

Inspection of a good school: Iwade School

School Lane, Iwade, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8RS

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 September 2022

Outcome

Iwade School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this busy and happy school. Leaders have carefully considered how pupils can feel part of their allotted 'community' within the bigger school. This helps pupils to feel a sense of belonging.

Relationships across the school are friendly. Pupils are polite and well behaved. They open doors and respond to thanks with a cheery 'you're welcome'. Outside pupils play happily on the climbing frame or enjoy sharing a book together. A few parents expressed concerns around bullying. This did not reflect inspectors' findings. Pupils were adamant that any bullying is rare and quickly dealt with. They feel safe in school and know that staff will help if they have any worries.

Right from the start, children in the early years quickly learn the routines of school. This helps them settle in and learn well. Expectations are high across the school. Pupils strive to meet them.

Pupils are offered the chance to take on a wide range of responsibilities, which enables them to contribute to the life of the school. Pupils value these roles. They appreciate that they have a voice which can make a difference. Pupils are proud of their school. They explained, 'We have got positive energy'.

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

Leaders at all levels are highly ambitious for the pupils of Iwade School. They have provided the right training and support for staff to help them realise these ambitions. Staff, including early career teachers, feel valued and listened to. They appreciate how working across the trust and revising some policies have made their workload more manageable. Staff have a high degree of confidence in leaders.

Reading is firmly at the centre of the curriculum. Leaders have recently strengthened their approach to early reading. This is helping pupils to master reading skills confidently and

quickly. Any pupils at risk of falling behind and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are given the help that they need. Pupils are excited by the books that they read. They are captivated by the stories their teachers read to them. These introduce pupils to ideas about plots and characters. As pupils move through the school, their responses to texts become more skilled and insightful.

Leaders have also introduced a revised mathematics curriculum. This builds pupils' skills and knowledge well as they move up through the school. The curriculum starts in early years and builds clearly. Pupils, including those with SEND, become increasingly confident and competent mathematicians. Teachers use assessment well in mathematics to swiftly identify and address any confusion or knowledge gaps. This helps everyone to keep up.

Curriculum leaders have ensured that curriculum content is clearly sequenced for all subjects. However, in some subjects, the curriculum focuses more on skills and activities rather than knowledge. Leaders are rightly revising the curriculum to focus more on the key knowledge that pupils need to know and remember over time. They are also considering what assessments should take place in these subjects to help teachers check what pupils have remembered.

Detailed individual plans and regular reviews help to ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are known and met. During lessons, support for pupils is aligned to their education, health and care plans. This helps them to access the curriculum and become confident and successful learners.

In lessons, pupils behave well. Most are attentive and interested in their learning. Pupils follow instructions and respond quickly to any redirection from staff. Staff are very positive about the new behaviour policy. They say that it encourages pupils to take responsibility for their actions and to develop empathy for others.

Pupils' personal development has been carefully considered through the curriculum and through additional opportunities. They are excited by the wide range of after-school and lunchtime clubs on offer. Pupils are consulted about the range of these clubs. They say that their ideas are considered and responded to. For example, some pupils instigated getting big bean bags that can be used during playtimes for pupils who want to read or draw. Pupils understand that people have different views and faiths and the importance of tolerance. They say that it is good to be informed and that, 'You can be who you want to be'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a high degree of vigilance around safeguarding. They ensure that everyone has the training they need to identify concerns. Any concerns are analysed and where necessary acted upon quickly to provide the help pupils need to stay safe. An online safety team has been created to specifically focus on aspects of e-safety.

Pupils receive additional safety training, such as the cycling training that was taking place during the inspection. These opportunities complement safeguarding lessons well and helps pupils to develop a wide-ranging awareness of how to stay safe in a variety of situations.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, sequences of learning in the foundation subjects focus more on skills and activities rather than knowledge. This means that teachers do not have enough guidance about the most important knowledge that pupils need to learn. Leaders should continue to implement their plans to strengthen the curriculum and associated assessment processes. They need to make more explicit the most important knowledge that they would like pupils to learn and remember.

Background

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

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2012.

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.

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	140900
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10227912
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	613
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Neil Peterson
Head of School	Katrine Stewart
Website	www.timuacademytrust.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has grown in size since the previous inspection. There are now three classes in each year group. Pupils are grouped into three communities within the school: forest, ocean and sky.
- The head of school took up her post in January 2021. Prior to her appointment, she worked across the trust as a senior leader.
- Iwade is one of four academies in the Bourne Alliance Multi-Academy Trust. Until 1 September 2022, the trust was known as the Timu Academy Trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- During the inspection, the lead inspector met regularly with school leaders. The lead inspector met with representatives from the local governing body and multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, 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 listened to some pupils read.
- Records associated with safeguarding were reviewed, including the single central record and appointment procedures. The inspectors spoke to staff about safeguarding and spoke to pupils about the support they have in understanding how to keep safe.
- The inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors met with groups of staff to discuss their views about the school, including workload and well-being. The inspectors met with several groups of pupils, as well as speaking to pupils during lessons, at playtime and around the school.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Gillian Lovatt-Young

Ofsted Inspector

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