

Isbourne Valley Primary School

Didbrook, Cheltenham, GL54 5PF

Inspection dates 25–26 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils are making good progress and achieve well from their varying starting points, year on year.
- The positive experiences that children enjoy in the Reception class mean that they have a good start to their time at Isbourne Valley Primary School.
- Teachers have high expectations of the pupils; the quality of teaching is good, with well-planned lessons that are interesting and make good use of the natural beauty surrounding the school.
- Teaching assistants work well with pupils; they are skilled and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning through the support that they provide.
- Pupils are inspired by the themed approach to their learning; they find the work enjoyable and this was evident in the lessons observed.
- All pupils clearly enjoy school and take part in lessons with enthusiasm. Their behaviour is good in and around the school, with evidence of positive working relationships.
- Pupils feel safe in the school: they report the grounds are safe and they are aware of different types of bullying and report they know what to do if an incident should arise.
- There is a strong leadership team including governance, which is truly committed to moving the school forward. Together they have brought about improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. They appreciate the individual care and the opportunities that are offered through clubs and visits.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' marking does not always consistently inform pupils how well they are doing and how they can improve their work and teachers do not give them enough time to respond to their comments.
- The teaching in some lessons provides pupils with few opportunities to work on their own because introductions go on for too long.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector observed teachers and teaching assistants teach 12 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the executive headteacher. This included several short visits to lessons and observations of small groups of pupils being taught independently. An assembly was also observed.
- Pupils were heard to read in Year 2 and Year 6, a meeting was held with school council representatives and break times were also used to talk to pupils around the school.
- The lead inspector spoke to governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, members of the school management team and a representative of the local authority. These meetings included discussions about the analysis of data, documented information and records provided by the school, including records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching, tracking pupils' progress as well as documents relating to safeguarding pupils.
- The inspector also met with some parents and carers at the start and end of the school day.
- The inspector took account of the responses of 26 parents to the online Parent View questionnaire during the inspection and of the 13 questionnaires completed by school staff.

Inspection team

Sarah Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Isbourne Valley Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school organised over two sites. There is a service-level agreement between this school and Winchcombe Academy, the local secondary school, and the executive headteacher leads both schools.
- The executive headteacher joined the school in September 2012. He is supported by two deputy headteachers from Winchcombe Academy who work closely with all staff and members of the governing body.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional income for looked-after children, those known to be eligible for free school meals and for children from service families, is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has the Healthy Schools Plus Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - making sure that marking shows pupils how well they have done, what they need to do to improve and giving them time to improve their work
 - adapting the pace and challenge of the learning so that pupils do not spend too much time listening to whole-class introductions and have more time to work on their own.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Reception children make good progress from broadly expected starting points. The successful system used for checking progress in Reception shows that this is improving well, preparing children well for their future learning in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- In 2012 although the attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 dipped, it remained above average. Leaders have introduced new strategies to raise standards. Pupils currently in Year 6 have made good progress and are on track to achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress, similar to other pupils in English. However, their progress in mathematics is not quite so strong. To address this, mathematics teachers from the secondary school have provided additional support to raise the standards.
- Pupils known to be eligible for pupil-premium funding make the same good progress as other pupils. This is because the school successfully uses the funding to provide additional staffing so that groups are smaller and pupils receive more individual support, helping progress to accelerate.
- More-able pupils benefit from plenty of challenge, which is a strength of the school, so that the proportion of pupils exceeding expected levels of attainment is growing at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils read regularly and enjoy reading. They are taught how to use their knowledge of phonics (the sounds letters make) to read 'tricky' words.
- The use of 'working walls' for pupils, where relevant information to the lesson is put up on the wall, helps to enhance their learning as well as share ideas with each other.
- Pupils communicate well and speak clearly and with expression when talking about their work.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers use the assessment data on pupils to plan lessons effectively and to make sure the work is matched to the different abilities within the group. This was evident in a mathematics lesson in Years 5/6. Work provided is interesting and pupils are certainly motivated by the themed approach to their learning.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use a range of strategies effectively to support the pupils with their learning. This includes effective questioning and peer work such as 'talk partners' as observed in a Years 3/4 lesson on journalistic writing.
- Teaching in Reception is good with teachers and teaching assistants having a good understanding of the learning needs of young children and assessing them well.
- Displays of pupils' work in classrooms and corridors are of a high standard and inspire pupils.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning by supporting pupils in lessons and withdrawing small groups, as well as effectively leading the end-of-the day story in Reception with children hanging onto every word.
- The atmosphere in the school is very positive; warm relationships and consistently applied routines support the learning. Pupils are encouraged to work together and share ideas. This in turn helps pupils learn to accept each other's opinions, and promotes their moral and social development effectively.
- While there is evidence of some good marking, there is too much inconsistency in how teachers tell pupils what they have done well, what next steps in learning they need to take, and in finding time for them to respond to their teachers' comments.
- Reading homework is regularly set and, occasionally, written tasks to strengthen pupils'

knowledge and embed their understanding.

