

# Imperial Avenue Infant School

Imperial Avenue, Leicester, LE3 1AH

**Inspection dates** 3–4 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Senior leaders are not rigorous enough in checking and then improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Teaching and learning are not consistently good or better across the school.
- Attainment is improving since the last inspection but remains below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Despite the recent improvements, attainment in reading remains well below expected levels.
- Teachers do not give sufficient focus on developing pupils' fluency and understanding in reading.
- Teachers do not always check that pupils are following up the guidance given to them on how to improve their work.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their extended and creative writing skills.
- Teachers do not provide sufficient support to encourage pupils to extend their vocabulary.

### The school has the following strengths

- Standards and progress have begun to improve.
- More able pupils have made better progress than their peers.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters represent) is very effective.
- Children make a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes and make good progress from low starting points.
- As a result of a successful external review of governance, governors have made good improvements in carrying out their roles and responsibilities.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school and show respect for others. Pupils and their parents agree that they feel safe in school.
- Parents have positive views about the school and value the close links that exist with the teachers.
- Attendance has improved because of the concerted actions taken by the school leaders.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 15 lessons and also observed pupils working in smaller groups. They observed two of the lessons jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors heard pupils read and checked their reading records.
- The inspection team held meetings with some members of the teaching staff.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors.
- Many discussions took place with pupils, both formally in groups and informally in lessons and at lunchtimes.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 53 parents from Ofsted’s online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors held conversations with parents at the start and end of the day. The inspectors also analysed the 32 responses to the questionnaire for staff.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents. These included: the school’s own data on pupils’ recent and current progress; planning and monitoring documentation; reports on the quality of teaching over time; records relating to behaviour and attendance; the school’s improvement plan; documents relating to safeguarding; and the minutes of various meetings, including those of the governing body.

## Inspection team

Nigel Grimshaw, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David West	Additional Inspector
Linda Lyn-Cook	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, for whom the school receives the pupil premium, is in line with the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided to schools for the education of looked after children and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Almost half the school population are from a broad range of minority ethnic groups. The largest group, about one sixth of the number on roll, is from other White backgrounds, mainly eastern European. Almost one-third of the pupils speak English as an additional language. These proportions of minority ethnic groups and pupils who speak English as an additional language are above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils arriving at and leaving the school part way through their education is low compared to other schools.
- The school's early years provision in the Nursery class is part-time and in the Reception class is full time.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To improve the quality of teaching by:
  - undertaking more regular and rigorous checking of classroom practice
  - making more effective use of action plans to provide individual staff with specific targets for improvement to achieve within set time scales
  - making sure that the teachers' marking is consistent and that pupils follow up on their next steps for improving their work
  - providing more opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding practice.
- To improve achievement, particularly in reading, by
  - senior leaders making more rigorous checks on the progress of all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their reading and communication skills and extend their vocabulary
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to write longer pieces of work in a range of subject areas.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders have focused on improving the quality of teaching since the last inspection and have been successful in eradicating any consistently inadequate teaching and outcomes for pupils. However, teaching remains variable and leaders have not ensured that it is consistently good across the school.
- Senior leaders are now monitoring classroom practice on a more regular basis but the resulting targets for improvement set for the teachers are not specific enough and are not reinforced by short-term time scales for follow-up checks.
- The overall attainment and progress of the pupils have improved since the last inspection but for some groups, such as the disadvantaged pupils, the improvements have been slower and less consistent. Checks on the progress of the groups of pupils have not been rigorous enough to identify consistently the learning needs of individual pupils.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are now being well supported by the middle leadership team, including the Early Years leader and the subject leaders for English and mathematics. A new system for tracking the attainment and progress of all pupils has been introduced and the middle leaders' analysis of this is now having an impact on the current improvements. The school leadership has developed an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the recent actions are impacting on the improved quality of teaching and the improving outcomes for pupils. The school is demonstrating sufficient capacity for improvement.
- Since the previous inspection the school has received comprehensive support from the local authority's school improvement adviser and consultants. This has also been a contributory factor in the school's year on year improvements in the outcomes for pupils.
- The school leaders have reviewed the way that subjects are taught across the school in line with the new National Curriculum and this has been shared with parents through the school's website. New themes have been developed that appeal to the interests of the pupils and particularly the boys. Consequently, the pupils are motivated and engaged in their work, as was very evident during the inspection when the 'Pirates' theme was proving very popular with the pupils.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted well by the school through assemblies, a planned programme of personal and social education, and through the displays around the school. As a result pupils work and play together co-operatively and supportively and they show respect to others. The school has a consistent approach to behaviour management through the school rules that pupils largely abide by in their school lives. The teachers built on the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the recent general election to organise a similar 'voting system' within school whereby the pupils could decide on preferred school menus. This proved very successful and gave the pupils a voice in the decision making in school. Pupils are becoming well prepared at this young age for life in modern British society and have a positive and developing appreciation of the importance of British values.
- The pupil premium is largely spent on providing small group and individual support for the disadvantaged pupils. This focused support is now proving effective because staff have been well-trained. This academic year the progress being made by these pupils is above expected levels and is impacting on narrowing the gaps in attainment with their peers. The gaps are narrowing in all core subject areas but not sufficiently quickly over time in reading and writing. The school is aware that these areas need more focused monitoring.
- The school is using the primary sports funding effectively. The teaching of physical education and games is now higher profile. The use of sports coaches has led to improvements in practice and also in the confidence of the teaching staff to teach sports effectively. The pupils have also gained a greater understanding of how to live their lives more healthily and the importance of a healthy diet.
- The programme for the checks on teachers' performance is fully in place and records are kept diligently.

