

Inspection of Inkpen Primary School

Weavers Lane, Inkpen, Hungerford, Berkshire RG17 9QE

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 July 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy learning and they like knowing everyone in their small village school. They believe that other pupils and staff are kind. One pupil commented that this is important 'because it helps other people to feel happy inside'. The caring environment supports pupils to work well together in the mixed-age classes. Older pupils relish reading stories to younger children each Friday. They also enjoy attending different clubs, such as pottery, football and choir.

Although pupils feel safe, leaders do not ensure that important safeguarding procedures are followed consistently. This means that pupils do not always receive the help that they need. This leaves pupils at risk of further harm.

Staff and pupils have warm and positive relationships. Teachers help pupils understand how they are expected to behave. This supports pupils to behave well. Bullying does not happen often. When it does, staff work effectively with pupils and parents to resolve any concerns quickly.

Leaders and staff are keen for pupils to learn well in all subjects. This ambition is not consistently realised from Reception onwards. This means that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are not supported to achieve as well as they could.

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

From the start of Reception, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are eager to do well. They concentrate well in lessons and are respectful to others. Occasionally, pupils disengage and lose focus, but staff quickly involve them back into their learning. Teachers provide effective guidance for pupils who need support with their behaviour to help them make good choices. Pupils are well mannered and behave well around the school.

Pupils' keenness to learn extends into their personal development and leaders promote this well. Staff teach them about people from a range of backgrounds who have different beliefs. They learn about equality and discrimination and how to tackle it. This helps pupils to understand the importance of including others. As one pupil commented, 'Everyone should be treated the same.' The range of opportunities for pupils to experience leadership roles is less well developed.

Pupils' learning across different subjects is variable and not all pupils get off to a strong start in learning to read. Many, but not all, staff are trained to teach the school's chosen phonics programme. Staff have recently begun to follow the scheme more closely, but they do not routinely check that pupils have understood before moving on. Teachers do not consistently match books to the sounds that pupils can read. This makes it more challenging for pupils to develop fluency and confidence with their reading. In Reception, the support for struggling readers has recently improved. This has helped children to be more prepared for their learning in Year 1.

Pupils enjoy staff reading a range of books to them that they might not otherwise read. This encourages them to read different stories at home.

Curriculum thinking in other subjects, including mathematics, is inconsistent. In a few subjects, such as French, leaders have identified the essential content that they intend pupils to learn. In these subjects, staff use their strong subject knowledge to teach with clarity and enthusiasm. This inspires and supports pupils to achieve well.

Leaders recognise that other subjects need further work. They acknowledge that the mathematics curriculum needs reviewing so that it maps out more precisely what pupils will learn. The early years curriculum is currently being developed. In other subjects, from Year 1 onwards, leaders have ensured that there are broad plans in place. However, the work given to pupils is not always sufficiently demanding for both year groups in the mixed-age classes. There is some effective support for pupils with SEND but this lacks consistency. A clear sequence of learning in individual topics, such as when learning about rivers in geography, helps pupils to develop their understanding. However, pupils are not supported to build on this over time and to connect new learning to what they have learned previously. Consequently, pupils' achievement across the curriculum, including that of pupils with SEND, is variable.

Many governors are new to their role. They are not equipped with sufficient knowledge to ensure that leaders have identified the most important priorities and planned the key actions to bring about swift improvements. Governors are starting to develop an understanding about the quality of education. They do not yet provide enough challenge to address the inconsistency of pupils' learning. Although staff enjoy working at the school, they have received limited training in recent years to support them to carry out their roles effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that training, policies and procedures are in place but do not themselves use them. When a risk or concern about a pupil's safety has been identified, leaders do not consistently follow the agreed procedure to get pupils the help that they need. This leaves vulnerable pupils at risk of further harm.

Leaders have not ensured that safeguarding records are complete. Records of incidents do not always contain clear timelines or details of contact with external agencies.

Governors do not have the expertise or oversight to ensure that safeguarding is effective. They have not made sure that the safeguarding procedures are being followed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not follow the agreed safeguarding procedures. This leaves vulnerable pupils at risk of harm. Leaders should ensure they fulfil their statutory duty and make sure that, when a safeguarding risk is identified, they get pupils the help they need to prevent further potential risk of harm. Leaders should also ensure that safeguarding records are complete.
- Governors do not have a vigilant oversight of safeguarding. Consequently, vulnerable pupils are being left at risk of harm. Governors should ensure they are equipped with the knowledge to assure themselves that the agreed safeguarding procedures are followed by leaders and staff.
- Pupils' achievement is inconsistent. This means that pupils are not learning as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum thinking is well developed in all subjects from Reception onwards. They should make sure that the key content is precisely identified and sequenced, and that staff are equipped with the subject knowledge and skills to teach and assess it consistently well. Importantly, this includes ensuring that pupils are provided with books to read that closely match the sounds they have learned.
- Leaders have not ensured their ambitions to develop the curriculum from Reception onwards have been realised. This means that weaknesses in the school have not been addressed. Leaders and governors should ensure that they identify the most important priorities and the precise actions to bring about swift improvements and carefully monitor them to ensure they are successfully achieved.

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

Unique reference number	109817
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	10241754
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Emma Wordsworth
Headteacher	Jane Kanisius
Website	www.inkpenprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a small primary school with four classes.
- The headteacher is retiring in August 2022 after eight years in post. A new headteacher is due to start in September 2022.
- Almost all staff have worked at the school since the previous inspection. The Reception teacher left the school in April 2022. The headteacher and a teaching assistant have taught the Reception class in the summer term.
- The chair of governors started in her role in April 2022. All governors are new since the previous inspection.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. Inspectors deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement,

because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher and other school staff.
- The lead inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair, and spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and languages. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector also looked at curriculum planning, reviewed pupils' books and spoke to pupils about their learning in geography.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors spoke with staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to review their knowledge, records and actions. The inspectors also looked at safeguarding records and actions and reviewed information about the safer recruitment of staff.
- To make wider judgements, inspectors spoke to staff and groups of pupils from different year groups and observed behaviour in classrooms and at lunchtime.
- The views of staff and pupils, including responses to Ofsted's online staff survey, were considered.
- The responses to Ofsted Parent View, including written responses, were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Laurie Anderson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Haynes

Her Majesty's Inspector

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