

Ibstock Junior School and Special Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119931
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	313451
Inspection dates	31 January –1 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Roger Sadler

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	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	Vicki Page
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 0001
School address	Melbourne Road Ibstock LE67 6NP
Telephone number	01530 260481
Fax number	01530 264292

Age group	7-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school has a 10-place special educational needs unit with five pupils currently on its roll. Very few pupils are at an early stage of speaking English. In most years, pupils enter Year 3 with average standards. The current Year 6 pupils entered the school with below average standards. The school has recently received a Healthy Schools Award. Since June 2007, the deputy headteacher has been acting headteacher of the school. Procedures to appoint a permanent headteacher are currently underway.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. The headteacher and other leaders have, since June 2007, worked in close partnership with the local authority. This has resulted in satisfactory leadership and management and improved teaching. Better leadership and teaching have resulted in pupils learning at a faster rate and improved achievement. Pupils' work and school records indicate that pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory. Standards in Years 3 and 4 are in line with national expectations. Although Year 5 and 6 pupils are catching up, standards in Years 5 and 6 remain below nationally expected levels. Few pupils attain above the standards expected of their ages, especially in mathematics, where marking is often less effective than in writing. Staff accurately recognise the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and these pupils also make satisfactory progress.

The quality of teaching and learning and care, guidance and support is satisfactory. The school has recently introduced a system to give pupils targets to aim at in their writing and mathematics, and pupils are beginning to see more clearly where they need to concentrate their efforts to improve their work. In most classes, pupils are given checklists of what is expected and are directed to improve just one or two particular aspects of their work at a time. This is helping speed up rates of progress. The satisfactory curriculum provides sound emphasis on pupils' personal development and is enriched by educational visits and by external specialists, for example, in music. Although standards of writing are rising, school leaders recognise that insufficient attention is paid to developing particular writing skills in subjects other than English.

Too few parents are fully supportive of the school, mainly because they were not kept sufficiently informed about recent changes and future plans concerning the leadership of the school. Pupils are supportive of the school and often enjoy lessons. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the local community, for example, by involvement in charities. Many older pupils enjoy taking responsibility for helping the smooth running of the school and for helping other pupils. They mostly feel safe in school and feel confident that they can turn to any adult for support if they are worried about anything. The school's work towards the Healthy Schools Award has helped pupils clearly understand the importance of regular exercise and a healthy diet. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall and often good in lessons.

Although monitoring and evaluation in the main school have improved and are now satisfactory, monitoring and evaluation are inadequate overall because leaders lack a sufficiently clear view of where improvements in the special unit are most needed. The improvement of the special unit has been given insufficient priority and consequently its overall effectiveness is inadequate. Although governors have recently introduced a programme of training to develop their skills, they have taken insufficient responsibility for communicating with parents or for the overall effectiveness of the special unit.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enable more pupils to attain standards above those expected for their ages, especially in mathematics.
- Improve the overall effectiveness, monitoring and evaluation of the special unit.
- Ensure that governors carry out their roles effectively, particularly in ensuring the confidence of parents and in improving the special unit.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school has placed good emphasis on improving standards in English recently and this work is beginning to bear fruit. Standards of reading and spelling are rising, especially in Years 3 and 4, in part due to greater emphasis on teaching letter sounds. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to speak with partners or in small groups in lessons and make good progress in their speaking and listening skills. Although the more able pupils make sound progress, chances are missed to provide them with extra support and challenge. Consequently, too few pupils attain above levels expected for their ages, especially in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Attendance is satisfactory and rates of attendance have improved. Pupils show a satisfactory level of enjoyment of school. They especially enjoy participating in extra-curricular clubs. Behaviour around school is satisfactory. Pupils often behave well in lessons or class assemblies, especially where work is interesting and where they are challenged. Although the school has improved its procedures for managing behaviour, a small minority of disruptive boys are not effectively managed and are occasionally disruptive in lessons. Pupils' satisfactory skills in writing and mathematics mean that most are on track to leave adequately prepared for life at secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The headteacher, working with the local authority, has introduced much improved ways of evaluating and developing teachers' skills. This is resulting in improved teaching and learning. In many classes, pupils are given clear checklists that help them see exactly where and how to improve particular aspects of their work. This is helping pupils learn at a faster rate. For example, in a Year 3/4 English lesson, pupils made good progress in their writing by comparing their own writing with the teachers' checklist of the key features of explanatory writing. Although teaching assistants often provide effective individual and small group support to those who are falling behind, teaching assistants are sometimes passive and not used enough when the teacher is working with the whole class. Homework is used well in some classes to help pupils learn. In other classes, homework is not always set regularly. Teaching in the unit is sometimes not interesting or challenging enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum in the main school is effectively modified to meet the learning needs of those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Too little additional challenge or guidance is provided for the most able and consequently too few pupils, especially in mathematics, attain

