

Inkberrow First School

Main Road, Inkberrow, Worcester, WR7 4HH

Inspection dates 4–5 March 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make rapid progress and leave with standards that are very high for their age.
- Teachers assess what pupils know and can do accurately, and use the resulting information to set work that is perfectly matched to their ability.
- Teachers give pupils high-quality feedback, both in lessons and books, so they know exactly what they need to do to improve their work.
- 'Inky the Owl' is used exceptionally well to instil outstanding attitudes to work in all pupils.
- The school provides a very well-rounded education for all its pupils, so they develop spiritually, culturally, morally and socially equally as well as they do academically.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite, caring and have a strong sense of right and wrong.
- The school is an exceptionally safe place to learn so pupils feel totally secure.
- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has forged a team of staff who are always seeking to improve their teaching.
- Staff who are new to the school receive training of the highest quality, so that outstanding teaching and achievement are maintained over time.
- Governors play a very strong part in leading the school and checking that other leaders and managers are doing all they can to improve pupils' education.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, including two that were seen jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector listened to pupils reading and analysed the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, a representative of the local authority and members of the governing body.
- The inspector took account of the 28 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. He also spoke to parents during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own information on pupils' progress; the school's evaluation of its performance; records relating to attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

David Driscoll, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average, although none currently have a statement of special educational needs.
- Few pupils are eligible for support through the pupil premium. This is additional funding for pupils who are looked after by the local authority, known to be eligible for free school meals or have a parent serving in the armed forces.
- The headteacher is a Local Leader of Education. She is supporting improvement in several local schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Explore more topics in mathematics that may interest girls, and use the findings to motivate them and accelerate their progress in mathematics to match that of the boys.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children join Reception with skills, knowledge and understanding that are typical for their age. They make outstanding progress as they move through the school and leave Year 4 with standards that are much higher than in most other schools. On average, pupils are 18 months ahead of national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 4.
- By the end of Year 4, pupils are avid readers, both of fiction and non-fiction. Their writing is beautifully presented and free of spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. Pupils apply their mathematical skills to solve complex problems. Standards are equally as high in other subjects, such as science and information and communication technology.
- Standards at the end of Reception have been above average in recent years. The accuracy and use of information from assessments have been improved, so standards were well above average in 2013 and continue to improve. Children who in September had difficulty holding a pencil, for example, are now writing short, legible sentences. The more-able children are writing longer pieces with accurate spelling and punctuation.
- Results of the phonics check at the end of Year 1 fell to average in 2013. The school responded by completely reorganising the way pupils are taught to read in Year 1. Almost all pupils currently in Year 1 have already met the expected standard, and others are very close to doing so.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 are consistently well above average. Reading books are very well matched to pupils' abilities, so they are continually learning how to read new words as they are moved from one book to the next.
- 'Inky the Owl' is the school's emblem, and the first thing that any visitor sees on entering the school. Inky's values are central to the school's work on promoting the best possible attitudes to learning and have a big impact on pupils' achievement. Teachers and teaching assistants have used him to teach pupils how to be good learners. In mathematics, for example, Inky tells them that they need to persevere when solving problems. In Year 3 pupils were given the task of finding the mass of three individual cats if they knew the combined masses of cats 1 and 3, 2 and 3, and 1 and 2. All worked systematically through the problem and were not daunted by its difficulty.
- Very few pupils have special educational needs that require support through school action. This is because pupils receive support that is tailored to them as individuals, so none fall behind. The very few that are supported at this level do have highly specific needs that are not related to slower progress.
- Disabled pupils and those supported at school action plus make progress equally as rapidly as their classmates and leave with high standards. The school works with a wide range of outside agencies and is very quick to act when an individual pupil needs support that cannot be provided from within school.
- Leaders have used the pupil premium funding very well to provide extra lessons and one-to-one support where it is needed. The numbers of eligible pupils are too small to comment on any differences in attainment at the end of Year 4 without identifying individuals. However, in all years and subjects they make the same outstanding progress as others.

- The only notable difference in progress between groups of pupils is in mathematics, where girls do not do quite as well as boys in Years 1 to 4. Girls do not like to spoil the presentation of their work with errors, so are more wary of making mistakes than boys. They also do not find topics such as finding patterns in the type of planes shot down in the Second World War as interesting as the boys. The school is already working with a good degree of success on the first issue, and is starting on the second.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teachers mark pupils' books frequently and with a high degree of accuracy. Each piece of work is praised where the pupil has done well, but teachers also point out exactly what the pupil needs to do to improve it. Pupils respond exceptionally well to the guidance and make rapid progress as a result.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are assiduous in correcting their spellings. By Year 4, pupils are told bluntly early on when their spelling is not good enough, but it is not the teacher's role to spell for them; they have to do it themselves. The results are clear in pupils' books, where, by Christmas, such errors are almost unknown because pupils routinely check spellings carefully using a dictionary.
- From Reception onwards, pupils are taught to think for themselves and not rely on the teachers to do things for them. 'I can't see' said one little girl in Reception. 'Then move somewhere that you can,' came the simple reply from the teacher.
- The results of tests and marking are analysed in great detail and used to set work for individual pupils that they find difficult but achievable if they try their very best. Each pupil has their own list of spelling and reading words in Year 1 that is unique to them and changes as soon as they are secure in their understanding. The same is true for lists of sums and problems to be solved in mathematics.
- In Reception, the day's assessments are used to plan activities for the following day that address any weaknesses identified in the performance of individuals. Children are very carefully guided towards activities that they enjoy and from which they can quickly learn. One group, who were learning to recognise groups of dots to aid counting, made 2 x 3 grids of 'spots' for 12-spot ladybirds and were soon starting to learn about multiplication.
- The guidance that pupils receive in lessons is equally as good as that which they receive in their books. Teaching assistants are adept at quickly identifying any who are struggling, and then questioning the pupil so that they think through the task for themselves. Teachers quickly challenge imprecise answers. For example, Year 4 were describing the character of Tom in *Goodnight Mr Tom* and explaining how the author portrayed his character in this way. One group suggested he was 'neurotic', so the teacher quickly asked them to explain what they thought it meant and how it differed from words such as 'worried' and 'downcast'.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils work exceptionally hard in lessons and concentrate for long periods. They quickly learn to work on their own initiative, choosing the resources they need to help them from the wide range that is available in each classroom.
- Pupils take a great pride in their work and are keen to show it to visitors. They talk enthusiastically about their achievements, pointing out where they have improved their work.

