

The Iver Village Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110239
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310231
Inspection dates	19–20 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Mike Thompson

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs R Wingrove
Headteacher	Mr C A Collis
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
School address	High Street Iver SL0 9QA
Telephone number	01753 653059
Fax number	01753 650027

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Iver Village Junior is smaller than average. Most of its pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion from minority ethnic groups is similar to what is found nationally. A very small number of pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion with a learning difficulty or disability varies from year to year; overall, it is slightly above the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The Iver Village Junior is a good school. Its success in ensuring that pupils achieve well stems from the strong emphasis placed on giving pupils the tools for learning by developing their skills in thinking. Allied to this are good teaching and a curriculum that is effective in developing pupils' skills as learners.

The parents hold their school in high regard because of the good progress made by their children. In particular, they appreciate the work that it does in developing its pupils' personal skills. One of the many positive comments appended to the inspection questionnaires sums up the views expressed in many others when noting, 'I am really impressed by the sense of independence and responsibility that the school fosters in children.'

Attainment on entry varies from year to year. The assessments carried out in the adjacent infant school show that the attainment of the pupils is broadly average at the time of leaving Year 2. Although there is no question about the accuracy of these assessments before the summer holidays, pupils' skills on entering the juniors are frequently found to have declined over the summer break. School records show that there are wide variations in the attainment of individual pupils when they begin in the juniors and that the school successfully builds on pupils' different starting points. It is particularly good at broadening pupils' experiences, improving their skills in speaking and listening, and developing its pupils as independent learners. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics, and this represents good progress when the starting points of these pupils are considered. Standards in science are, however, significantly below average. This situation stems from weaknesses in assessment in this subject and in the lack of focus on monitoring the effectiveness of science lessons. The school is working hard to improve standards in science and has recently introduced a new system to help check on pupils' progress through periodic assessments. However, the impact of this is not yet evident.

The key to the school's success is the pupils' good personal development and well-being. The school develops its pupils as confident, caring, independent and thoughtful learners. The pupils enjoy learning and appreciate their lessons. The teachers keep a very close check on how well their pupils are doing, particularly in English and mathematics. They are good at using what they know to ensure that their pupils make good gains in their learning.

Iver Junior is an inclusive school in which each child matters. All pupils are warmly welcomed and equally valued. They are well cared for and feel safe and happy. With the exception of science, the school provides good academic guidance for its pupils. It is able to do this because it has developed comprehensive systems for checking on what individual pupils know and can do.

The driving force behind the school's success is its good leadership and management at all levels and the teamwork and commitment of all staff. The headteacher, ably supported by his deputy, gives a strong lead. The school has developed a range of successful partnerships to help improve the learning of pupils and to access additional help or expertise as needed. However, it is not content to rest on its laurels and knows that these could be even better. For example, a small number of parents would like communications to be improved. The school has made good progress since its last inspection, and the strong commitment shown to analyse the impact of its work and bring about further improvement leaves it well placed to continue to develop in future years.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in science by improving the quality of assessment in this subject and ensuring that monitoring includes lesson observations.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The results of the 2007 national tests for pupils in Year 6 showed that standards were broadly in line with the national average in English and mathematics, but significantly below average in science. This continues to be the case. Pupils make good progress from their levels on entry in developing skills in literacy and numeracy because they benefit from the good teaching, very detailed assessment of their learning needs, and the good ratio of adults to pupils in classes. They receive a lot of individual attention whenever they need it, and each step in their learning is closely checked. In science, pupils make satisfactory progress. Their learning is sometimes adversely affected by weaknesses in assessment, which mean that teachers do not always pitch work at suitably challenging levels.

There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and the small number of pupils in the early stages of learning English, make good progress because of the good quality extra help they are given.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. They behave well, both in lessons and around the school. They are attentive, show respect, and are polite and well mannered. Pupils say they enjoy school, especially the wide range of clubs, which include archery, dance and football. An awareness of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle is well developed, and the pupils can explain clearly the actions needed to keep safe and free from harm. They enjoy the sense of achievement and belonging promoted through their various roles and responsibilities around the school. Year 6 pupils tend to take the lead in these, although some are less keen on some of the canteen duties at lunchtime because of the mess made by others.

