

Iver Heath Junior School

St Margaret's Close, Iver Heath, Buckinghamshire SL0 0DA

Inspection dates

21–22 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This is a good and improving school with inclusion at its heart. The determination of the effective leadership team underpins the school's sustained improvement.
- The school's core values, expressed as, 'We are achievers, we are a community, we are inclusive, and we are proud', are evident in all aspects of the school's work.
- Governors, leaders, and staff work successfully to sustain the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They share a commitment to helping every pupil do as well as possible.
- As a result of effective teaching, pupils are making good progress. Recent dips in pupils' achievement have been successfully addressed. Some pupils, however, are not fully reaching their potential.
- The curriculum engages, motivates and challenges pupils. They enjoy learning and make every effort to do well.
- Pupils' progress is tracked carefully, and they benefit from clear guidance on how to improve.
- As they move through the school, pupils take increasing responsibility for their own learning. Older pupils reflect maturely on their achievements and how to improve.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is nurtured effectively. They are socially responsible and tolerant, and value fairness.
- A strong sense of harmony permeates the school. Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and mutually respectful. Pupils take pride in their work. They are friendly, polite and well behaved.
- Support for pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Parents and carers value the extent to which their children are cared for and kept safe.
- Leaders work hard to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. Although attendance is good overall, a few pupils are persistently absent.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take steps to ensure that all pupils reach their potential by sharing the methods evident in the most effective lessons, including:
 - setting tasks that take account of pupils' prior attainment
 - posing questions that elicit what pupils already know and understand, and promote their deeper thinking
 - adapting teaching strategies during lessons, taking account of pupils' responses.
- Further reduce the number of persistent absentees by sustaining current strategies.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and leaders at all levels successfully sustain a strong sense of purpose, underpinned by an ethos of high expectations. Leaders and governors keep a close eye on how well pupils are progressing and gain an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching and provide additional training when necessary. Staff routinely reflect on their practice and share ideas. Subject leaders provide strong direction. For example, improvements in writing and mathematics owe much to their clear guidance and high expectations.
- Teachers and support staff liaise effectively to provide a continuity of approach. As a result, pupils know what is expected of them, for example, about how they should make a prompt start to their learning during well-established early morning routines.
- Leaders have devised a manageable and accessible assessment system. This is used well to closely monitor pupils' achievement throughout the year. Senior staff and subject leaders gain an accurate view of how pupils are progressing, and work with teachers to set appropriately ambitious targets. Information about how different groups are getting on is presented succinctly to provide leaders and governors with an easily accessible picture of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. The 'giving tree' display celebrates random acts of kindness, for example. Pupils develop a secure understanding of the school's values. Older pupils explained how 'We are inclusive' and 'We are a community' were fundamental to being a responsible citizen.
- Recent adaptations of the curriculum have enhanced opportunities for pupils to make links across subjects and to practise, consolidate and extend their key skills in different contexts. Their work in history and geography, for example, includes annotated diagrams, charts and tables.
- Pupils benefit from a wide variety of enrichment activities, including the performing arts. They talked enthusiastically about playing in the school orchestra and singing in the Royal Albert Hall. Additional funding is used well to enhance the physical education curriculum. Specialist sports coaches take lessons, passing on their skills to school staff, and contribute to after-school clubs.
- The curriculum takes account of the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Effective adaptations are also made for pupils who have fallen behind in their learning. For example, pupils who lack confidence in phonics as they start Year 3 soon catch up through additional phonics sessions. Effective use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils ensures that they have opportunities to learn that are similar to those of other pupils.
- Parents hold the school in high regard. They feel welcomed and well informed. Among parents' comments were, 'Children feel safe and valued as individuals', 'My children are the happiest they have ever been', and, 'They bounce out of school full of enthusiasm and bubbling over with information about their day'.

