

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Irby Primary School

Coombe Road, Irby, Wirral, Merseyside CH61 4UR

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Inspection dates:

21 and 22 September 2021

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy attending. The positive relationships between staff and pupils make Irby Primary School a happy and calm place to learn. Pupils feel safe and are safe. Adults take the time to listen to pupils and help them if they have any worries or concerns.

Teaching staff expect pupils to do their best in lessons. Pupils live up to these high expectations. Pupils enjoy the interesting and fun learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are given the right type of support so that they can achieve well too. However, in some subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils form firm friendships. They mix well together and treat each other with respect. Pupils are well supervised as they happily play together in the well-resourced outdoor play area. Standards of behaviour are high. Pupils are confident that if bullying happens, adults will make it stop.

Pupils relish the wide range of opportunities beyond the academic curriculum. For example, they access a varied range of after-school clubs and trips. They contribute to the decisions made by leaders through their roles as school councillors, eco-warriors and play leaders.

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

The recently appointed headteacher has very quickly evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Together with the staff and governors, he is determined to give all pupils the best start to their education. Pupils are taught the full range of national curriculum subjects. Planning in many subjects is logical. Clear guidance is given to teachers about the knowledge that should be taught and in what order. However, this is

not the case in all subjects. This means that pupils do not learn all the knowledge they need to.

Leaders in some subjects monitor their areas of responsibility well. They make regular and detailed checks of curriculum plans and pupils' work, and visit lessons. This helps subject leaders to ensure that the intended curriculum is being taught and that pupils are knowing more and remembering more. The monitoring of some other subjects is not as well developed. This is because some aspects of the monitoring of these subjects were paused due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.

Leaders place much emphasis on ensuring that pupils become confident and fluent readers. The teaching of phonics begins as soon as children start in the Reception class. Staff deliver the school's phonics programme well. Pupils enjoy reading decodable books that are matched to the sounds that they know. Pupils who find reading difficult are quickly identified and given additional support to help them catch up. Older pupils are keen readers. They talk eloquently about their favourite authors. Pupils benefit from having a school library both indoors and outside to help foster their love of reading.

Pupils achieve well in reading. Nevertheless, leaders are not complacent and are keen to do even better. They have recently introduced some new ideas. For example, a new approach to guided reading has recently been introduced to further develop pupils' vocabulary and comprehension skills. However, it is too soon to gauge the impact of these actions on pupils' achievement in reading. In addition, pupils do not have enough access to books that deepen their knowledge in subjects such as science, geography, and art and design.

Pupils are beginning to make connections in their learning. In their study of the Egyptians, pupils make good use of their map-reading skills to identify Egypt on a map. Pupils can recall prior learning. For example, older pupils explained that the many different strategies they have learned previously to add, subtract, multiply and divide are now helping them to solve complex mathematical problems. Pupils are keen to learn and behave well in class.

The early years classroom is a hive of activity. Staff take every opportunity to develop and extend children's language and mathematical skills. New and exciting words are introduced as children play. Children quickly settle into well-established routines.

Pupils with SEND have their needs identified quickly. Clear and precise targets are set for these pupils so that they can learn more and remember more at the right pace for them. These targets are regularly monitored and reviewed. The special educational needs coordinator works well with teachers to help them adapt the curriculum so that pupils with SEND can learn alongside their peers.

Pupils talk about the wide range of clubs they have enjoyed, such as those for football, dance and gymnastics. They also speak fondly of trips to museums, castles and local parks. These opportunities broaden pupils' experiences. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures to help them appreciate our diverse society. Pupils raise money for a wide

range of charitable causes and have established links with a school in Uganda. Leaders pay due regard to pupils' mental health and well-being.

Staff feel valued and work well as a team. Leaders and governors are mindful of staff's workload and well-being.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that curriculum planning for history and geography may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained in safeguarding. This helps them to quickly spot if pupils are becoming anxious or distressed. Staff have a secure understanding of the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about a pupil's welfare. Leaders work well with other agencies to ensure that families facing challenging circumstances get the help and support that they need.

Through the curriculum, pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They learn about healthy relationships, the importance of consent and how to keep themselves safe when online. The school's website also provides valuable information for parents and carers to ensure that pupils use the internet safely at home.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some subjects in the curriculum are not well planned and sequenced. This hinders some pupils from gaining the essential knowledge that they need to succeed in future learning. Leaders need to review curriculum plans to ensure that they identify essential knowledge that pupils must gain from early years to Year 6. This is so that pupils can know more and remember more.
- Some subject leaders have not made detailed checks to ensure that curriculum plans are working in practice. As a result, they do not have a secure understanding of how well pupils are achieving in these subjects. Leaders need to ensure that monitoring arrangements for these subjects are of the same high quality as is evident in other areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to access reading materials that strengthen their knowledge within as wide a range of subjects as possible. Leaders need to ensure that pupils have greater access to a broader range of texts to deepen their knowledge and understanding of other subjects in the curriculum.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding on 10–11 November 2015.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105025
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199465
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	220
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Graham Barley
<b>Headteacher in charge</b>	Richard Dixon
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.irbyprimary.com">www.irbyprimary.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 and 11 November 2015, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed in January 2021.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and has taken that into account in their evaluation.

- The inspector spoke with members of the governing body, the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and staff.
- The inspector also had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with the subject leader, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of their work. The inspector listened to

pupils read with a familiar adult. The inspector also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to the headteacher about geography, art and design, and design technology.

- The inspector spoke to eight parents as they brought their children to school at the start of the school day.
- The inspector considered 55 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, and 40 free-text comments. The inspector considered the 19 responses to the staff survey and the 134 responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation relating to safeguarding and spoke with pupils and staff.

### **Inspection team**

Sheila Iwaskow, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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