The school council is a proactive force and has been successful in ensuring that pupils' ideas are shared and acted upon. The school ethos of working together as a community, along with the positive impact of work to develop pupils' independence as learners, prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education and their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils learn well because of the impact of the school's work in developing their skills as both thinkers and learners and also because of the way in which all lessons include clear guidance for them about what will make their learning successful.

The weakness in otherwise good teaching is in teachers' use of assessment in science. This means that sometimes work does not provide the necessary variations of challenge necessary to meet the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities in the same class. Although no science

lessons were seen because of the way in which the timetable was arranged, a scrutiny of pupils' books showed that teachers' marking does not always provide pupils with clear pointers as to how they can improve.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities learn well because skilled learning support assistants give them a large amount of individual attention and this helps them to keep up.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A particularly noteworthy feature of the curriculum is the promotion of key skills for learning. The enrichment of the curriculum is good as there is a wide range of clubs and after school activities for the pupils. These are well attended because they are enjoyable and pupils are keen to be involved. The pupils' personal, social and health education is a strong feature of the school. Work for mixed age classes is carefully planned over a two-year programme to ensure that pupils learn well. There is a clear focus on the acquisition of skills in literacy and numeracy and the application of these skills in most other subjects. However, the application of skills in science is still underdeveloped. The pupils identified as having learning disabilities and difficulties are provided for well. The school is keen to develop its pupils' individual talents across the curriculum. For example, it arranges peripatetic instrumental tuition for just over a quarter of the pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care is a strong feature of the work of the school and there are secure procedures for making sure pupils are safe and behave well. The school has a comprehensive means of tracking pupils' progress in English and mathematics and consequently teachers know their pupils well. The information gathered is generally used well to set targets to help pupils improve their learning. Most pupils know their targets and say that they are aware of what they need to do to make their work better. Target-setting in science is weak because of weaknesses in assessment. Most parents feel that the school keeps them well informed. However, there is a small minority who do not feel that they have as much information as they would like, particularly those whose children have learning disabilities and difficulties. Nevertheless, these pupils, and those who are learning English as an additional language, are supported successfully in lessons. Procedures for promoting attendance are having a positive effect. However, a few families do not support the school well enough in ensuring their children's regular attendance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's good team of teachers is constantly seeking ways to improve through reflection and evaluation of all aspects of their practice. Initiatives, such as the work to improve pupils' skills in spelling, have had a significant impact on pupils' learning. Leadership and management at all levels are effective.

The senior managers of the school know its strengths and weaknesses well, and priorities are set out clearly in the school improvement plan. However, the criteria used to determine the success of initiatives are not always set out in ways that make them objectively measurable. Senior managers regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning. So far, this monitoring

has rightly focused on English and mathematics. The school acknowledges that there have been no observations of science lessons, so managers do not know how effective teaching is in this subject and what its impact is on pupils' attainment.

The governing body makes a good contribution to the work of the school. Governors know the school well and successfully act as 'critical friends'. However, their monitoring is not always informed enough by reference to the national framework for judging the effectiveness of schools.

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Annex A

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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	2
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

29 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Iver Village Junior School, Iver, SL0 9QA

On behalf of your inspectors, I would like to thank you very much for being so helpful when we came to visit your school. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at your work.

Your parents think that you go to a good school, and we agree. One of the things we particularly like about your school is the way that you become good learners.

Here is a list of some of the other things we like.

- You make good progress.
- You all follow the values your school teaches you. Everyone in your school is friendly and welcoming, and you behave well.
- You learn well in lessons because the teaching you are given is good.
- All of the adults in your school make sure that you are well looked after.
- Your headteacher and the other people who help run your school are doing a good job.

Every school has something that could be better, so this is what we have asked your school to concentrate on to help you to learn more.

- We would like your school to improve the way that you learn in science. At the moment, your standards in science are not as high as they should be, so we would like your teachers to become better at finding out exactly what you need to do next to help you improve. This should mean that your work becomes harder and makes you think even more. I am sure that you are ready for this challenge! We would also like senior staff to visit your science lessons to find out what needs to be improved.

Your teachers need your help to make the school even better than it already is. Most of you come to school regularly, but we know that a few of you are not as good at attending. Your teachers cannot help you to improve your work unless you help them, and the best way that you can do this is to make sure that you come to school on time and do not take time off when you should not.

With best wishes for your future success,

Mike Thompson

Lead Inspector