

# Ilfracombe Infant and Nursery School

Marlborough Road, Ilfracombe, Devon EX34 8JL

## Inspection dates

27–28 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Outcomes have declined since the previous inspection. In particular, pupils who have low starting points do not make the progress they need to catch up.
- Too few children make good progress in the early years, particularly in writing. Consequently, they are not well prepared for Year 1.
- Teaching does not provide sufficient levels of challenge for pupils in writing, mathematics and the wider curriculum. This limits pupils' progress including the most able.
- Governors and senior leaders have not developed precise systems for checking the effectiveness of the school's work.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment, although improving, remains inconsistent. In particular, weaknesses occur in the assessment of subjects in the wider curriculum.
- Although improving, historically, governors have not held senior leaders to account for the progress that pupils make.
- Leaders' actions to improve attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, have not had enough impact. Too many pupils are absent from school too often.
- Although improving, the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is too slow.

### The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher's fervent drive for improvement has been effective.
- The school engenders a love of reading. Consequently, standards in reading by the end of Year 2 are good.
- Pupils appreciate the rich variety of extra-curricular clubs, trips and visits that the school offers.
- The school offers a caring and inclusive community. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. Parents value staff approachability.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning, particularly in Year 2, have led to improved progress.
- Strategies to develop pupils' mathematical language and their ability to problem solve have been effective in raising standards.

## Full report

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels, by ensuring that:
  - the curriculum supports all pupils to learn successfully, systematically building on skills, knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects
  - governors hold leaders to account robustly through close monitoring of the school's work including the impact of expenditure of additional funds
  - leaders make close checks on pupils' attendance and act swiftly to bring about sustained improvement, in particular for those pupils who are disadvantaged and are persistently absent from school
  - leaders ensure that activities planned for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities help pupils to make the progress they are capable of.
- Raise the achievement of pupils by ensuring that:
  - teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly in the early years
  - teachers in the early years make best use of what the children know, do and can understand to ensure that they make good progress and are ready for Year 1, particularly in writing
  - teaching across the school provides the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, with the challenge and support they need to make rapid progress, particularly in writing and mathematics
  - teachers provide greater support for disadvantaged pupils, those with low starting points and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so that these pupils make the progress they are capable of
  - robust assessment informs teachers' planning to raise pupils' achievements including in science and the wider curriculum.
- Improve pupils' behaviour, personal development and welfare by ensuring that:
  - attendance improves for all pupil groups and persistent absence reduces for disadvantaged pupils
  - governors closely check the school's administrative systems in line with safeguarding policies so that all incidents or concerns are recorded accurately and communicated swiftly.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium and governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The school has experienced considerable changes in staffing since the previous inspection. This has hampered school improvement. The most recent leadership regime has prompted significant changes for the better. The executive headteacher leads with a strong moral purpose. This has galvanised staff to work together to improve outcomes for pupils. However, progress has not been rapid enough to overturn the legacy of underachievement completely.
- Leaders have not yet developed fully effective systems for recording and monitoring accidents, poor behaviour and incidents that occur in school. Although the school ensures that pupils are safe, school policies and procedures are inconsistently applied. Consequently, the governing body do not have a well-informed view of this aspect of the school's work.
- The leader of special educational needs has been effective in implementing systems for the effective identification of pupils' needs. She liaises effectively with other agencies to gain advice on how best to meet pupils' needs and has effective plans in place. However, due to some weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning, support for pupils is not as effective as it could be. Consequently, the expenditure of additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not leading to strong enough gains for some pupils.
- Senior leaders have been successful in developing systems for the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress. However, these are not working well enough to enable pupils to make the progress they are capable of, especially in the early years. Leaders recognise this and have plans for the Nursery and Reception classes and the Reception and Year 1 teachers to work closely together to agree standards.
- In the past, leaders have not been precise enough in evaluating the impact of the expenditure of pupil premium funding. Current leaders spend the funding on a range of different strategies. There are positive signs of improvement. However, where teaching is weak, differences are not diminishing quickly enough between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.
- The local authority intervened in 2014 to broker temporary leadership. Since the current executive headteacher's appointment, the school has engaged well with local authority support. School leaders have taken on advice. Effective guidance from the local authority has steered the school back on course. Consequently, outcomes for Year 2 in 2017 reflected a much more positive picture than over the last few years. However, some of the improvements are not yet embedded. It has taken time to make up for previous deficiencies.
- Recently developed curriculum programmes have raised the profile of subjects such as history and geography. Pupils are taught about diversity, other cultures and religions. Visitors into school and trips out of school enhance the curriculum and effectively support pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. This work has also been effective in increasing pupils' engagement and enjoyment. However, leaders recognise that although plans now ensure coverage of all curriculum areas, there is still work to do to ensure that teachers plan activities which support pupils' progress in all

subjects, particularly for the most able pupils.

