

Inspection of Irthlingborough Junior School

College Street, Irthlingborough, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN9 5TX

Inspection dates: 14–15 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They like what has been done to make the school better. They enjoy reading and playing board games on the double-decker bus during playtimes. Pupils care for each other and are keen to take on positions of responsibility such as being 'anti-bullying ambassadors'.

All staff want pupils to have a rich diet of experiences while they are at school. They organise many clubs and check that pupils have the chance to join in. Parents, carers and pupils value the support that they get from the school if problems occur at school or at home.

Pupils feel safe in school. They say that adults are kind and always listen to them. They say that they can talk to adults about any worries and have learned about this through the 'blue butterfly' project.

Pupils say that behaviour has really improved. They say that when pupils are unkind to each other this is sorted out straight away. Pupils walk sensibly around school and are polite and well mannered. Most pupils always follow the school's behaviour code. However, a few pupils still find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. Too often, some pupils are temporarily excluded.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders prepare pupils well for their next stages in learning and for life beyond the school. They want them to become active citizens in their community and learn more about the world beyond it. They have developed 'passports for life' and strong links with the local secondary school. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Leaders have improved the curriculum. Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is strong. They help pupils to become fluent with number facts. Pupils remember and use these when they solve problems. They become confident mathematicians.

Pupils enjoy reading and choose from a wide range of attractive, high-quality books in their classrooms. Teachers make sure that pupils identify words they do not understand. Pupils enjoy using this new vocabulary. Teachers check that this makes a difference for pupils who are catching up, disadvantaged pupils, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A few pupils do not read fluently enough. Some of the books that these pupils are given to read are too difficult because some pupils do not remember the sounds that letters make.

Pupils understand how to lead healthy lifestyles. They concentrate well in physical education (PE) lessons and are keen to improve. They speak with enthusiasm about the wide range of residential visits that they can attend. In geography, pupils can remember what they learned about in previous topics. For instance, they can recall

accurately information and knowledge about mountains. Teachers are ambitious for pupils. They have changed their approach to planning series of lessons so that pupils are able to build on what they have learned before. Not all of these new plans are yet in place.

Staff make effective links between what pupils are studying and the features of their local area. Pupils find out about important local figures such as Walter Tull. They think deeply about how they can help the community around them. For example, pupils research the kind of products that people who use food banks need. They organise fundraising to buy these foods. Pupils visit local places of worship from different faiths. Pupils are interested in each other's beliefs.

Projects such as 'forest schools' help pupils to develop resilience and learn to work together. Leaders make sure that pupils with SEND are well supported. They make sure that teachers understand how they can change the way they teach to help all pupils. Leaders have worked with different external agencies to support pupils who find it difficult to control their behaviour. This has helped some pupils to join in lessons more. However, the number of exclusions remains high.

Parents feel that leaders are improving the school. Leaders are changing the way they communicate with parents to make information easier to find. Staff say that leaders make sure that they can manage their workload and support their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders check that staff understand their safeguarding training. They know the dangers that pupils may face in the local area. They make sure that what pupils learn prepares them for these challenges. Staff know the signs which could indicate that a pupil is at risk.

Leaders are persistent in seeking support for pupils and their families. They challenge other agencies and seek out additional support so that families get help when they need it.

Teachers help pupils to stay safe online. Governors help to run workshops on e-safety. They check that pupils understand the importance of what they are learning.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all pupils have secured the skills they need to become fluent readers. Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge of phonics. Some pupils cannot break down unfamiliar words and they struggle with the books they have to read. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the knowledge they need to make sure that all

pupils secure and build on their knowledge of phonics. They should ensure that the books that pupils have to read match the sounds that pupils already know.

- The school's curriculum is not yet coherently planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear from the actions which leaders have already taken to plan next year's curriculum and train staff in how to deliver it that they are in the process of bringing this about. For this reason, the transition arrangement has been applied in this case. Leaders should continue to embed these new curricular plans so that pupils know more and remember more in all subjects.
- Leaders have not yet securely embedded systems that fully support some pupils to make demonstrable improvements to their behaviour. The rate of fixed-term exclusions is high. Leaders should ensure that there is a consistent approach which is understood by all staff. They should check that it is making a difference to these pupils.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	141910
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10132966
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	428
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stephen Ward
Headteacher	Nicholas Garley
Website	www.irthlingborough-jun.northants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently works with Northampton Saints alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with senior leaders, governors and the chair of the learning outcomes committee of the Learning for Life Education Trust.
- We did deep dives into reading, mathematics, geography and PE. We spoke with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and scrutinised pupils' workbooks.
- We checked the safeguarding records, including recruitment and vetting checks. We spoke with leaders, governors, staff and pupils.
- We spoke with parents and considered the views of parents and staff shared through Ofsted's online surveys. We met with groups of pupils and staff. We met with the inclusion leader and pastoral team.

Inspection team

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