

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



5 February 2018

Mrs Judith Baker
Headteacher
Iver Heath Infant School and Nursery
Slough Road
Iver Heath
Iver
Buckinghamshire
SL0 0DT

Dear Mrs Baker

Short inspection of Iver Heath Infant School and Nursery

Following my visit to the school on 23 January 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have built an effective team of leaders who share your ambition for continued improvement. You have an accurate understanding of the school's many strengths and where further improvements are needed. Your action plans set out clearly the steps you and your staff are taking to continue to improve standards. Staff work very well together as a united team, sharing good practice and learning from each other. Your partnership with parents and carers is a strength and parents are overwhelming in their praise of the school. They greatly value the good education their children receive and the caring, nurturing approach of the staff. As one parent commented, 'I have been so lucky to have my children go through this school. I could not be happier.'

The school is a happy, thriving community. Relationships are warm and supportive and everyone shares your ambition for children to 'be the best that they can be'. Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They work and play happily together and have highly positive attitudes to learning. Pupils take great pride in their achievements and present their work beautifully. Governors support the school well and visit the school regularly. However, governors do not yet hold leaders to account fully, for example by asking challenging and searching questions about pupils' progress.

You have taken swift and decisive action to address the lower-than-expected standards at the end of key stage 1 in 2016. You have developed and refined the school's approach to assessment and teachers now have a more accurate

understanding of the expected standards. The new mathematics scheme of work supports teachers' planning and has strengthened the teaching of mathematics. These changes are helping to improve outcomes. As a result of your effective action, in 2017 standards in key stage 1 rose and were broadly in line with the national average. In addition, a greater proportion of the most able pupils are now achieving the higher standards. However, you acknowledge that sometimes the most able pupils are not moved on to harder work in mathematics as quickly as they could be.

You are also continuing to improve the outcomes for children in the early years. The proportion of children who attained the expected 'good level of development' has risen steadily over the past three years. Nevertheless, in 2017, standards at the end of Reception were still lower than average. You are, rightly, continuing to focus on improving outcomes in the early years, particularly in writing which is currently not as strong as other areas of learning.

Although there has been some recent variability in standards, you have maintained the school's many strengths identified at the previous inspection. Standards are rising and current pupils are making good progress. Pupils' exemplary behaviour and attitudes have also been maintained. You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement highlighted by inspectors during the school's previous inspection. You have restructured the leadership team and middle leaders are now organised into teams. These leaders are taking increasing responsibility for monitoring the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. They work well together, sharing their knowledge and expertise and learning with each other. Leaders greatly value this professional dialogue with their colleagues.

In key stage 1, pupils' spelling has improved. Pupils spell accurately and draw upon their good knowledge of phonics when writing new words. Pupils are now taught in smaller groups. This enables teachers to check pupils' understanding carefully and to pitch new learning appropriately to meet pupils' needs and abilities. You have also improved other aspects of pupils' writing, including their handwriting. The impact of your effective work to improve spelling and handwriting in key stage 1 can be seen in pupils' high-quality writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school.

Good-quality, timely training ensures that all staff are knowledgeable about their responsibilities and know just what to do if they have any concerns. You keep careful records of any concerns about pupils and, where appropriate, refer these on to outside agencies. You know pupils and their families well and work effectively with many different agencies to provide early help and support for them. You provide helpful guidance for families to help keep children safe when using the internet. The recent e-safety meeting for parents was very well attended. Pupils feel entirely safe and secure at school and parents and staff are unanimous in their

views that pupils are kept safe at Iver Heath.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we agreed to focus on some aspects of the school's work, including: how well pupils are learning in the early years, in particular in writing and mathematics; how well the most able pupils in key stage 1 are achieving in writing and mathematics; and how well leaders and governors are continuing to improve standards.
- As a result of good teaching, children in the early years make good progress in their early mathematics skills. Opportunities for children to learn about number and shapes abound. During the inspection, children enjoyed finding numbers hidden in the sand and jumped enthusiastically along the giant number line, naming each number they landed on. Children also learn about the shapes around them and some can name the different properties of shapes. As one child explained, 'I know this is a square because it has four sides. They are all the same.' Adults skilfully guide children's learning, posing well-judged questions to help develop children's understanding.
- Children's language skills are developed well through the many speaking and listening activities on offer in the early years. Relationships between adults and children are warm and nurturing, enabling children to confidently join in with these activities. Children enjoy acting out and telling familiar stories, taking on the role of different characters. Teachers also plan many activities so that children can develop their hand control. For example, children are encouraged to use the giant tweezers to pick up small objects. Staff have also created many stimulating 'hand-control' resource packs for parents to use at home with their children. However, we agreed that currently, while children are making good progress overall, they are not achieving as well in writing as they are in other areas of learning. In addition, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write.
- As a result of good teaching, the most able pupils in key stage 1 are achieving well in writing. Teachers challenge these pupils to make their writing interesting, for example by using different types of sentences and punctuation. Pupils write with increasing control and many write imaginatively. During the inspection, pupils were inspired to write about the Great Fire of London. In our visits to classes, we could see that many of the most able pupils had written high-quality diary entries about this historic event. One pupil wrote, 'I could taste burning on my tongue, I wished I could help those poor people.'
- The new mathematics scheme is having a positive impact and provides a supportive structure for teachers to plan from. The majority of pupils are making good progress in their calculation skills. Pupils also regularly apply their skills to solve simple word problems. However, challenge for the most able key stage 1 pupils is more variable. In our visits to some classes, we could see that sometimes the most able pupils were not moved on to more challenging questions as quickly as they could be.
- You and other leaders have responded swiftly to the dip in standards at the end of key stage 1 in 2016. You have made good use of the sound advice and

support from the Bucks Learning Trust (BLT) and other external partners. Your action plans address the steps you are taking so that there is no loss of momentum in your drive to improve standards. Governors are very aware of the previous dip in outcomes in 2016 and the need to sustain this journey of improvement. They support you and other leaders well. However, scrutiny of governing body minutes reveals that, currently, governors do not hold leaders to account as well as they could. For example, they do not yet ask searching questions about pupils' attainment and progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders' good work to improve outcomes in the early years is continued and strengthened by ensuring that children have more opportunities to practise and apply their writing skills
- the most able pupils in key stage 1 are more consistently challenged so that a greater proportion achieve the higher standards in mathematics
- governors ask more searching and challenging questions so that they have an even clearer understanding of pupils' progress and can hold leaders to account more fully.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Buckinghamshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sue Cox
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Together with you, I visited all classes to look at learning and talk to pupils about their work. I met with you to discuss the school's self-evaluation and met with a group of leaders to discuss the progress pupils are making and plans for improvement. I met with three governors, including the chair of governors, and held a telephone conversation with the school's BLT adviser. I also met with a group of pupils from Year 2. I reviewed a range of documents including safeguarding information, the school's pre-employment checks on the suitability of staff to work with children and other school policies and documents. I considered the views of parents through the 53 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the responses from the 10 members of staff who completed the Ofsted staff questionnaire. I also met parents on the playground at the start of the school day.