

# Inspection of Ilam C of E (VA) Primary School

Ilam, Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 2AZ

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Inspection dates: 12 and 13 September 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

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

Ilam Church of England school is at the very heart of the community. Pupils are polite and are proud to welcome visitors to their school. This is because staff set high expectations. They are supportive and care for pupils. As a result, pupils flourish in this nurturing, happy school. Staff set the bar high, and pupils rise to the challenge.

Pupils show confidence and they care for one another. The values of caring, courage, friendliness, forgiving, respect and resilience permeate everyday life in school. Pupils show a 'can-do' attitude to new experiences.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Wherever you go in school, you see acts of kindness. Older pupils help younger pupils at lunchtime. They care for the youngest pupils on the playground. On the rare occasion when pupils fall out, adults help them to put things right quickly.

Pupils enjoy going on trips. These trips are matched to what they are learning in lessons. For example, the whole school visits a lake beach to deepen their understanding of beaches and the environment. Learning is exciting and pupils are succeeding.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have worked to improve the school curriculum. As part of this work, leaders are developing an ambitious curriculum for all pupils.

Children get off to a great start in reading in early years. Staff read to children and encourage them to talk about books. This is helping to develop pupils' listening skills. Daily phonics lessons ensure pupils learn and practise new sounds in their reading. Phonics is taught well. Staff quickly identify pupils who need extra help, and they make sure these pupils get the support they need.

Once pupils can read fluently, staff make sure pupils have lots of opportunities to read widely and often. There are several events in school to promote a love of reading. These events include visits to the library van, visits from authors, and the whole school getting involved in reading a book together.

Leaders have strengthened the teaching of mathematics and foundation subjects. Learning now builds on what pupils know. Staff subject knowledge is strong, and pupils are succeeding. For example, from the early years, pupils have lots of opportunities to talk about number in their play. Children get plenty of meaningful practice, which helps them become confident with number.

Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn in all areas of the curriculum. However, there is some variation in how well assessment is used. In

some lessons, assessment is not always used effectively enough to pick up pupils' gaps in knowledge or misconceptions. This means some pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is highly effective. Leaders quickly identify pupils with SEND. Staff provide appropriate support for pupils with SEND to help them learn the same curriculum as their peers. Additional adults provide effective support in lessons and through interventions.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Routines are quickly in place for pupils right from the start in early years. Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They enjoy the wide range of experiences on offer at Illam. They participate in a wide range of visits and residential adventure activities. Adults make great use of the location of the school by providing pupils with lots of opportunities for outdoor learning through forest school, orienteering and the much-anticipated Year 6 walk up Bunster Hill to hear the school bell rung. The whole school community gets involved in fundraising. For example, the pupils participated in a marathon run to raise awareness and funds for a meningitis charity.

The school has been through a period of change. Leaders, including governors, have taken effective steps to improve the quality of education at the school over recent years. However, leaders recognise that they do not have a full and accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This means that they are not always able to identify quickly when things are working well and when things need further improvement.

Staff are proud to be part of the school team. They appreciate the support the school leaders give them. They say that leaders care about their well-being and are considerate of their workload.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Teachers do not consistently use assessment to identify precisely what pupils need to learn next. This means that teachers do not always know what pupils know and can do or where there are gaps and misconceptions. The school should review its approaches to assessment to ensure all pupils are learning well across the curriculum.
- The school does not monitor the impact of its work systematically. This means leaders are not able to identify strengths and areas for improvement quickly enough. The school should continue to focus on developing effective self-evaluation in all aspects of school life.

## 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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124337
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268084
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	50
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Jon Cushing
<b>Headteacher</b>	Emily Johnson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ilam.staffs.sch.uk">www.ilam.staffs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 May 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school had no children in nursery at the time of the inspection. Children in the nursery start at different times throughout the year.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- Leaders provide a before-school breakfast club and after-school activity clubs.
- The school is part of the Church of England Diocese of Lichfield. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, was carried out in October 2016.

## Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.



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