

Ilfracombe Church of England Junior School

Princess Avenue, Ilfracombe, Devon EX34 9LW

Inspection dates

2 to 3 April 2019

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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have taken swift and decisive action to bring about rapid improvement. Their actions have ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.
- Governors are effective in their roles. They use their precise knowledge of the school to challenge and support leaders appropriately. This contributes to securing positive outcomes for pupils.
- Middle leaders are highly effective in their roles. They are relentless in their pursuit of excellence in their areas of responsibility.
- The school's nurture unit provides valuable support for pupils' social and emotional health and well-being.
- The curriculum supports pupils' academic development well. Pupils are well equipped with knowledge, skills and understanding that prepares them for the next stage of their education and for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, at times, teachers do not plan activities to challenge the needs of the most able pupils in writing. As a result, this group of pupils do not make strong progress.
- Pupils develop a love of reading during their time at the school.
- Pupils learn effectively to write for a range of different purposes. They use grammar, punctuation and spelling accurately.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and at social times. They are polite, considerate and respectful to one another and adults.
- Leaders are tenacious with their use of additional funding. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make positive progress from their starting points. Although improvements are evident, disadvantaged pupils' outcomes remain below that of other pupils nationally.
- Most pupils attend regularly. However, despite leaders' efforts, a small number of disadvantaged pupils have low levels of attendance. This hampers the progress they make.
- Pupils are kept safe at school. Nevertheless, some pupils do not understand the danger of online gaming.
- Safeguarding is effective. However, more work needs to be done to ensure that all staff have a strong understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by developing the curriculum further so that pupils know the risks associated with radicalisation.
- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning in writing by planning activities which consistently challenge the most able children to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Further improve outcomes for pupils by continuing to diminish differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally.
- Improve the personal, development, behaviour and well-being of pupils by:
 - continuing to work with parents so that attendance levels rise and fewer pupils are persistently absent, particularly disadvantaged pupils
 - ensuring that all pupils are fully aware of the risks associated with online gaming.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have established a culture of high expectations in all aspects of the school's work. This ensures a belief that all pupils can succeed regardless of their different starting points. Leaders and staff have very successfully created an ethos where pupils' well-being is centre stage and a pivotal driver for achieving success.
- Leaders have an accurate and precise knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use regular checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress to ensure that their actions are making a positive difference. For example, leaders identified that the school's approach to reading was not having the desirable impact. Therefore, leaders changed the whole-school approach to teaching reading. Inspection evidence shows that this is having a positive effect on improving the quality of pupils' reading skills. Nevertheless, leaders recognise that further refinements are necessary to continue to improve pupils' outcomes. Leaders are relentless in their pursuit of excellence.
- Teachers respond well to leaders' high expectations. Teachers continually reflect on their teaching methods, using evidence-based research to think about what works best for their school. Leaders regularly monitor and evaluate teachers' work and have not shied away from taking the action necessary when pupils' outcomes are not adequate. As a result, most pupils make strong progress.
- The curriculum is broad and rich and ensures that pupils develop a range of knowledge and skills other than those in reading, writing and mathematics. The varied curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures and religions. An example of this is the school's ongoing work to support a school in Swaziland. Pupils learn about making healthy choices and are provided with time to reflect on the effect that their actions can have on others. Such activities develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well, and this results in pupils being prepared for life in modern Britain. The curriculum is the heart and soul of the school.
- The PE and sport premiums are used effectively. The school has had recent success in a range of sporting competitions, such as athletics, football and sitting volleyball. Leaders have also used the funding to provide resources for social times and extra opportunities for pupils, such as surfing, archery and early morning provision to promote and encourage pupils' attendance. As a result, some pupils' attendance has improved.
- Middle leaders contribute effectively to whole-school improvement. They have a thorough understanding of their areas of responsibility and check regularly on the quality of teaching and the impact on pupils' outcomes. They are experts in their field, so they are able to give high-quality advice to staff to continue to improve their teaching further. Staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire value the continued professional development and support on offer.
- Morale across the school is high. This is because leaders place staff well-being at the forefront of their strategic thinking. They recognise that a happy workforce supports a positive learning environment for pupils.

