

Iver Heath Infant School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110343
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310266
Inspection date	4 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Keith Williams

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr L Harris
Headteacher	Mrs J H Smith
Date of previous school inspection	30 September 2002
School address	Slough Road Iver Heath Iver SL0 0DT
Telephone number	01753 652262
Fax number	01753 653310

Age group	3-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the reasons for the school's very strong, and improving, performance in the national assessments, and the extent to which current pupils are maintaining high standards; how well assessment is used to plan and challenge pupils of different abilities; and whether the leaders have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness.

Evidence was gathered from: lesson observations, discussion with staff, pupils and a governor, the scrutiny of pupils' work, assessment data and documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The remainder are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being those of Indian heritage. An above average proportion is learning English as an additional language. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. More pupils are identified with learning difficulties than is found in most schools. Amongst these pupils are those with moderate learning, speech, language, communication and hearing difficulties and physical disability. In addition, the proportion in receipt of a statement of special educational need is above average. The school has Investors in People status, the Active Schools Mark and two national awards for information and communication technology (ICT).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Parents describe Iver Heath Infant School and Nursery as 'cracking', 'excellent', 'wonderful' and 'A+'. The inspection confirms their overwhelmingly positive views. The school provides an outstanding education and, as a result, pupils make excellent progress in their all-round development. Pupils join the school with attainment that is typical for their age, although increasing proportions start school with language or communication difficulties. They achieve outstandingly well to reach exceptionally high standards by the end of Year 2.

Instrumental in the school's success is the way that the excellent headteacher, formidable senior team and talented staff work tirelessly to ensure that pupils are able to fulfil their potential, regardless of background or ability. They place a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' personal development and raising their self-esteem. Pupils are shown how to succeed and they are richly praised when they do so. Support for pupils with learning difficulties or disability, some of whom have significant special educational needs, is of the highest order. Parents are very appreciative of the school's efforts, one saying, 'I can't praise the school enough.' The learning and welfare of all pupils, but especially those in greatest need, are monitored very carefully. Support staff are deployed thoughtfully and excellent links with outside agencies enhance this provision. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English are very well supported, too, so that they soon gain confidence and make equally rapid progress to their classmates. Pupils' health and safety are secured through rigorous and robust checks on the suitability of adults to work with children and activities are analysed carefully to identify any potential risk.

Pupils' academic success is built upon this caring, supportive and safe environment. As a result, pupils report that they feel safe and well cared for, and this adds to their immense enjoyment of school. They show a great thirst for learning, behave impeccably and concentrate with remarkable maturity. The curriculum is imaginative and innovative, focusing strongly on promoting literacy and numeracy, but also provides excellent links between subjects that help make learning meaningful. ICT is a particular strength and this has been recognised nationally. Pupils appreciate their teachers' efforts to make learning fun. Lessons are lively and often involve drama, role-play or stories to reinforce pupils' understanding and capture their attention. Pupils also enjoy the very wide range of activities provided outside of lessons. Pupils' personal development is planned very carefully and ensures that they are very well prepared for their future lives. They have a very good understanding of how to be healthy and safe. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to express their views. They have been particularly influential in devising helpful school rules. Attendance levels having risen in recent years, although the rate has been affected by significant bouts of illness and by the chronic sickness experienced by a few pupils.

Self-evaluation is very strong and this has been instrumental in the school's improvement in recent years. School leaders gather a wide range of information about the performance of staff and pupils. They monitor the work in lessons and pupils' books very carefully and evaluate test results and other assessments thoroughly to identify what is working well and what needs to improve. Weaknesses are tackled determinedly. Of particular note is the way that teachers use the results of their day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress to plan the next steps in their learning, a significant improvement since the last inspection. As a result, the work planned invariably meets the needs of pupils of different abilities and ensures, for example, that more able pupils are challenged consistently. Teachers explain carefully what pupils are expected to learn in lessons and how they will know if they are successful. Helpful written or verbal feedback

and clear targets for their future learning ensure that pupils are well informed about how they are doing and what they should concentrate on next. Teachers' knowledge of the progress made by pupils is greatly enhanced by high quality, challenging questioning by all staff.

Governors contribute considerably to school life and have well organised systems to find out about the school's work and hold the leaders to account. An important outcome of the excellent teaching and monitoring is that the school's performance in the national assessments for pupils in Year 2 has risen consistently in recent years. There is no complacency, however. For example, the school leaders recognised that pupils' performance in reading, whilst still very good, was not quite as strong as the exceptionally high standards reached in writing and mathematics in 2007. Successful efforts to tackle this mean that pupils currently in Year 2 are well on track to reach exceptionally high standards, not just in reading, but also in writing and mathematics. Given their track record, the school is exceptionally well placed to maintain its considerable strengths and improve still further. Leaders have accurately identified how the school can improve in its development plan. Amongst these priorities are exciting plans to extend the already excellent provision for ICT. This will provide, for example, opportunities for pupils to create their own animations; increased access to school information for parents and exploring even better use of computers to monitor pupils' progress.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

As in Key Stage 1, very strong teamwork amongst staff underpins the exceptional provision for the youngest children. From being an area for improvement when the school was last inspected, the Foundation Stage is now a considerable strength. The school's successful efforts to enhance pupils' language skills starts in the Nursery. Here, children thrive in a calm, supportive, yet challenging environment and make an excellent start to their education. Their very brisk progress continues in the 'rising fives' and Reception classes. As a result of excellent planning, teaching and assessment, the children achieve very well and most reach the goals expected of them by the end of Reception. Outdoor provision has improved, too, and each class benefits from regular access to their outdoor areas.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop work already in progress to enhance the already excellent use of ICT.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	1

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

14 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Iver Heath Infant School and Nursery, Iver, SL0 0DT

Thank you for being so friendly when I visited your school recently. Lots of you came to say hello on the playground and I was pleased to meet with some of you to talk about your work and school. Many of your parents told me that they think that your school is fantastic. I agree. It is outstanding. This means that your headteacher and teachers are doing a brilliant job at looking after you and making sure that you can do your best. You do your bit, too, by behaving extremely well, trying very hard in lessons and by being keen to learn.

I am pleased that you enjoy lessons so much because this is one of the reasons why you are doing so well. Teachers work very hard to make them interesting and fun. I enjoyed hearing the story of the big bad wolf in Year 1 and seeing the 'special visitor' in Year 2. (Ask the children who it was!) I was very impressed by the way that children in the Nursery, 'rising fives' and Reception classes worked together and how well Year 2 used the internet. Playtimes are good fun, too, and you play very energetically but very safely.

Even though your school is excellent, Mrs Smith and the other staff want it to get even better, and I know you will want to help by carrying on working very hard. Your teachers have some exciting plans for giving you even more interesting things to do with computers. I think this is a really good way of making your school even better.

Once again, thank you for your help during my visit. You gave me lots of useful information. I wish you good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Williams

Lead Inspector