However, the guidance given to staff, and the targets set for their improvement, are too generalised and lack specific detail. The regular checks on progress towards the targets are not frequent enough to be effective in accelerating the improvements in teaching and learning, including, in some cases, moving the quality of teaching and pupil outcomes from good to outstanding.

- The school's links with parents are a clear strength, both from the high number of responses on Parent View and from discussions with parents during the inspection. Parents are very positive indeed about the school and the vast majority would recommend the school to other parents. One parent said, 'I can't fault this school. My child's progress has been amazing and their support for me and the family has been fantastic. I couldn't ask for more.'
- The arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are very effective. Checks on members of staff and other people working in school are rigorous and fully up to date. Checks on the security of the school site and risk assessments for school visits are completed regularly. Statutory requirements are fully met.
- The senior leaders and school governors have worked together to make sure that the school's provision promotes equal opportunities for all pupils and that any of the rare examples of discrimination are tackled promptly and effectively.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Following the previous inspection the governing body underwent an external review and a new Chair of Governors was elected. A training and support programme was provided for all governors by the local authority. This successful programme has led to good improvements in governors' knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities. New committees have been set up with a clear focus on monitoring the effectiveness of the teaching and learning within the school.
  - Governors now have a good awareness of the pupil performance data and the quality of teaching and consequently are clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the actions being taken to improve practice and provision. They are more actively involved in their own monitoring roles through their subject links, and in challenging senior and middle leaders and checking on the school's effectiveness. Governors are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and have an appreciation of the links between classroom performance and incremental salary rises. However, sometimes the senior leaders do not provide governors with sufficient detail to ensure they have all the information they need to make informed decisions.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** is good

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils and the large majority of parents who commented during the inspection agreed that behaviour is good.
- Behaviour in lessons is almost always good, especially when the theme work is well planned by the teachers to interest and motivate the pupils and there are sufficient resources for all the pupils to access. Consequently, the pupils are engaged in their work and find it enjoyable. They settle quickly at the start of lessons and have positive attitudes to their learning. They are keen to answer questions and do their best work. The large majority show pride in the presentation of their work. Occasionally pupils' progress and achievement in lessons is hampered by poor organisation of insufficient resources which distracts them from concentrating on their work, resulting in slight dips in behaviour.
- Behaviour is good around the school. Pupils show respect for one another and for adults. They show courtesy and good manners at all times. Pupils like the school rules and the guidance they provide. They are clear about the behaviour management systems and the expectations these provide and staff apply these consistently across the school.
- Attendance has improved and is now much nearer the national average. The number of persistent absentees is reducing rapidly as a result of the actions being taken by the school and the good links with the local authority's education welfare officer. There have been no permanent exclusions since the previous inspection.

## Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils and every parent who commented on Parent View agreed that this is the case.
- From an analysis of the school's records, and from discussions with pupils and parents, bullying is rare and the pupils are confident that teachers will help them and address any issues effectively. Anti-bullying work has been undertaken in lessons and this has led to developments at playtimes, such as the 'big buddy' system to encourage peer support.
- Pupils know how to stay safe when using computers at school or at home because they have been given clear guidance in school. They have also been given good advice on how to stay safe outside the school in the wider community.

