



Ilam CofE (VA) Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124337
LEA Staffordshire
Inspection number 281695
Inspection dates 20 June 2006 to 20 June 2006
Reporting inspector Susan Orpin AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ilam
School category	Voluntary aided		Ashbourne
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Derbyshire DE6 2AZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01335 350316
Number on roll	70	Fax number	01335 350316
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Nick Smith
Date of previous inspection	12 July 2000	Headteacher	Mr Les Biddulph

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ilam is a very small, rural Church of England primary school. Pupils are mainly White British, all with English as their first language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Numbers eligible for free school meals are well below average. More pupils join the school after the Reception Year than is usual.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school – as it judges itself to be. It is a happy place where the staff work well as a team and pupils flourish because of the good level of care they receive. Good teaching helps pupils to achieve well and standards are exceptionally high by the time they leave. Pupils make rapid progress in Years 5 and 6 because teaching here ensures that the work is well adapted to the needs of different groups. Progress is slower in Years 3 and 4. This is reflected in the school's own tracking data and is because assessments of pupils' prior learning are not as well used in these years to adapt work to the progress pupils have made and their different abilities. Most pupils know what their targets are but some are not as sure as they should be about what they are aiming for and how to improve their work, particularly in writing.

Provision for the children in Reception is good and they make good progress. Children's skills in communication and their confidence are particularly well promoted through good teaching. By the time they start in Year 1, children's attainment exceeds the goals expected for their age in all areas of learning and pupils continue to make good progress through Years 1 and 2.

Pupils' personal development and their well-being are good. Pupils very much enjoy school and their behaviour is excellent. The pupils' understanding of different cultures is not as well developed as it might be.

Leadership and management are good and so is the school's self-evaluation. The school provides good value for money. It knows where it needs to improve and has the capacity to do so. This has been demonstrated by the improvements in standards since the previous inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the assessments made of pupils' progress are used more effectively to plan their next steps for learning through Years 3 and 4, so that all pupils make consistent progress.
- Ensure that pupils know what they are aiming for and how to improve, especially their writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Children start school with attainment that is often higher than might be expected. They make good progress in Reception, particularly in language, and gain confidence so that by the time they join Year 1, they exceed the goals expected for their age in all areas of learning.

Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Although standards for the current Year 2 are average, this represents good achievement for this group of pupils. Their standards are slightly higher in mathematics and slightly lower in writing. In Years 3 and 4, whilst

achievement is satisfactory, the rate of some pupils' progress slows because assessments are not used sufficiently in planning the teaching and learning. The work is either too easy or too hard for pupils at times. However, pupils' rate of progress increases rapidly in Years 5 and 6. By the end of Year 6, pupils are achieving exceptionally high standards. The school is on track to meet the targets set for Year 6, which are suitably challenging. Standards in science are particularly high. The school has recognised that standards in writing are slightly lower and improving pupils' achievement in this area has been identified as a priority.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress towards their individual targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, is good. Their enjoyment of school is outstanding and this is reflected in their good attendance and positive attitudes. Their behaviour is excellent. Reception children respond well to adults' high expectations, learning to cooperate, share and to take turns. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the times when they go on residential visits where they learn an appropriate range of skills to help develop their independence. Pupils reflect well on what they learn from visits, including those to the church. However, their understanding of different cultures is less well developed than that of their own. Pupils know how to keep healthy and safe. They take full advantage of the wide range of sporting activities to keep fit and they make healthy choices about what to eat at lunchtime. Through their active involvement in the local community, including the church and Dovedale House, pupils gain a good understanding of how they can make a difference to their community. Their success in learning basic skills and their ability to work together effectively set them up very well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers capture the classes' enthusiasm for learning and use questions skilfully to help deepen pupils' understanding. The purposes of lessons are made clear, as in a Years 1 and 2 literacy lesson where the teacher explained that the class would learn to scan text, and gave different challenging targets to each group. Tasks are interesting and relevant, such as the World Cup football card game used to help Years 3 and 4 pupils learn how to write instructions. Teaching assistants are used effectively, sharing a common approach that has been planned well with teachers.

In Reception, children are taught well so they are interested and enjoy learning. Pupils continue to be taught well in Years 1 and 2, creatively grouped so they learn with others of similar ability. In Years 3 and 4, teaching does not fully take account of

pupils' different abilities. Information from assessments is not used enough to vary tasks. Expectations are not as high as they should be for some pupils and so their progress slows. In Years 5 and 6, there is more consistent challenge, so pupils' progress accelerates.

Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but they do not always give pupils clear guidance on what to do next, particularly in writing. Consequently, some pupils continue to make the same mistakes in spelling and punctuation or are unsure of exactly what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and taught through relevant topics that make the work interesting. Careful planning ensures that pupils in mixed age classes cover the full range of work. In most classes, the curriculum is well adapted to meet most pupils' needs. A good programme of personal, social and health education supports pupils' personal development and teaches them to stay healthy and safe. Although pupils are developing good skills in ICT, some opportunities are missed for pupils to use these in other subjects.

An excellent range of visits and clubs enriches the curriculum and supports pupils' personal development. Many take part in sporting, drama and musical activities, as well as learning French.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is good and contributes to their enjoyment of school and sense of well-being. Children are helped to settle into Reception well and liaison with the local secondary school helps pupils transfer smoothly to their new school. Parents are confident that their children are safe and well cared for. Pupils value the support they receive and the views of many are reflected in the comment of one pupil who said 'Everyone here is nice and there is no bullying.' The arrangements for the safety and protection of pupils are good. The importance given to promoting a healthy lifestyle effectively shapes pupils' attitudes to health, including diet and exercise. Guidance for pupils in their work is generally good but there is room for improvement, especially in helping them to understand what their targets are and how to improve against them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good, ensuring a firm focus on pupils' personal development and good achievement in their work. The headteacher knows individual pupils very well and has a clear view of their needs and what needs to be done to improve the school. He provides clear direction and is well supported by the senior

teacher in day-to-day management. There are detailed records to track pupils' achievement and these are used effectively to target additional help. However, these need to be updated more regularly, which the school plans to do. Governance is good. Governors are very supportive and have helped the school to become a focal point of its community. The role of the subject coordinators is developing well, given the demands made on the small number of staff, most of whom are part time. The school's self-evaluation is well informed by checks made on teaching and learning. This gives the school an accurate picture of where improvements are needed. The school actively involves pupils, governors and parents by taking note of their views and acting on them, for example, recent consultations have led to a review of school uniform. The school has a good track record of achieving its aims. Its capacity to improve further is reflected in the improvement in the standards pupils have achieved since the previous inspection.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. Your school is a very friendly and happy place and we enjoyed meeting you. This is what we found out about your school:

You enjoy coming to school, work hard, achieve well and reach high standards by the time you leave.

Your behaviour is excellent and you are making a difference to your community.

You are taught well and the grown-ups are good at helping you learn and keeping you safe and healthy.

The people in charge of the school want the best for you. We have asked them to make sure that the work you do in Years 3 and 4 helps you to learn a bit faster. We have also asked your teachers to be very clear in helping you know exactly what you have to do to improve.

Your school gives you a good start and the grown-ups are rightly proud of you. You can help to make your school even better by continuing your outstanding efforts.

We wish you all the best for the future.