above levels expected of their ages. Although writing skills are carefully and systematically developed in English lessons, too little emphasis is given to correcting and developing writing skills in other subjects. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of clubs, visits and visitors to school. Because the special unit's curriculum does not provide enough interest or stimulation, pupils in the unit do not enjoy school sufficiently.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The headteacher has introduced a much improved and effective assessment system to monitor the progress of individuals and groups as they move through the school. Those at risk of not attaining standards expected of their ages are provided with extra support and this has been an important reason why many pupils are now learning at a faster rate than previously. The school has introduced an effective system to set learning targets for pupils and many pupils show sound awareness of their learning targets. In some classes, teachers' marking, especially in mathematics, does not provide sufficient guidance to pupils on which aspects they should concentrate. Consequently, some pupils lack a sufficiently clear idea of where or how to improve their work. Risk assessments, child protection and other procedures for ensuring pupils' safety and well-being are sound. Procedures for ensuring pupils behave well are mostly satisfactory, except that the school has not established fully effective ways of dealing with the poor behaviour of a small minority of boys.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Since June, the acting headteacher has worked closely with the local authority to raise standards and the staff in the main school are united in a determination to raise standards further. Consequently, rates of progress are improving and standards, especially in writing and reading, are rising. The school has set ambitious targets for English and mathematics and progress towards these targets is accelerating. Monitoring and evaluation in the main school are much improved and the school has a clear and accurate view of where further improvements are needed. Consequently, the school improvement plan concentrates on the correct issues.

Subject leaders are beginning to take a stronger role in leading their subjects. These improvements in the main school indicate that the school has satisfactory capacity to continue to improve. However, monitoring and evaluation are inadequate overall because the school has not sufficiently clearly identified the weaknesses or given sufficient attention to bringing about the necessary improvements in the special unit. The governing body has given too little priority to assuring the overall effectiveness of the special unit or to ensuring effective communication with parents.

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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?	3
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
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

4 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Ibstock Junior School and Special Unit, Ibstock, LE67 6NP

Thank you for making Mrs Taylor and me so welcome when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers, and watching you learn. We think your school is properly run and is giving you a satisfactory education. We are pleased that many of you attend school regularly and that you enjoy the good range of clubs the school arranges for you. Adults provide satisfactory teaching and care, guidance and support for you so that you make sound progress.

We are pleased you understand about eating the right food and playing sports and games so you stay fit and healthy. This is important. Most of you behave well in lessons and your behaviour around school is satisfactory. However, a few boys are occasionally poorly behaved and need to improve their behaviour. Most of you know right from wrong, show enough consideration for others and are friendly and helpful to each other. We were pleased to see how older ones look after the younger ones, so keep up the good work! Those of you who find learning hard make sound progress because teachers and teaching assistants help you learn.

There are three things that we have asked your school to work on:

- Help more of you reach the higher levels in your work, especially in mathematics.
- Improve the way in which the work of the special unit is checked.
- Ensure that governors concentrate more on keeping your parents informed and on improving the special unit.

With very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Sadler Lead inspector