- Pupils very much enjoy coming to school. Their attendance is above average and improving. Pupils are highly punctual and keen to get down to work as soon as they enter the classroom.
- At lunch and playtimes pupils show a different side to their character. They look out for younger pupils in the playground and make sure that everyone has a friend. Lunchtimes are more like a company restaurant than a school canteen. The hall is packed with pupils sitting in mixed age groups quietly chatting to one another. There is not a single spot of litter or food debris to be seen.
- Pupils look up to their staff. They respond immediately to instructions and are very respectful both towards staff and visitors. Pupils' manners are exemplary.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Parents rightly feel that pupils are very secure in school. The pupils themselves feel very safe and have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. By Year 2, for example, they know not to give out personal details on the internet and to 'think before you click'.
- Leaders go way beyond what is required in order to keep pupils safe. The safeguarding governor, for example, visits the school to check the arrangements to support individuals who may be vulnerable to harm and provides a full report to governors on the outcomes. Fire drills are conducted without warning at different times and circumstances, for example at lunchtime, to make sure procedures are totally secure.
- Bullying and any form of discriminatory or bad language are unknown. There are very few instances of even minor misbehaviour. All staff promote a strong understanding of right and wrong, and respect for others. Parents, pupils and staff all see the school as 'one big happy family'.
- The school has a very strong record of working to improve the behaviour of pupils who have previously been excluded, so that they continue their education and make the same outstanding progress as others.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school's leaders, including governors, are always seeking ways to improve. They look for the smallest of weaknesses and take very effective action to make the school the best it can be. Weaknesses in presentation and information and communication technology identified at the previous inspection are now strengths in the school's work.
- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has led to a culture where all staff want to continuously improve their performance. There is no fear of being observed as a teacher, so any member of staff or the governing body is free to watch lessons whenever they want to. This means that teachers are constantly receiving feedback from others, including teaching assistants, on what went well and how teaching can be improved further.
- All teachers are also subject leaders. They are highly effective because they gain a deep insight into the effectiveness of the teaching of their subjects by visiting lessons and checking work in books. All staff also visit each other's lessons to learn from one another and see particularly outstanding examples of teaching.
- The leader responsible for physical education has drawn up and implemented an impressive set of actions to make use of the primary sports funding. Staff have been trained, more

competitions are being entered and clubs have been set up for those less likely to take regular exercise. Participation rates have already improved, but many of the initiatives are long-term and the full benefits will not be seen until the end of the year.

- Training for new staff is of the very highest quality, especially for those who are new to the profession. A mentor works alongside them and timetables are coordinated so that the mentor and mentee are free at the same time. This approach means that when changes in staffing occur, they do not disrupt the progress made by pupils and outstanding teaching is maintained.
- Nowhere has the training for new staff been more successful than in Reception, where the new leader has maintained the very best of what went on before, but also developed new approaches that have improved achievement to the same high level as in the rest of the school.
- Inky permeates all that the school does. He (or she, no one is quite sure) is widely seen by parents as one of the school's great strengths. His values are consistently reinforced throughout the school day by all staff so pupils' attitudes to, and enjoyment of, learning blossom.
- Other aspects of the school's work are equally as strong, especially in promoting equality and tackling discrimination. Pupils are taught about life in towns and cities through, for example, visiting schools in Birmingham. There are very strong ties with a school in Zambia, so pupils learn about the lives of children in other countries. The hall is converted to a 'spiritual zone' where pupils ask and reflect on thought-provoking questions, such as 'what does God feel'. This well-rounded education leaves pupils exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their schooling and for life beyond school.
- The local authority provides only limited support for this highly effective school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are exceptionally well informed about the school and play a strong role in driving improvement. The data governor analyses the school's performance, so governors do not have to rely on the headteacher's interpretation of results. Governors are quick to challenge any perceived weaknesses, such as the fall in Year 1 phonics results in 2013, and to find out what the headteacher is doing about them. They are well aware of the strengths and areas for improvement in teaching because they visit lessons to gain first-hand evidence for themselves.
 - Governors are very clear about how teachers' performance is managed and what is being done to reward good teaching. They have a good track record of supporting the headteacher when firm action has been necessary in order to address weaker teaching.

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	116689
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	431541

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Heidi Fear
Headteacher	Heather Thomson
Date of previous school inspection	9 January 2012
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