an additional language attain at least as well as others by the end of Year 2. They make particularly good progress in developing skills in speaking English.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is rarely less than good and some is outstanding in all year groups. This ensures that all pupils learn quickly and make good progress in lessons. Across the school, teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and manage their behaviour well. They have high expectations of what pupils should achieve. They plan work that successfully meets the needs of different pupils, including the more able, those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs, ensuring a good level of challenge for all groups.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, all adults give children sensitive support throughout the day. Teachers make good use of the well-resourced outdoor area and focus well on language development including improving both speaking and reading skills. Children get many opportunities to explore their own ideas, for example working together to build a 'crocodile den' or devising their own surveys that build high effectively on earlier work about the morality of killing butterflies to make collages.
- In Key Stage 1, work is consistently fun and engaging. Theme weeks bring subjects alive and teachers link these well to pupils' everyday learning so that all work is purposeful. Pupils are very clear about how to improve. They are highly motivated to do well by procedures such as the 'Picture Challenge' in one class where they strive to complete their work so that they get the

next 'block' to complete their picture.

- Speaking skills are taught especially well in Key Stage 1. Pupils get many opportunities to talk about their work and when they do, teachers focus closely on improving vocabulary. Older pupils enjoy making presentations to their classmates. This helps to improve their confidence at speaking to an audience and gives them the chance to celebrate their successes.
- Teaching is not outstanding because there are inconsistencies in the way that spelling is taught in Key Stage 1. While teachers introduce phonics systematically, some teaching groups are too large and all pupils, whatever their ability, then learn the same sound. On occasions, teachers do not link well enough pupils' phonics knowledge to their everyday writing so that there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise and refine their ability to spell new words.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' exemplary attitudes contribute extremely strongly to their good learning in lessons. Pupils try hard all of the time and work without fear of failure because, as one said, 'You learn by making mistakes.'
- Behaviour in and around school is, without fail, impeccable. Pupils are polite and courteous and show great sensitivity to the needs of others. When working in the Forest School (an outdoor area where teachers promote a sense of adventure, teamwork and problem-solving skills) or taking part in activities in the tepee (in school as part of a theme week), pupils understood why good behaviour is so important and they follow school rules very carefully.
- Pupils feel very safe. They say there is no bullying and that 'If we fall out the grown-ups quickly sort it out.' Pupils know what to do if they have a worry and have a secure understanding of e-safety for their age.
- Rates of attendance have been improving and are broadly average. The school is successfully working with a very small number of families where absence is still too frequent.
- The school fosters good relationships between pupils and tackles discrimination rigorously. There is a delightful atmosphere on the playground as pupils from different year groups play together happily.
- Pupils keenly take responsibility. School councillors are pleased that they are listened to and, in areas such as improving playground resources, the fruits of their efforts are greatly appreciated by other pupils.
- Parents and carers are very pleased about how well the school enables pupils to develop a love of learning. Pupils agree, making comments such as 'I never know what we are going to do next' and 'Everyday is fun.'

The leadership and management are good

- The relatively new headteacher has built successfully on the school's strengths over the last two years. The school is not resting on its laurels and there have been many new initiatives such as the introduction of the Forest School and the strengthening of links between subjects. These have been well considered and have ensured continued rapid school improvement.
- Checking of provision by the headteacher is thorough. Development planning is based on an accurate understanding of the current priorities. These are being tackled well. The school has a good track record for improving teaching. Good use has been made of additional training in areas such as 'philosophy for children' to enhance teachers' skills.
- The headteacher makes extremely good use of data to identify pupils who are in danger of falling behind, including those who are eligible for the pupil premium. They receive timely support to help them catch up. Good use is made of the pupil premium to employ additional staff to support eligible pupils in small groups or individually. This ensures that the gap between the attainment of these pupils and others closes quickly.

- Middle managers are keen and enthusiastic but they are insufficiently involved in monitoring teaching and checking the progress of different groups. This makes it difficult for them to get a clear enough picture of the key strengths and weaknesses in the areas they manage.
 - The local authority provides good support to the school, visiting annually to check that good performance is being maintained.
 - The outstanding curriculum greatly enriches pupils' learning and contributes extremely effectively to their personal development. Activities such as the regular theme weeks teach pupils about life beyond Iver Heath and develop their creativity and imagination very well. Work both in and out of lessons gives pupils many opportunities to take responsibility and to learn values such as respect, kindness and perseverance.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides good challenge to other school leaders. Governors use training judiciously to improve their skills and to support new governors. They have a good understanding of how well the school is performing in comparison with others because the headteacher gives them very clear and detailed information about attainment from year to year. They supplement this information well through their own visits to school, although they do not always follow these up with written reports so that findings can be fully shared. Financial planning is very thorough. The pupil premium is used well to close the gap for eligible pupils and governors ensure that good teaching is rewarded financially. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are very thorough.
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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	110343
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	412005

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keren Beddows
Headteacher	Judy Baker
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2008
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