- The local authority has supported the school well. It provides regular challenge to senior leaders and governors. Leaders make good use of opportunities provided by the local authority to continue to improve the school. In 2018, the school joined the 'excellence for all programme'. As a result, improvements have been secured and pupils' outcomes continue to rise.
- The senior leader responsible for pupil premium is making a positive difference to the pupils who are eligible for support. Leaders' tenacious approach ensures that pupils receive effective tailored support. Although improving, differences still exist between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally. Leaders recognise this and are relentlessly focused on ensuring that the differences in reading, writing and mathematics continue to diminish.
- The leadership of pupils with SEND is highly effective. The special educational needs coordinator is rigorous in ensuring that pupils overcome any barriers to learning. Additional funding is used effectively to provide close support for pupils. This ensures that pupils with SEND make strong progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have identified from their checks on learning that, occasionally, activities in writing do not challenge the most able pupils to reach their full potential. They have strategic plans in place, but they have not yet been implemented.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is experienced and has a good strategic understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need further development. This is because governors visit the school regularly and check forensically on the work of leaders in relation to the impact on the quality of education provided. They are very clear in their expectations that additional funding should be well-targeted and used appropriately so that it makes a difference to pupils' outcomes.
- Governors respond well to support and challenge and have commissioned several external reviews to develop their strategic oversight further. As a result, they provide appropriate, pertinent and well-judged challenge and support to school leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The persons responsible for safeguarding pupils in the school maintain precise, accurate records of concerns and actions taken by the school. Any referrals to outside agencies are made promptly, so that pupils and their families receive the help that they need swiftly.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. They explained that they always have a responsible adult to go to if they have any concerns or worries. They learn how to stay safe through personal, social, health and economic lessons and assemblies from visiting agencies. Pupils gave examples of how the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and a recent police visit developed their understanding of how to stay safe both inside and outside of school.
- Leaders ensure that staff have regular training and updates so that they can recognise the signs and risks of harm. As a result, adults are confident in referring any concerns that they have. They know that any concerns will be acted on swiftly or escalated if a

response is not timely.

- Most pupils know how to stay safe when using the internet. However, pupils are not aware of the risks that the internet poses in terms of radicalisation. Furthermore, some pupils believe it is acceptable to play games online that are not appropriate for their age.
- Although staff have had training on the risks of extremism and radicalisation, some members of staff are not able to recognise the risks to pupils. There is minimal teaching in the curriculum of the risks of radicalisation. Consequently, pupils are not fully aware of the potential dangers associated with extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching over time is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning. As a result of warm caring relationships and mutual respect, pupils respond admirably. They work effectively with both adults and other pupils and develop as confident learners as they progress through the school.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge across a range of subjects. For example, pupils in Year 5 are skilfully taught 'carbon sequestration', thereby connecting knowledge of science and geography together to deepen their subject knowledge.
- Teachers plan sequences of learning and activities that are mostly matched to pupils' capabilities. This is particularly true for those pupils who are working at or below the standard expected for their age. These pupils are motivated and enjoy their learning. Presentation and standards of their work is of a very high standard.
- Teaching assistants provide high-quality support to pupils with whom they work. They accurately identify pupils' barriers to learning and work effectively to help pupils overcome them.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders identified that pupils were not achieving as well as they should in reading by the end of key stage 2. This is because pupils were not developing skills of inference and deduction sufficiently. Leaders have ensured that reading is central to pupils' development across the curriculum. As a result, teachers instil good reading habits and pupils acquire a good range of vocabulary which they then apply to their writing. Pupils who read to inspectors did so fluently and with comprehension appropriate to their current levels of attainment.
- In mathematics, teachers ensure that pupils have a fluent understanding of the concept being taught. They regularly review previously taught concepts, and this helps pupils consolidate their understanding. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to practise and use their skills through reasoning and problem-solving skills. This helps pupils to gain confidence in their use of mathematics. Pupils put their mathematics knowledge and skills to use in other subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils in geography construct pie charts to show the impact of geographical processes.
- Pupils are taught to write well, developing their skills as they progress through key stage 2. Recently, teachers changed their approach to writing by introducing age-related milestones, and this has had a positive impact. In Years 3 and 4, pupils focus on developing their knowledge of different sentence structures, vocabulary and punctuation. In Years 5 and 6, pupils apply this knowledge and understanding to a

range of different text types. However, too often, pupils who are capable of achieving more are hampered by not being given the opportunity to write at length. As a result, most-able pupils do not achieve as well as other similar pupils nationally.

- Pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of a range of subjects effectively. The wider curriculum captures and builds on pupils' interests. Pupils told inspectors how extra-curricular visits underpin their knowledge. For example, pupils in Year 4 were keen to share their experiences of a recent visit they made to 'Arlington Court' to deepen their understanding of life in Victorian England. Subject leaders make sure that the content and challenge are appropriate for pupils' age and ability. As a result, pupils make strong progress across the curriculum.
- Many of the positive comments on Parent View reflect on the good quality of teaching. One comment that reflected many others was: 'My son has a great teacher who has taken the time to get to know him, which means he is achieving great things this year.' Furthermore, all pupils report positively on homework and the impact that it has on their development. All parents who responded to Parent View also agreed that homework is having a positive impact.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school's Christian values permeate the school. Pupils have a deep, genuine attachment to equality and diversity. This has led to pupils having a mature outlook and appreciation of others. Leaders have established a truly caring and nurturing culture in the school.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to make a positive contribution to the school and wider community. For example, pupils in Year 5 recently presented and debated their rationale to the local council on how to improve the local area. Another example is how the Mayor led pupil voting for the Youth council elections. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of democracy and rule of law.
- Pupils are confident that they can talk with a trusted adult about any concerns or problems that they have. They say that teachers act swiftly to resolve any concerns that may be bothering them. Older pupils thrive on their positions of responsibility to provide weekly support to younger pupils. This enables younger pupils to quickly establish the expectations of junior school life.
- Pupils have a comprehensive understanding of bullying and the different types and the harm it causes. Pupils say that bullying used to be a problem in the school, but leaders have eradicated nearly all incidents. This is confirmed by the school's records. Over time, incidents of bullying and poor behaviour have reduced significantly.
- Nearly all parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, are confident that their children are safe in school.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe when using computers. However, a small proportion of pupils participate in online games that are not age appropriate.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. A very clear set of high expectations and a calm teaching environment ensure that pupils have a positive attitude to learning.
- Pupils' conduct around the school and in social times is excellent. They play and socialise together sensibly and enjoy spending time with adults who facilitate a wide range of playground games. Pupils are polite and considerate to one another and to adults. Some pupils who are vulnerable and find it hard to make the right choices are supported effectively in the school's nurture provision (The Bridge). As a result, pupils who can find learning challenging make strong progress in their lessons.
- In lessons, pupils behave well. They follow teachers' instructions and poor behaviour is rare. However, pupils who responded to the pupils' survey have a different opinion. They say that behaviour is not always positive. During the inspection, inspectors found well-established behaviours and attitudes to learning. Only occasionally, when the work does not fully challenge them, does pupils' focus wander.
- Leaders, alongside the effective pastoral team, have worked hard to improve pupils' attendance. While attendance for current pupils is broadly average, the rate of persistent absence is above average. This issue was explored during the inspection. Inspectors found that some disadvantaged pupils are not attending school regularly enough. As a result, their progress is hampered.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was at least in line with the national average in the end of key stage 2 tests in 2018. This is because from their different starting points in Year 3, pupils made strong and, in some cases, very strong progress. Inspection evidence indicates that current pupils continue to flourish and make good progress.
- Most pupils with SEND make good progress, often from low starting points. This is because of effective leadership and high-quality teaching. Teachers' accurate identification of barriers to learning and appropriately deployed support ensures that no pupils with SEND are left behind.
- The progress of most-able pupils is inconsistent, especially in writing. This is because in writing, pupils are not being given the opportunity to use and apply their knowledge and skills often enough to write at length. As a result, some pupils are not achieving the standards of which they are capable. In reading and mathematics, an above-average proportion of pupils reached the higher standards at the end of Year 6 in 2018.
- The strong curriculum provision means that pupils gain a range of skills in other subjects. Pupils love music because teachers place much emphasis on music being the heartbeat of the curriculum. Pupils gain a depth of knowledge in history, art, physical education, science and computing. As a result, of the well-planned curriculum, pupils connect their knowledge from other subjects. This in turn enables pupils to make strong progress across a range of subjects and prepares them well for the next stage in their education.

- Over time, disadvantaged pupils' progress has been inconsistent. Although, provision clearly demonstrates that pupils are making progress, differences remain with other pupils nationally. Progress is less consistent for a small number of disadvantaged pupils who are frequently absent.

School details

Unique reference number	113381
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10081345

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	452
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Porter
Headteacher	Catherine Cox
Telephone number	01271 863 463
Website	www.ilfracombe-jun.devon.sch.uk
Email address	ccox@ilfracombe-jun.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 to 24 November 2016

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils with educational, health and care plans is below the national average.
- The school is designated as having a religious character and received its section 48 inspection in January 2016, when the school was graded as good.

Information about this inspection

- Due to unforeseen circumstances, the headteacher was not available during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed learning in classes across the school. Most observations were undertaken jointly with the acting headteacher and one of the assistant headteachers. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour around the school and at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, the leader with responsibility for pupils with SEND and a sample of support and teaching staff.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with five governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils formally and informally during their breaktimes and lunchtimes and in class. Inspectors also listened to groups of pupils read.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's self-evaluation document, the school's improvement plan, external monitoring reports and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors examined a large sample of pupils' books from across the school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they brought their children to school in the morning. The lead inspector also considered 30 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and the 31 responses to the staff survey and the 28 responses to the pupils' survey.

Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alison Cogher	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Nash	Ofsted Inspector

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