- The current executive headteacher has not shied away from difficult situations. She has tackled weaknesses in teaching robustly. Consequently, the quality of teaching is improving. However, inconsistencies still exist. The systems to hold teachers to account for the quality of teaching do not focus sharply enough on outcomes across the subjects for different pupil groups.
- Senior leaders have strengthened the quality of teaching this year with high-quality training, some new appointments and redistribution of teaching staff. The executive headteacher has articulated her vision clearly. Senior leaders new to their role are receiving effective support and guidance to carry out their roles. Similarly, middle leaders have clear plans which focus on the right aspects of school improvement.
- The current executive headteacher has ensured that there is a comprehensive and diverse range of extra-curricular activities on offer for pupils. Leaders make effective use of the additional sports funding. The school offers a wide range of sporting activities for pupils. Qualified gymnastic coaches provide effective training for teachers so that the quality of teaching is good. The executive headteacher's passion for encouraging healthy lifestyles has extended to the school securing free tennis facilities and equipment for families.
- Parents value the good communication that exists between them and the school. They report that staff are approachable and open. Parental concerns are dealt with speedily and effectively.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have relied too heavily on the information provided by senior leaders and have provided insufficient challenge in some aspects of the school's work. Consequently, the decline in standards which saw pupils' progress plummet came as a shock. However, the governing body federated in 2015 has been proactive in tackling issues. This work is beginning to bear fruit as seen in the much-improved end of Year 2 outcomes in 2017.
- Although governors know how much funding is available to support pupils in receipt of pupil premium or for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, they are unclear about which strategies to improve pupils' progress are most effective. The governor linked to special educational needs rightly identified that now the identification of pupils' needs is in place, there is a need to evaluate the impact of additional funding.
- Governors' decisions are leading to improvements. Staff morale is good. The recruitment and development of key senior and middle leadership posts are leading to improvements in curriculum provision and pupils' outcomes.
- Governors have taken action to enhance the safety of the Nursery environment. It is now a bright, well-maintained and attractive space in which children can learn. Safeguarding arrangements have been enhanced. Similarly, governors have managed improvements to the school grounds including the development of a forest school area.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff, parents and pupils agree that the school offers a safe and inclusive environment.
- All staff and governors receive regular up-to-date training. Safer recruitment procedures are effective. Staff are well informed about safeguarding matters and can articulate the school's policies and procedures. However, governors do not make sufficiently robust checks to ensure that school policies are followed. Governors too easily accept reports from senior leaders about pupils' attendance, for example. Governors' minutes reflect little challenge.
- There are effective systems in place to secure the well-being and safety of pupils. Although record-keeping and leaders' and governors' evaluation of the success of initiatives is weak, leaders work diligently to engage wider expertise to offer timely support for pupils.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good across the school, or within some subjects. As a result, some pupils do not secure good progress over time.
- Teachers' use of assessment to help identify pupils' next steps, although improving, is not consistently good. Work in books and pupil outcomes show that progress in some classes and for some groups of pupils is weaker than in others. For example, work in books shows that pupils identified as being confident in using numbers to 20 when they left Reception were not. However, Years 1 and 2 writing books reflect more accurate teacher assessment.
- Teachers do not always respond quickly enough to pupils' misconceptions and mistakes. Consequently, pupils repeat mistakes and this slows down their learning. For example, a number of pupils make number reversals in mathematics and poorly formed letters in their writing hamper the quality of the work produced.
- Although it is improving, not enough of the teaching has enabled disadvantaged pupils and those with low starting points or those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to diminish the differences in their progress with other pupils sufficiently.
- Teachers now have a clear focus on improving standards. For example, leaders expect teachers to set activities in mathematics which require pupils to think deeply and to apply their mathematical skills in new contexts. However, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high across the year groups and classes. Too often, tasks that are set do not challenge the most able.
- Leaders have developed a consistent approach to the teaching of writing. This has seen standards in writing improve to in line with the national average by the end of Year 2.
- Teachers' focus on developing pupils' thinking and learning skills is having a positive impact. As a result, pupils can self-correct and are willing to 'have a go', which is starting to improve outcomes more rapidly for some pupils.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use effective questioning to develop pupils' skills in understanding the texts they read. Strategies to involve parents in reading have been

