

# Inspection of Isbourne Valley School

Didbrook, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL54 5PF

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Inspection dates: 10 and 11 January 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are proud to attend Isbourne Valley School. They enjoy being part of a community where everyone gets along and helps each other. Pupils like how staff are caring and take the time to get to know them as individuals. It is common to see older and younger pupils socialise, eat lunch and play together. Pupils say it makes them feel 'like one big family'.

Leaders aim high and want the best for all pupils. They continue to review and improve the curriculum so that pupils leave the school as knowledgeable and respectful individuals.

Pupils behave consistently well. They like the rewards and praise they receive for doing the right thing and showing the school's values. Bullying is rare. When it happens, staff are quick to put a stop to it. This helps pupils feel safe and valued.

Pupils benefit from experiences beyond the classroom to complement their learning. Outdoor learning is a firm favourite. Here, pupils learn about teamwork, explore the outdoors and care for the environment. Pupils like the range of clubs on offer, such as cheerleading, yoga and running. These develop their talents and interests.

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

Despite the many staffing changes in the last two years, leaders and staff work as a united and dedicated team. Morale is high because staff receive the right support and feel valued. Governors share the same ambitions as leaders. They ask challenging questions to ensure that the school continues to improve and that pupils achieve well.

Leaders have designed an effective curriculum for the mixed-age classes. They have set out clearly what pupils need to learn in each subject. This begins in the Reception Year when staff introduce the vocabulary children need for future learning. Teachers ensure that learning builds across year groups and connects to what pupils have studied before. For example, in history, pupils draw on their growing knowledge of empire when comparing the Romans and Anglo-Saxons. Most curriculum thinking is well established. However, leaders and staff recognise that some subjects are more recently developed than others. Where this is the case, pupils do not learn the same depth of knowledge as they do in others. Leaders have a clear plan in place for continuing to develop the curriculum in all subjects.

Leaders ensure that reading sits at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils enjoy the range of stories, poems, songs and novels that staff share with them. Many say that this inspires them to read more widely. The school's revised approach to teaching phonics is paying off. In the Reception Year, children successfully read and write the sounds they should know. Staff ensure that pupils practise their reading regularly. This allows them to develop their confidence and expression. Well-trained teaching assistants provide support for any pupils at risk of falling behind. However, despite

this help, a small minority of pupils in key stage 2 still do not read as fluently as they should.

Teachers use assessment well to find out what pupils know and remember. This includes recapping prior learning, quizzes and extended pieces of writing. Staff know the needs of all pupils. They modify learning activities to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities take part in the same learning as their classmates.

Staff establish clear rules and routines. Pupils listen to adults and work hard in lessons. They use the school's values, such as resilience and courage, to guide them in how they think and act. Disruption during lessons is rare. Specialist staff provide pastoral support to help some pupils manage their feelings and emotions. This ensures that they are ready to learn.

Leaders' work to develop pupils' personal development is effective. Pupils appreciate the roles of responsibility such as 'table leaders' and 'buddy helpers'. This helps develop their character and confidence. Through assemblies, pupils learn about the importance of equality and fundamental British values. For example, older pupils know why racism and homophobia are wrong. They say, 'We make sure everyone is accepted and belongs here.' Pupils are growing into thoughtful young citizens.

Parents are typically positive about the school. They value the 'WOW Wednesday' sharing sessions when they can visit classes. Many commented on how the school provides the foundations for pupils to succeed academically and socially.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture where staff take concerns about pupils' safety and well-being seriously. Staff are trained well to spot a child who might be at risk of harm and know what action to take. Leaders communicate swiftly with external agencies for pupils who need extra help. Staff ensure that adults who work at the school are safe to do so.

Pupils learn how to manage risk and stay safe. For example, they know how to keep safe online and about the dangers of drugs. Pupils know who to talk to if they have any worries.

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

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

- In a few subjects, improvements to the curriculum are recent. In these subjects, pupils do not gain the depth of knowledge that leaders intend. Their recall of essential knowledge is variable. Leaders should complete the work they have

already begun to ensure that pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding across all subjects.

- A minority of pupils in key stage 2 do not read as fluently as they should. This slows their progress across the curriculum. Leaders should review and refine the help that struggling readers receive so that all pupils become fluent readers.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135437
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241788
<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>	83
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Rachel Bale
<b>Headteacher</b>	Justin Godding
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.isbournevalleyschool.com">www.isbournevalleyschool.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 April 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- Most teaching staff are new to post since the previous inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, school staff and two governors. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, 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 also met with curriculum leaders and looked more widely at documentation and pupils' work in geography, art and design, design technology and in personal, social and health education.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 read to an adult.
- The lead inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. Inspectors talked to governors, staff and pupils about how the school keeps everyone safe.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff to discuss how leaders support their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 37 free-text comments, and responses to the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Dale Burr, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Teresa Hill

Ofsted Inspector

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