

Irlam Endowed Primary School

Chapel Road, Irlam, Manchester, M44 6EE

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2014

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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement has improved to a good level since the previous inspection. In the 2013 recent Year 6 national tests, pupils attained average standards in reading and writing and well above average standards in mathematics.
- These results showed that in reading and writing all pupils made at least the expected progress. Progress in mathematics was particularly good.
- Throughout the school, increasingly more pupils are making rapid progress in reading and writing because of the increased impetus by leaders and governors to improve achievement and teaching in these aspects.
- The vast majority of teaching is good and a notable amount is outstanding. This ensures that most pupils achieve well and develop a genuine love of learning.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They apply themselves well to their work and rarely misbehave. They have a good understanding of how to spot dangers and keep themselves safe.
- The headteacher is resolutely focused on ensuring that pupils achieve their potential and experience exciting and valuable learning experiences. She is well supported by a strong and able leadership team and an effective governing body.
- The curriculum is thoughtfully planned to provide stimulating learning experiences in and outside school. Physical education has a high profile and promotes pupils' well-being and achievement in this subject particularly well.
- The needs of pupils in the language resource base are met exceptionally well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- By the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement in reading and writing is not as strong as it is in mathematics.
- A minority of pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to struggle when blending letter sounds to help them read.
- A minority of teaching is not effective enough in enabling pupils to learn well and make the progress of which they are capable.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. The headteacher also undertook a joint analysis of pupils' work with an inspector.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, analysed their work and checked the school's data about their attainment and progress.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and other school leaders and eight governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone discussion was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors held two formal discussions with pupils and spoke to others informally in lessons and at breaks and lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's own evaluation of its work and documents relating to teachers' performance, the school's safeguarding procedures, pupils' behaviour and their attendance.
- Inspectors took account of 72 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke to a number of parents informally as they brought their children to school.