- On a few occasions, the introductions to lessons continue for too long, and too much sitting and listening leads to some pupils losing interest, and as a result, progress slows down.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are extremely polite and courteous to all; they show each other respect both in class and during break times. Teachers set a good example of how to respect each other and this contributes to good relationships between pupils, respect for others and celebrating each other's achievement and success.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are extremely positive; they work well and support each other's learning. They are enthusiastic and rise to the challenges presented to them.
- Groups of pupils said they enjoy school very much, they like the close-knit community and they report that teachers help them with their learning.
- Attendance is improving and the school makes sure that all pupils attend regularly.
- Pupils' behaviour at playtime is outstanding; they have access to a range of equipment that they take responsibility for. Pupils of different age groups play together particularly well, enjoying the access to the grounds they have. Children on the infant site were very keen to develop their 'forest school' skills at break time, creating bug homes and demonstrating their understanding of nature which they had learnt about in lessons.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in the school and this is supported by parents' views. A letter sent in during the inspection said, 'I feel proud our son goes to Isbourne Valley School and seeing other children and staff within the school environment I know he is going to a happy, friendly and nurturing school.'
- Pupils' knowledge of internet safety is good and they also have a very good understanding of the different types of bullying and say any bullying is unusual and that adults would sort it out quickly. They know that the school does not tolerate any discrimination.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher, senior leaders and governors have a shared vision and strive to make the school the best it can be, adopting a clear and collaborative approach. The Chair of the Governing Body has worked very closely and effectively with the school to support the changes made.
- The leadership team has put in place a very effective tracking and monitoring system to support teachers in setting targets for the pupils and planning lessons that meet the needs and challenge all pupils, whatever their ability or age.
- The school's documentation is clear, including a rigorous self-evaluation that is central to the work of the school, with realistic timelines. While systems are rigorous, the charm and small school community remains, where pupils feel valued, safe and prepared for the next stage of their education. The school promotes their equal opportunities well. During the inspection Year 6 pupils visited Winchcombe Academy as part of the induction process when they transfer in September.
- There have been more opportunities recently for teachers to improve their practice, working with neighbouring primary schools and Winchcombe Academy. Teachers are very keen to move the teaching from good to outstanding and want to know where the improvements can be made, accepting constructive criticism as a means of moving forwards.
- The school is working effectively with local schools and the local authority. This has successfully contributed to teachers' professional development and helped to improve pupils' achievement.

- The themed approach to the curriculum is exciting. Pupils say they enjoy the work. In Years 1 and 2 pupils were using 'beetbot' robots and computers to learn about direction, while exploring their topic 'Dinosaurs and all that rubbish'.
 - Pupils have good opportunities for spiritual, moral and social development both in lessons and assemblies. During the inspection, as pupils were practising for their end-of-term play for parents they worked together well, sharing and developing ideas.
 - Parents report that the facilities are improving and that the executive headteacher has worked hard to make sure all areas of the school are safe, with new fencing and gates. Parents are very pleased with the school. They report staff are approachable and at all times inclusive. One parent wrote to the lead inspector, 'Parents' evening is a genuine joy, teachers delight when sharing challenges and developments, giving useful tips for continuing the learning at home'.
 - The management of teachers' performance has been used well to raise expectations and to check the targets set for teachers. Governors are appropriately involved in and kept informed about this process.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a clear knowledge of the school and provides effective support and challenge. The Chair of the Governing Body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development within the context of the school and the community it serves and the needs of the pupils, in relation to similar schools. The governing body makes sure that statutory responsibilities are met, such as safeguarding requirements being fully in place and effective. The governing body is very clear on the targets for the school and how these can be met. Governors have a good understanding of the school including the management of teachers' performance, the implementation of the national 'Teachers' Standards' and how these affect salary progression. They understand what the school is doing to reward good teachers and tackle any underperformance. Governors monitor spending carefully and are aware of how the school is using the pupil-premium funding to improve pupils' achievement. Governors make sure they are kept up to date with training to improve their effectiveness, especially when holding leaders to account.
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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	135437
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	412875

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	67
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ashley Fawcett
Headteacher	Neil Hall (executive headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2010
Telephone number	01242 621341
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