

Inspection of a good school: Irchester Community Primary School

School Lane, Irchester, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN29 7AZ

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 June 2023

Outcome

Irchester Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a well-led school where pupils are happy and feel safe.

Leaders and staff work together to provide a caring environment and an ambitious curriculum for all their pupils. Teachers engage pupils in meaningful learning. For example, in mathematics, Reception children work out how many pigs are in the barn. Further up the school, Year 5 pupils need to choose the right sleeping bag when the temperature drops. Pupils enjoy their learning across the curriculum. For example, one pupil commented about geography: 'I love learning about physical features. It really tingles your brain.'

Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive. Staff encourage pupils to aim high in their learning and in the wider experiences of life. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get support to access the same learning opportunities as other pupils.

Bullying is rare. Leaders follow up incidents promptly. There is a purposeful atmosphere in lessons. Pupils learn with confidence and are keen to take part.

Most parents are very happy with the school. One parent, typical of many, commented: 'My child has been so inspired by his learning at school. He has so much to talk about after school each day.'

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum, which begins in the early years. In most subjects, leaders have identified the key knowledge and the order in which pupils need to know it. However, in a few subjects, this work is not yet complete. As a result, pupils' knowledge in these subjects is not yet fully secure.

Reading is a top priority throughout the school. Leaders have chosen an early reading programme that meets the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. This programme begins as soon as children start school, in Reception. Staff receive training to deliver the programme. This helps them to deliver effective reading lessons. Teachers are quick to identify pupils who fall behind. Pupils are well supported to read with accuracy. 'Reading buddies' help younger children gain confidence. Leaders encourage a love of reading. Pupils enjoy story times with the school librarian. One pupil, typical of many, commented: 'I love reading because it takes you to a place where anything can happen.'

Learning in mathematics is a strength. Leaders have ensured that pupils' mathematical understanding builds in small steps. Across the school, staff challenge pupils to explain their thinking, asking, 'How do you know?' This approach begins in the early years. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They recap previous learning well. This helps pupils remember what they have learned. Most pupils enjoy mathematics. They like being 'stretched' in their thinking. As one pupil commented: 'I like the way that teachers teach us different methods, whether we like them or not.'

Beginning in the early years, leaders are quick to identify pupils with SEND. Staff provide support to help these pupils achieve well. Leaders monitor this support closely to ensure that children's needs are being met. Most parents of pupils with SEND are positive about the support their child receives at school.

Pupils enjoy their learning experiences beyond the classroom. They explain that trips and special visitors support their understanding. Parents appreciate the wide range of clubs on offer. Most pupils, including pupils with SEND, attend at least one club. Pupils enjoy leadership roles, such as anti-bullying ambassadors and Lab 13 committee members. These roles make a real difference. For example, Lab 13 committee members organise 'lunch lab' to help other pupils learn from science experiments. Leaders are working to broaden pupils' horizons in different ways. For example, pupils are encouraged to consider future careers. Pupils learn about people from different backgrounds. They show respect for others.

Pupils are friendly and behave well in lessons. They pay careful attention to their teacher and work well together. For example, Reception children were happy to take turns when playing with a phonics-based board game. Most pupils continue to behave with respect throughout the school day. However, some pupils do not always behave well at lunchtime, and their behaviour is not always dealt with effectively.

Governors and trust leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and needs of the school. They challenge and support school leaders. Leaders have a clear vision for improving the experiences of pupils at this school, and parents are 'on board'. Staff recognise how leaders' actions have improved the school. They are proud to work at the school, and they appreciate leaders' concern for their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders check that all adults who work in school are suitable to work with children. They provide all staff with regular training. As a result, staff understand the vital importance of safeguarding. They report any concerns promptly.

Leaders are persistent in engaging the help of outside agencies, such as children's services. They make sure that pupils get the support they need as quickly as possible.

Pupils learn how to stay safe, both online and in the wider world.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not precisely identified what knowledge pupils must know and in what order. As a result, pupils' knowledge in these subjects is not as strong. Leaders need to ensure that they complete their work on refining the curriculum so that staff know what pupils must learn and remember.
- The management of pupils' behaviour at lunchtime is not consistent. As a result, the behaviour of some pupils during lunchtime is not to the same high standard seen in classrooms. Leaders need to ensure that behaviour at lunchtime is as good as behaviour in classrooms.

Background

When we have judged 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 predecessor school to be good in April 2014.

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	146482
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10268476
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	375
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Margaret Clements
Headteacher	Simon Anderson (head of school)
Website	www.irchester.northants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since April 2023.
- The school offers a breakfast club.
- The school does not make use of any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, senior leaders, groups of staff and groups of pupils.
- The inspector met with trust leaders and representatives from the board of trustees, as well as school governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the

curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke to pupils about their learning.

- The inspector listened to pupils read to an adult.
- The inspector considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe. Meetings were held with the school's designated safeguarding leads to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding. The inspector also scrutinised the school's single central record.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and considered their responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. He also considered the responses to the staff survey.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including school improvement plans and behaviour records.

Inspection team

Martyn Skinner, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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