Inspection team

Margot D'Arcy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Terry Bond

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to most primary schools.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school has a resource unit for eight pupils aged four to seven who have specific language and communication difficulties. Most of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. No pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- In most years, a notable number of children who have not attended the school's Nursery join the school's Reception class.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement in writing and reading by the end of Year 6. School leaders should do this by:
 - ensuring that the work pupils are given is always sufficiently challenging to enable them to learn well and make good progress
 - ensuring that the minority of pupils at Key Stage 2 who are still struggling to fully understand and use phonics (the sounds that letters make) when reading and writing receive intensive support to enable them to quickly master this skill
 - ensuring that teachers always provide clear direction to teaching assistants and check on the effectiveness of their work with pupils
 - ensuring that all teachers provide quality feedback to pupils about their learning and how they might improve, in line with the best practice evident in some parts of the school
 - sustaining senior leaders' rigorous focus on improving teaching so that it is all at least good.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children start in the Nursery and Reception classes, their skills are generally below those typical for their age, particularly in aspects of communication and literacy. During their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children learn well in all areas of their work. Progress in developing early reading and writing skills has shown a marked improvement this year. The children are rapidly gaining secure skills in using phonics to read and write. By the end of the Reception Year, the children are well prepared to begin Key Stage 1.
- In Years 1 and 2, the good teaching of reading and writing is ensuring that pupils build well on their earlier learning. Pupils who are in danger of falling behind are quickly identified and good quality support is provided to help them catch up. The impact of good teaching and additional support was clearly evident in the most recent (2013) end of Year 2 assessments, which showed significant improvements in reading and writing from the previous year. Standards in writing rose to broadly average, while standards in reading were slightly above average.
- From their starting point on entry to the Reception Year, Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in mathematics. By the end of Year 2, their attainment is broadly average. Pupils have a secure understanding of number and other mathematical ideas by the time they begin Year 3.
- The increased focus on improving pupils' reading and writing skills is evident in the work of most pupils at Key Stage 2. As at Key Stage 1, increasingly more pupils at this key stage are making rapid progress in these areas and becoming competent readers and writers.
- Pupils at Key Stage 2 enjoy reading for pleasure and to find information. Even the weakest readers have positive attitudes. Good quality additional support has helped these pupils become more competent, but a few still struggle to use phonics effectively to help them read and write.
- By the end of Year 6, attainment in mathematics is well above average. In the most recent (2013) Year 6 tests, all pupils made the expected progress and over one third did even better.
- Test results in reading and writing are not yet reflecting the rapid improvements evident for most pupils currently in the school. Pupils attained broadly average standards in these areas. However, while all pupils made the progress expected of them from their individual starting points few did better than this.
- The rapid improvements in reading and writing evident for most pupils currently in the school are the result of a major overhaul in the way reading and writing is taught and the higher expectations school leaders have set for what pupils should achieve.
- The majority of pupils, including the most able, are completing work that gets the best out of them. The most able pupils are fluent readers and capable writers. In Year 6, these pupils are relishing the challenge achieving the highest levels in this year's mathematics tests.
- The pockets of underperformance still evident in the school have been identified by senior leaders. Appropriate action is being taken to address these. Consequently, equality of opportunity for all pupils to succeed and make progress is not being compromised.
- Throughout the school, gaps between the attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils are closing. The attainment of this group of pupils in the most recent Year 6 tests was about six months behind that of other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, but was higher than pupils in this group across the country. There was no significant difference between the rates of progress of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils in any subject.
- In relation to their prior attainment and capabilities, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Pupils in the language resource base come on leaps and bounds because specialist support and learning activities are well focused on their specific needs. Pupils' language and communication skills improve and their confidence grows.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- The quality of teaching is typically good and there are examples of outstanding teaching in all phases. In the last year, improvements to the teaching of reading and writing have boosted the progress of most pupils currently in the school. However, the learning and progress of some pupils in lower Key Stage 2 are not as rapid because teaching is not as strong.
- Typically, teachers plan and organise lessons very well. They ask thoughtful questions of pupils of all abilities to assess their understanding and frequently check on pupils during lessons to make sure they are not finding the work too easy or too difficult. More challenging work is set for pupils who are progressing quickly and additional help given to those who need it. Teachers reflect on how well pupils have learned and make amendments to the next lesson to maintain the momentum of good progress.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is strong. Teaching staff have secure knowledge of how young children learn best and are skilled in moving learning on, both in the activities they have planned and those that children choose for themselves. Basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics are continually promoted. During the inspection, children eagerly donned outdoor satchels containing writing equipment and were keen to make notes about what they did and noticed. Others were fascinated as the teacher helped them understand how a tape measure could be used to compare distances travelled by toy cars down a water chute.
- Phonic skills are taught very well during the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Teachers plan this work to match pupils' different stages of development, making good use of skilled teaching assistants to lead groups so that progress for all pupils is rapid.
- The impact was clearly evident in Year 1 where pupils worked independently on a range of challenging literacy tasks. The most able wrote four to five well structured questions relating to things they wanted to know about how their bodies worked and then used information books to find the answers.
- Pupils' books show that across the school, reading and writing skills are continually developed through topic work. For example, outstanding teaching in Year 6 and Year 4 ensured that pupils had excellent opportunities to reinforce and extend key literacy skills while learning about the life and culture of the Aztecs and the Tudors. Year 6 pupils applied a wide range of reading skills very effectively to interrogate different information texts and Year 4 pupils learned how to write more complex sentences by adding connectives.
- There is good teaching of mathematics, including problem solving, and regular opportunities for pupils to apply mathematical skills to real-life problems. For instance, Year 5 pupils calculated change from different amounts they had been given to make catalogue purchases. Numeracy skills are also promoted well across different subjects. In Year 2, the teacher capitalised upon mathematical opportunities in a geography lesson to teach pupils how to use Venn diagrams to sort photographs of the town and country.
- Well trained teaching assistants make a good contribution, including leading additional learning programmes, to help pupils who have fallen behind to catch up. For the most part, teachers make very good use of the teaching assistants assigned to them.
- Where teaching is not yet good in Key Stage 2, pupils are not given work that challenges them to do their best and lesson time and teaching assistants are not used to best effect. In one lesson, some pupils only began writing five minutes before the lesson ended, so were unable to complete the work set or develop the skills identified as the objective of the lesson. Teaching assistants were not given enough direction about how to promote the best possible learning for the groups they were supporting and the impact of their work was not checked.
- Occasionally, the progress of pupils in Key Stage 1 is not as rapid as it could be. This occurs when they spend too much time completing tasks in which they are already competent before moving onto the most challenging work.
- Most teachers provide pupils with good quality feedback to help them understand how to improve. However, while there is some excellent practice in the school, not all feedback is as clear as it needs to be to improve pupils' learning.
- The majority of teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) well to support

their teaching and provide pupils with frequent opportunities to use ICT across all aspects of their work. This includes physical education, where there is outstanding, specialist teaching that promotes excellent development of pupils' skills, healthy competition and team spirit.