successful. Pupils read daily and share books enthusiastically.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Although staff are vigilant in recording issues of poor behaviour or accidents that take place, leaders and governors do not pay sufficient attention to check the impact of any actions taken. Consequently, accidents reoccur or incidents of poor behaviour are sometimes repeated and lessons are not learned.
- Where pupils have received additional support when they have become upset or angry, the school's records do not reflect a thorough approach to evaluating the effectiveness of actions taken. Consequently, governors cannot make considered decisions around the allocation of resources to support the needs of the most vulnerable pupils.
- Staff are effectively trained in safeguarding procedures and are attentive to any changes which may indicate a pupil is vulnerable. No stone is left unturned in supporting pupils and their families to receive the support they need.
- Pupils say that they know that they can trust staff to listen to them and they are encouraged to speak out when they have concerns. They say that bullying is rare and where there are fall-outs, 'teachers help to sort it out'. Pupils know how to stay safe.
- Extra-curricular activities and trips out of school help pupils to gain an understanding of the community beyond the school and promote tolerance and respect towards others.
- Leaders identified that the presentation of pupils' work was not always good enough, so they implemented a new handwriting policy. Work in books suggests that pupils are taking greater care to present their work neatly. Some teachers have exceptionally high standards and this is reflected in the pride most pupils take when presenting their work.
- The school's work to develop pupils' understanding of what it is to be an effective learner is beginning to take hold. Inspectors observed pupils in Year 2 reflecting on the accuracy of their work and self-correcting.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' attendance is below the national average. Although leaders are vigilant in checking that pupils are safe when they are not in school, they are not rigorous enough in ensuring that pupils attend regularly. Too many holidays are authorised in term time. Governors do not provide sufficient challenge.
- Too many disadvantaged pupils are absent from school too often. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is below others nationally and below that of others in the school. It is not improving quickly enough.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are good when they are appropriately

challenged by the work set. Inspectors observed little low-level disruption in classes. Some of the Year 2 pupils demonstrated particularly good attitudes towards their learning.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Too few children make good progress from their starting points in the early years. Consequently, some children are not ready for Year 1.
- Children who leave the early years not ready for Year 1 do not catch up quickly enough. Outcomes at the end of Year 1 in 2017 showed that less than one third of pupils who entered Year 1 who had skills, knowledge and understanding below that expected of their age left Year 1 having made enough gains in their learning.
- Outcomes at the end of Year 2 in 2016 showed that too few pupils compared to those nationally reached expected standards. This did not represent good progress from pupils' different starting points. Although there is a much-improved picture in 2017, too few pupils with low starting points make the progress they need to catch up.
- The academic outcomes for some groups of pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are below average in a range of subjects. This is because there are inconsistencies in the quality of support and rigour of assessment. However, there is an improving picture. Swifter identification of need is leading to a better match of activities for these pupils.
- Although still below last year's national average, more pupils reached the high standard of greater depth in mathematics in 2017. Leaders have worked closely with the local authority to develop teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics. As a result, outcomes, particularly for middle-ability pupils, are improving.
- Too few pupils achieved the high standard of greater depth in writing in 2017 at the end of Year 2. End of Year 1 outcomes in 2017 and work in current books reflect an improving picture. More pupils are currently on track to achieve the high standard than previously. However, the most able writers do not achieve their potential.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils who met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics checks in 2016 dipped for the third year in succession. This did not represent good progress from pupils' starting points. However, differences between the disadvantaged pupils and others are diminishing. The differences are diminishing in writing and reading by the end of Year 2. In mathematics, the difference between outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and others nationally has widened.
- Work in books shows that where a pupil has been absent, there is inconsistency in the approach to help them to catch up. Work in books shows that there are sometimes gaps in pupils' learning caused by them being absent.
- Pupils do not regularly apply their skills to write in depth when they learn in subjects other than in English and mathematics. Consequently, their writing skills are underdeveloped, in particular for the most able pupils.
- Overall attainment and progress are improving by the end of key stage 1. In particular, more middle-ability pupils are achieving expected standards by the time they leave Year 2.

