

Inspection of Inkpen Primary School

Weavers Lane, Inkpen, Hungerford, Berkshire RG17 9QE

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Every pupil receives a warm welcome at the start of each day. Staff care for pupils extremely well and get to know them as individuals. Pupils are proud to attend school and they respect staff. They feel part of a family that is focused on helping them to succeed and keeping them safe. When unkindness or bullying is identified, staff act swiftly and effectively to address it. Pupils trust staff to listen to them and sort out any worries they may have.

The headteacher has raised expectations of what pupils can achieve, but this is not yet fully realised. Pupils come to school ready to learn and to do their best. Pupils appreciate opportunities to explore their talents and interests in a growing range of clubs and visits. Many of them take part in the creative, sporting or cultural activities the school offers. Pupils look forward to learning new things with their friends.

Parents are happy to send their children to this school. They value the school's nurturing 'family feel' and how dedicated staff are in this inclusive setting. They are excited about the positive impact that the headteacher is having on improving the school and specifically their children's learning. Parents who responded to the questionnaire would unanimously recommend this school to others.

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

This is a strongly improving school. Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has prioritised the essential actions needed to deliver important improvements, including a sharp focus on improving the curriculum. However, there is still more to do to make sure the quality of education is fully effective.

Pupils do not learn as securely as they should. Leaders have rightly prioritised English and mathematics and have developed ambitious curriculum plans. This is now already helping pupils build their knowledge and skills over time more effectively. However, in a few other subjects, the curriculum is still being refined. For example, in science pupils remember the exciting and engaging experiments they do rather than what they have learned. Teachers do not always check that pupils are secure in their understanding before moving on to learn something new. As a result, pupils' achievement remains too variable for most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

In the early years, there is a well-organised and stimulating learning environment. Staff interact well with children to develop their language and communication skills. This helps children to learn well across all areas. Children make a good start to their school life. This is because they benefit from well-planned activities to help them become more confident and independent.

The school has a truly inclusive ethos. Every pupil is welcomed and made to feel a part of the Inkpen community quickly. Leaders have put in place an effective process that identifies different needs. Training and ongoing support develops staff

understanding of how best to meet and deliver these needs as intended. This is helping to improve how pupils with SEND can learn more successfully alongside their peers.

Leaders recognise that ensuring all children learn to read securely is essential. They have introduced a well-structured phonics programme which begins as soon as children join in the early years. The books pupils read support learning because they are closely matched to the sounds they know so that they build fluency. Staff deliver lessons precisely and check understanding before moving on. This helps give pupils the best start possible when learning to read. Those who are struggling are identified quickly and receive help from well-trained staff.

Pupils behave well and demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils play happily with their friends at breaktimes and are kind to each other. The vast majority of pupils attend well. Leaders are reducing the barriers affecting the attendance of some individuals effectively.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their interests and talents beyond what they study. Leaders offer a wide range of clubs from pottery to gardening to dance. This includes putting on performances at the local Watermill Theatre to build confidence and teamwork. Pupils appreciate and benefit from music workshops and lessons, in addition to weekly activities such as swimming.

Governors have undertaken extensive training and are committed to providing the stronger challenge that the school needs, for instance around pupils' learning. Governors work closely with leaders to develop strategic plans and check carefully that these are working as intended. Governors are equipped to offer leaders useful support to help them achieve their ambitious goals.

The headteacher has secured substantial support from parents, staff and pupils since taking up post. Staff appreciate the training and opportunities that they can now access and benefit from. There is a real sense of teamwork among staff united with a common purpose. Staff value how considerate leaders are for their workload and well-being, without compromising the school's ambitions to make further improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a secure safeguarding culture. Staff are trained to accurately identify any potential issues promptly. They understand the school's processes and use them effectively. Leaders' record-keeping is comprehensive and well organised. Governors monitor leaders' work to safeguard pupils closely and make sure the right checks are in place when staff are recruited. Leaders secure any necessary additional support for pupils and their families swiftly, working effectively with external agencies. Leaders keep issues under constant review. Pupils learn

about healthy relationships, appropriate boundaries and behaviour, and how to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Improvements to the curriculum are still relatively new and therefore the full impact on what pupils are learning and remembering is not yet evident. As a result, pupils' achievement, including pupils with SEND, is inconsistent. Leaders should continue to implement their ambitious curriculum plans in their entirety and monitor their impact over time.
- Leaders are not yet ensuring that teachers accurately check how pupils' knowledge and understanding are developing. In some subjects, teachers do not have a clear oversight of how well the curriculum is meeting the needs of all pupils or what gaps in their knowledge pupils have. Leaders should ensure that assessment is effective so that learning meets all pupils' needs effectively.

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	109817
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	10284818
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Emma Wordsworth
Headteacher	Frances Buck
Website	www.inkpenprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 20 July 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a small primary school with three classes. Pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes. The number of pupils on roll is lower than at the time of the previous inspection report. There are currently no Year 6 pupils in the school.
- The headteacher started working at the school in September 2022.
- There has been significant turnover of staff since the previous inspection.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- Since the previous inspection, the number of children in the early years is now fewer than five pupils. Inspectors have decided not to give a grade because there is a risk that it is possible to identify individual children because the numbers are small.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the continuing impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, school improvement adviser, subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with 3 governors, including the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector also held a virtual meeting with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors visited a range of lessons. They also looked at samples of work that pupils produced over time. The lead inspector examined a range of curriculum planning and talked about how teaching in these subjects builds pupils' knowledge over time. The lead inspector also heard pupils read to a known adult.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of recruitment checks, talked to the leader responsible for safeguarding and looked at the school's records. Inspectors also talked with governors, staff and pupils about the safeguarding culture.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, school development plan and relevant school policies.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, along with their written comments. Inspectors also talked with parents on the afternoon of the first day of inspection.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views about their learning, what behaviour is like at the school and whether they felt safe. Inspectors also talked to pupils about their views on personal development and the wider school curriculum.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff to gather their views on how leaders support them. Inspectors took account of their responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum planning in other subjects.

Inspection team

Gareth Flemington, lead inspector His Majesty's Inspector

Chris Parker His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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