



Isleham Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110791
Local Authority CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Inspection number 288775
Inspection date 20 November 2006
Reporting inspector Keith Sadler

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Malting Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Isleham, Ely
Age range of pupils	4-11		Cambridgeshire CB7 5RZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01638 780336
Number on roll (school)	202	Fax number	01638 780336
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs M Jolly
		Headteacher	Mrs V J Ellerker
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2003		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. It serves the villages of Isleham and Chippenham. Almost all pupils are White British but a few are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Four pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. A small proportion of pupils come from American military families stationed in the nearby bases. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is about half the national average. The number with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than that in schools of this size nationally. Attainment on entry is at levels expected.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Isleham is an outstanding school. Its statement of purpose sets high store in engendering positive attitudes towards learning. This aim is very well met and the effects are immediately evident on entering the school. Almost all pupils thrive in the highly affirmative and caring environment. The staff work exceptionally well together, ensuring that pupils make outstanding progress, learn well and thoroughly enjoy the rich range of opportunities offered by the excellent curriculum. A measure of its success is the unanimous support of parents. This is summed up in the comment made by a parent whose family recently moved to the area, 'All the staff have been enormously helpful to us and have done their utmost to ensure our children are happy and integrated well into the school.' The outstanding provision in the Reception class enables children to settle quickly and they are helped to feel confident and secure. As one parent said, 'It's been a brilliant start for our daughter and a positive experience that will put her in good stead for her future school years.'

Children have great fun at school. Their personal development is good with outstanding features. They behave well, support each other and enjoy working together such as during team days when pupils of all ages study topics together. They are very keen to work hard and are extremely well motivated by the outstanding teaching. Overall, teachers prepare work which is very well matched to pupils' needs and they provide both interesting and challenging activities. Pupils have a good understanding of what is expected of them and how they can improve. As one pupil suggested 'Our teachers are nice and friendly and help us to learn.'

Leadership, management and governance are outstanding. The headteacher demonstrates exemplary leadership skills and sets a clear agenda for raising standards. She has an unerring dedication to ensuring that the school continues to improve. In this she is supported exceptionally well by the deputy headteacher, staff and governors. As a consequence of the united effort, close team work and excellent provision, pupils in the main make rapid progress in all year groups and achieve outstandingly well. By the time that they reach Year 6, standards are exceptionally high overall. Pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science is excellent. The systems used for checking the progress of pupils who find learning hard are not quite as effective as those for other pupils. As a result, the progress made by these pupils is sometimes slightly slower than their peers.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that learning plans for pupils who find learning hard are kept up-to-date and their progress is even more closely monitored.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Due to the excellent provision in Reception children achieve well. The majority exceed the expected learning goals for pupils entering Year 1. This rapid progress is maintained in the infant classes. The results of the 2006 tests at the end of Year 2 show that standards are above average particularly in writing and mathematics. An exceptionally high proportion of pupils gained the higher levels.

As a result of the consistently excellent teaching and learning in the four junior classes, progress remains generally rapid. For some pupils with learning difficulties is not so quite as quick because there is too little checking of their progress against personal learning targets. Nevertheless, overall achievement is excellent. At the end of Year 6, provisional results of the national tests show that standards are exceptionally high overall with the majority of pupils gaining the higher level in English, mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Some aspects are excellent. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This is the result of exceptional provision. Pupils thoroughly enjoy helping each other. For example, pupils in Year 6 take great care of reception children at lunchtime and escort them from the dining hall to the playground. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and this leads to them having a high regard for the importance of the community. Pupils take part in making important decisions about the school through, for example, the healthy school committee, playground committee and being house captains. Behaviour is good both in lessons and around the school. Pupils have a thorough understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. Attendance is at the national average because a few families take holidays in term-time. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives because they work well together and have excellent literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Pupils learn quickly and well because teachers expect high standards and accept nothing less. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, the teacher's excellent explanations, positive encouragement and careful nurturing of pupils' growing understanding helped them to achieve exceptionally well when learning to multiply. In this, and in most lessons, teachers use the interactive whiteboards exceptionally well to enliven learning and to clarify their teaching.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is excellent and meets pupils' needs and talents exceptionally well. Working closely together, staff constantly review and adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of pupils. They search for fresh ways to make activities exciting and relevant. This includes special themed days, which often involve pupils working in mixed age groups, in such activities as House days, multicultural days, the Healthy Schools Week. In addition, teachers plan themes, such as the current Year 5 and 6 work on the Ancient Greeks, to include a wide range of subjects. This helps to enliven learning and engage the pupils' interest. In addition, there are other outstanding features. These include the excellent provision for music and the wide range of visits and visitors to the school. These enhance and enrich pupils' learning experiences very well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and support that pupils receive is outstanding. All the staff know the pupils very well. They ensure that they are kept safe and that there are high levels of care. All arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are excellent and staff are particularly well-trained in protection and health and safety procedures. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and this is reflected by parents who are unanimous in their appreciation of this. There are good systems for checking progress and the setting of targets for almost all pupils, particularly in reading and writing. Currently the school does not have a system of target-setting for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Although their progress is at least good this limits the school in its ability to ensure that these pupils make the same rapid progress as their peers.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Because of the excellent quality of its leadership and management, the school has maintained and built on high standards that were reported in the last inspection. There is outstanding capacity for further improvement. Everyone matters in this school and teamwork is one of the keys to its success. Teachers with subject responsibility are trained exceptionally well for their work by senior staff and they provide strong and effective leadership in their areas of responsibility. Planning for improvement is thorough and based on the school's robust, accurate self-evaluation. Parents, pupils, staff and governors have an opportunity to contribute to the planning and to share in successes when targets are achieved. The school maintains excellent partnerships with local schools and organisations such as Soham Village College and Cambridge University. Links with the village and church are highly beneficial and are used successfully to enhance learning. There is a deep commitment to staff development and this is evidenced by the school's Investors in People status and the encouragement that staff are given to extend their own training. The learning environment is spacious

and of high quality. Resources generally are used effectively so that the school gives particularly good value for money.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 November 2006

Dear Pupils

Isleham C of E Primary School, Malting Lane, Isleham, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB7 5RZ

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school. You told me that you love school and lessons and I can see why! Here are the things that I found out:

- Your school is an outstanding one because almost everyone makes excellent progress, you attain very high standards and you thoroughly enjoy all that the school has to offer.
- Your teachers work very hard to make sure that lessons are fun and challenging for you.
- Your behaviour is good, you know how to keep yourselves safe. You delight in helping younger children and take your responsibilities seriously.
- Your teachers make sure that you have lots of exciting things to do including making many visits and having lots of clubs at lunchtime and after school.
- You are very lucky to have such an excellent headteacher. Along with the governors and other teachers, she leads and manages the school exceptionally well.

I have asked your teachers to write up learning plans for pupils who find learning hard and to check that the targets set in these plans are met.

You can help the school to continue to be so successful by working hard and by meeting the targets set for you.

With best wishes

Keith Sadler Inspector