- As a result of outstanding teaching, in which the teacher's expertise in understanding the needs of pupils with language difficulties is used exceptionally well, pupils in the language resource base make great strides in their learning and develop positive attitudes to school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are proud of their school and particularly appreciate the wide range of trips and residential visits that are provided to enhance their learning. They say that they feel very lucky to go to this school where teachers work hard at making learning fun.
- Different groups of pupils, including pupils of different abilities, are just as positive about the work they are given. The most able pupils confirm that they find their work challenging and interesting, while pupils who sometimes struggle with aspects of literacy talk animatedly about different books and authors they enjoy and say that they like writing.
- Most pupils believe that behaviour is good and that misbehaviour occurs only occasionally and by a minority of pupils. During the inspection, pupils behaved very well in lessons and showed very good respect for the adults who worked with them and for each other. Pupils' well developed social skills support effective learning in a range of situations, for example, when they are required to listen carefully to teachers, work as part of a team or get on with tasks by themselves.
- Pupils' enjoyment and good effort is clearly evident in their work. For the most part this is well presented, but the standard is not as good in lower Key Stage 2. While none of these pupils misbehaved when inspectors watched lessons, it was clear that some became bored and distracted, particularly while waiting to be told what to do next after finishing work quickly.
- Behaviour in the playground and in the dining hall at lunchtime is of a high standard.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of most types of bullying and of the risks that they might face in their everyday lives. They have a good understanding of how to use technology, including the internet, safely. Pupils were totally clear that they have trust and confidence in the adults in the school to keep them safe and deal with any worries that they might have. This view is also shared by pupils' parents, who spoke in glowing terms about how the school cares for their children; all of responses on Parent View reflected satisfaction with this area of the school's work.
- Attendance remains average, but rates have improved in line with those nationally since the previous inspection. The school has good procedures to monitor and promote good attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. Her drive to improve pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are also promoted by other senior leaders. The headteacher is supported by a very effective deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher who are excellent role models for teaching. Other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator and the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage, also lead by example. They too make a very effective contribution to school improvement and maintaining the high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Senior and middle leaders are all involved in various ways in checking the effectiveness of the school. Formal observations of teaching, 'drop-ins' to lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils are all undertaken. Senior leaders have a very clear picture of the quality of teaching. They make sure that teachers receive support and training that are carefully aimed at improving the skills they need to develop.
- The progress of all groups of pupils is tracked and analysed meticulously. The findings are discussed with teachers at regular pupil progress meetings. Pupils' progress is the determining

factor in decisions that are made with the governors about teachers' salary progression.

- Staff morale is high. Staff share the headteacher's view for the future for improvement and her commitment to ensuring that pupils receive exciting, first-hand, learning experiences. Pupils' and parents' views verify the vibrancy of the curriculum. While the basics have a high profile this is not at the expense of quality provision in other subjects and excellent enrichment activities, including residential visits to France and London.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is truly enhanced during their time at the school and they leave well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Additional funding, such as that for the pupil premium and primary school sport, is used well to enhance teaching and learning. For example, the additional sports funding is being used to sustain high quality specialist teaching, enhance other teachers' skills and promote pupils' physical well-being and understanding of healthy lifestyles.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this effective school. Recently, the school's improvement officer has worked with governors to enhance their skills in challenging school leaders about the school's performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very supportive of and committed to the school. The impact of recent training is clearly evidenced in the well documented questions governors are now asking about the school's performance. These draw well on achievement data, including that of groups, such as pupils in receipt of the pupil premium.
 - Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching. They know that staff training is planned to correspond with the school's priorities and individual staff targets. They have rigorous systems to set and monitor the performance of the headteacher. Governors make effective use of the school's performance management system to reward good teaching and tackle underperformance.
 - Governors are proud of the school and its place in the community. They visit often and enjoy the chance to speak to pupils and visit lessons.

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	105939
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	439533

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Callaghan
Headteacher	Jill Da Costa
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2009
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