- Attainment and progress in reading have improved. Many pupils, including the most able, are now on track to meet appropriately challenging targets. More pupils are reading fluently and confidently. Accurate assessments at the end of Year 1 outcomes in 2017 showed that just under a quarter of the pupils were assessed at working at the high standard of greater depth.

## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- The early years provision requires improvement because children do not make enough progress in their Reception Year. Too few are well prepared for the next stage in their education when they enter Year 1.
- Leaders' assessment systems to track and analyse children's progress are not sufficiently robust. Leaders do not use information gained from the notes they make on what children can and cannot do with sufficient precision. Consequently, on occasions, they do not act quickly enough to improve rates of progress for some pupils.
- Leaders' use of the additional pupil premium funding in the early years has not supported good progress for all disadvantaged children. Too few pupils who are disadvantaged make the progress they are capable of given their starting points. In 2017, only half of the children who attract pupil premium funding reached the standard expected, a good level of development, by the end of Reception.
- Too few of the children who received additional support for special educational needs and/or disabilities made good progress, although pupils' needs are clearly identified and plans are put in place. Teachers and leaders do not systematically check the effectiveness of this work. When this occurs, progress slows. However, speech intervention programmes are effective in supporting pupils who have speech and language needs.
- The new leader to the early years has established a routine whereby adults from the Nursery and Reception classes share their planning in a bid to raise expectations. It is too early to see the impact of this work. Similarly, the leader has recognised the need to work more closely with other Nursery providers.
- Work in books and learning journey records suggest there are weaknesses in the provision of writing opportunities. A local authority adviser had previously identified this as an area for improvement. Areas are labelled and there is a rich print-environment, however, there is little evidence in last year's books and in children's learning journeys of good progress in writing. Too many children left the early years in 2017 unable to form simple sentences or make plausible attempts in spelling.
- There is effective provision for personal, social and emotional development. Leaders have established effective routines so that children know what is expected of them. High expectations for behaviour, particularly in the Nursery, ensure that children quickly develop confidence and learn to cooperate with others.
- Parents value the good lines of communication and are positive about their children's start to school. Indoor and outdoor learning spaces are safe. Children move safely around these areas and show respect for equipment. Teachers routinely carry out risk assessments to ensure that equipment is safe.



## School details

Unique reference number	113155
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10033151

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Nursery and Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	389
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nadine Sampson
Executive headteacher	Claire Grant
Telephone number	01271 863462
Website	<a href="http://www.ilfracombe-inf.devon.sch.uk">www.ilfracombe-inf.devon.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:adminilfracombe@goodilf.org.uk">adminilfracombe@goodilf.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	May 2008

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- In 2014, the local authority brokered support for the school, seconding the current executive headteacher from her permanent position as headteacher of Goodleigh Primary School. In 2015, Goodleigh Primary School and Ilfracombe Infant and Nursery School federated under one governing body. The executive headteacher spends approximately three days in this school and two days in Goodleigh Primary School. Three assistant headteachers are responsible for the day-to-day management of the school in the executive headteacher's absence.
- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The school has a governor-run nursery.

- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and are supported by the school is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils who are supported by a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- Ilfracombe Nursery and Infant School is not required to publish information about the government's floor standards as these are not applicable.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in short visits to lessons across the school, some of which were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Discussions took place with the executive headteacher, senior leadership team and three members of the governing body. The lead inspector met with middle leaders. She conducted a telephone call with a representative of the local education authority and another call with the school's education welfare officer.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including school tracking documents, external reports and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspection team carried out a scrutiny of the quality of pupils' work in books which senior leaders dropped into at some points over the inspection.
- The views of pupils were gathered during lessons and lunchtimes. An inspector listened to pupils reading to school staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at lunchtimes, breaktimes and around the school.
- Inspectors met with parents to consider their views of the school at the beginning of both days.

## Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Aisha Waziri

Ofsted Inspector

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Matthew Shirley

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