## The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is improving over the time since the previous inspection and the inadequate teaching and outcomes for pupils have now largely been eradicated. However, the teaching and learning are not yet consistently good and outstanding outcomes remain rare. Teachers have not yet benefitted sufficiently from observing outstanding practice in other establishments.
- The school has rightly focused on improving reading. The beginning of the school day is now very effective after recent re-organisation to start the day with a guided reading session. This creates a purposeful and quietly focused start to the pupils' learning. From listening to the pupils read it is clear that the teaching of phonics has been very successful in the early years and across the whole school. In fact, results on the phonics screening check in Year 1 place the school well above the national averages. Pupils are able to decode any unknown words very effectively. However, their reading lacks fluency because they are over reliant on the use of phonics and some insist on sounding out even the most common of words, like 'and'.
- When they enter the school the vast majority of the children have a limited range of vocabulary and require a focus on introducing them to a wide range of challenging new words to use in their conversation and in their writing throughout their time in school. However, this is not consistently in place and there is consequently a lack of challenging vocabulary in most writing books checked during the inspection.
- Sometimes teachers plan work for pupils to complete on worksheets that restrict their opportunities to write longer pieces of work and limits them to one word or short sentences. They are therefore not having enough time to develop fluency and creativity in their work.
- Teachers' expectations in mathematics have been raised with the school now planning work in line with the new National Curriculum. Teachers plan work that challenges the pupils in most mathematics lessons. Pupils have responded well to this and progress in mathematics is consequently better than in reading and writing.
- Teachers often plan work that the pupils find enjoyable and motivating. This was very evident in a Year 1 mathematics lesson where pupils were actively involved in a range of tasks to improve their positional and directional language. They were using laptops and control technology, amongst other resources, and were totally engrossed in their work. They maintained their concentration and made excellent progress on their understanding. The pupils were clear about the expectations of what they had to complete by the end of the lesson but this is not universally the case across the school.
- Marking is another area that has improved and the new policy has brought more consistency. However, although teachers are generally giving pupils advice on how to improve their work, they are not then checking consistently that the pupils are following up on this advice on a regular basis.

**The achievement of pupils requires improvement**

- Children enter the school in Nursery or Reception with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. Many of the children have very significant weaknesses in reading, writing and mathematics and in their social skills.
- Since the last inspection the progress made by the pupils in the early years has improved well and this year almost half the children will leave Reception with a good level of development and ready to tackle the work in Year 1, compared to less than a quarter in 2013.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 now have a better base of knowledge on which to build but the variability of teaching means that, although improving, the progress they make in Years 1 and 2 is not so consistently good.
- When they leave the school at the end of Year 2 the pupils reach standards of attainment below the national averages and particularly so in reading. They are about half a term behind in mathematics and writing and a term behind in reading.
- The attainment of the disadvantaged pupils has been variable over the last two years. Two years ago the pupils were half a year behind their peers and two terms behind other pupils nationally in reading, writing and in mathematics. In 2014 the gap increased to a year behind other pupils nationally in reading, writing and in mathematics. Compared to their peers within school the gap had widened to just over a year in mathematics and just under a year in reading and writing. However, the school's analysis clearly showed that a high percentage of these disadvantaged pupils had either complex social needs or significant learning difficulties or both. Based on the school's own pupil progress tracking data, in this current year the gaps have narrowed again and the disadvantaged pupils are within a term in mathematics and half a year in reading and writing.
- The most able pupils have made much improved progress in the current academic year. From the school's pupil progress information the results in 2015 at Level 3 will show significant improvements and will be in line with the national averages for 2014. The improvements in reading are the most pleasing for the school leaders because they have invested in more challenging reading material for these pupils and have raised the levels of expectations from the staff.
- Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve levels of attainment in line with their peers because they receive good quality support from trained teaching assistants from when they start at the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are also well supported and achieve often good progress and reach levels of attainment in line with similar pupils nationally.

**The early years provision is good**

- Leadership and management of the early years are good. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement and have action plans in place to make further progress. The curriculum and learning opportunities mean that the children have wide, varied, creative and stimulating experiences in both the indoor and outdoor settings. Good attitudes and behaviours for learning are developing well at this early stage of their school lives.
- The learning environment is safe and secure. Safeguarding procedures are fully in place and staff have the relevant paediatric first aid qualifications. Routines and expectations of behaviour are set in place early and the children respond well.
- Children are attentive because they are interested in the activities planned for them. Adults show a depth of knowledge and understanding that means they guide children's learning well, responding to the particular needs of all groups and abilities. They accurately assess progress so that they can address

misunderstandings and plan for the next steps in learning.

- The progress that the children make from low starting points is improving year on year since the previous inspection and is now good. Almost half will reach a good level of development this year but this remains well below national averages. Progress is good for all children except those with very complex social needs and significant learning difficulties.



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	120014
<b>Local authority</b>	Leicester
<b>Inspection number</b>	462008

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	327
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Emma Harrop
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jenny Pickering
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 June 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01162 824503
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