Governance of the school

- Governors are perceptive and proactive. They routinely seek assurance from school leaders about the progress of different groups of pupils. They gain insights into the school's effectiveness by examining assessment information, visiting during the school day and through discussions with senior staff and subject leaders.
- Governors provide good support for leaders. They use the school's improvement plan effectively to check that leaders are making the improvements that they have identified. Subject leaders are invited to governors' meetings to explain the rationale behind initiatives and to summarise pupils' achievement. Governors ask probing questions, for example, about the impact of new approaches to teaching mathematics.
- Governors regularly reflect on their own effectiveness in supporting and holding the school to account. They draw up action plans that include specific and quantifiable targets. Governors are aware of the link between the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and ensure that the impact of teaching on pupils' progress is considered during annual salary reviews.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong commitment to safeguarding and a sense of shared responsibility. Detailed records are kept and regularly monitored by governors. Regular training on safeguarding is provided for all staff. Systems to check that staff, governors and volunteers are suitable to work with children are thorough.
- The comprehensive safeguarding policy provides clear guidance and sets out precise expectations for staff. All adults are clear about what constitutes a safeguarding concern and what actions are required. The school manages concerns and deals with external agencies effectively to meet pupils' needs. Interventions are timely, and outcomes are closely monitored.
- Pupils said that they feel safe. One remarked, 'Teachers keep us safe. They look on us as individuals.' Parents described the school as a safe and caring environment. Pupils understand how to look after themselves in a variety of situations, including when using the internet. Pupils also care for each other. They have the confidence to speak to an adult should they have concerns about themselves or a friend.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils enjoy lessons and take increasing responsibility for their own learning as they move through the school. Pupils' positive attitudes owe much to teachers' skills in engaging them, setting interesting, challenging tasks and praising their efforts. Teachers typically manage behaviour seamlessly, not least by ensuring that work is pitched at appropriate levels and encouraging a 'can do' approach. Pupils have taken on board the notion of 'can't do it *yet*'.
- Teachers ensure that pupils are aware of 'what makes good work'. This enables pupils to use specific criteria when reviewing their own efforts and those of their classmates.

Across the school, teachers implement the school's marking policy consistently, providing clear guidance about how pupils can improve their work.

- Using a variety of effective questioning strategies, underpinned by their secure subject knowledge, teachers, for the most part, skilfully elicit what pupils already know and understand, and prompt deeper thinking. Using terms such as 'mastery' and 'greater depth', teachers help pupils reflect maturely on their learning. Discussing their work in mathematics, pupils in Year 6 explained, 'We are encouraged to use different methods. We move from mainly arithmetic to solving problems. It's not just doing the sums, it's about applying what you know.'
- An atmosphere of learning together means that pupils are willing to contribute ideas, without being apprehensive about 'getting it wrong'. They collaborate well, listening with interest to their peers. They share ideas during group tasks and are equally diligent when working quietly on independent tasks.
- Strong partnerships between teachers and support staff contribute significantly to pupils' achievement. Teaching assistants are well briefed and use their initiative when working alongside class teachers, and when teaching individuals and small groups of pupils.
- Typically, teachers adapt their approach and modify their initial plans in the light of pupils' responses during lessons. Occasionally, teachers 'plough on' without checking pupils' understanding. There are some inconsistencies in the way teachers take account of pupils' prior attainment when asking questions or setting tasks. Consequently, a few pupils, particularly those who were previously meeting or exceeding expectations, do not fully reach their potential.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school's open culture contributes significantly to pupils' welfare. The overwhelming majority of parents feel welcomed and are confident that their children are happy, looked after well and kept safe. This was evident from their responses to the online survey and from discussions between inspectors and parents.
- Among parents' positive comments were, 'I'm impressed with the level of communication and the general warmth and caring attitude from IHJS', 'Every member of staff has been friendly, helpful, and genuinely caring towards the children', and, 'In addition to its academic performance, I am especially proud of the fact that the school promotes positive behaviour.'
- Pupils say that bullying 'doesn't happen' and are confident that any incidents would be dealt with swiftly.
- School leaders know pupils' families well. They understand when they need additional support to ensure that their children attend school regularly. The school provides a well-attended breakfast club.
- Systematic training, for example in road safety and the use of the internet, means pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They are aware that they can take personal

responsibility for their own safety.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- During lessons, pupils typically listen well and are keen to learn. They cooperate with one another and are mutually supportive. They are responding enthusiastically to a recent initiative to promote and acknowledge good behaviour through the award of 'ambassador stars'. Many were looking forward to finding out if they were one of the first to reach the gold level.
- Pupils are resilient and try hard. They are polite and courteous within the school's atmosphere of mutual respect. Boys and girls play happily together, demonstrating high levels of care and friendship. Pupils move around the school in an orderly fashion. Transitions from playground to classrooms and during lessons are quick so that no learning time is wasted. On the whole, pupils behave very well during lessons but occasionally their attention wanders.
- Pupils relish opportunities to contribute to school life. They are keen to be members of the school council. They take their responsibilities as house captains seriously and willingly help out, for example by helping in the school office at lunchtimes.
- Pupils enjoy school. Attendance has improved and is above the national average. Absence is monitored systematically. The school works hard to support parents in ensuring that their children attend well. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has fallen recently but remains above average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school's detailed tracking data, alongside scrutiny of work and lesson observations, indicates that the big picture is one of good progress through the school. National assessments over the last two years indicate that standards and progress were variable. This has been addressed very effectively. Because of better teaching and an engaging curriculum, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, are making good progress and reaching higher standards. Within this positive scenario, the school's meticulous assessment records indicate that a few pupils in each year group are not fully reaching their potential.
- Pupils are making good progress in reading. As they move through the school, they become increasingly adept at drawing inferences from text. Their secure reading skills contribute to the good headway they make in spelling, punctuation and grammar. By Years 5 and 6, most pupils read widely and acquire mature insights. One Year 5 pupil remarked, 'Reading is calming and helps you imagine a different world.' A Year 6 pupil commented, 'It's difficult to choose between books or films ...with books, you can picture anything in your mind and interpret your own characters.'
- Pupils make good progress in writing, not least because they have opportunities to write for different purposes. Throughout the school, pupils take great care with their handwriting, using an increasingly neat, flowing, joined script. Pupils' written work increasingly incorporates the literacy devices and vocabulary they come across in their

reading. The most able pupils show considerable flair. One wrote, for example:

'Torak felt the breath-taking essence of a fierce raven emitting off the warrior. His long, tangled, and ragged hair glowed in the silver moonlight. The musky scent of a fearless warrior drifted up Torak's nose.'

- An increasingly challenging sequence of mathematical activities draws a positive response from pupils. The new approach to teaching is bearing fruit. The proportion of pupils reaching at least expected standards in Year 6 has improved dramatically, and more pupils are working at a greater depth of understanding. Their workbooks indicate rapid progress in using efficient methods of calculation, for example, when comparing fractions, decimals and percentages.
- Good progress in science is evident from pupils' workbooks. By Year 6, pupils are generally adept in using scientific methods to hypothesise, conduct experiments and draw conclusions. Good work was also seen in art, history and geography.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language develop good communication skills and a wide vocabulary that enables them to learn at a similar pace to their classmates. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is not large enough to draw meaningful comparisons with other pupils nationally. However, the progress of these pupils is similar to, and often more rapid than that of other pupils in the school.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make at least good progress from their starting points. Gaps in their learning are very quickly addressed and followed up very well. Vulnerable pupils and those who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties are well supported and make good progress towards their individual goals.

School details

Unique reference number	110279
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10040717

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gabbie Cooney
Headteacher	Owen Lloyd
Telephone number	01753 651 382
Website	www.iverheathjunior.co.uk
Email address	office@iverheath-jun.bucks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 February 2014

Information about this school

- Iver Heath is slightly smaller than schools of a similar type.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' achievement in English and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed activities in all year groups. Observations were undertaken with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body and had a discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- Meetings were also held with pupils to discuss their views on their learning and well-being and with parents to gain their views about the school.
- Inspectors met pupils from Years 5 and 6 to discuss their reading preferences and look at their recent written work. They talked to pupils at breaktimes, in lessons and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors examined a range of the school's documents, including information on pupils' performance across the school, school improvement plans, the school's evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment, minutes of governing body meetings and curriculum plans.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of books to see what progress had been made across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors took account of 53 responses to the Ofsted survey of parents, Parent View. In addition, inspectors evaluated 16 returns to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

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