

Ilmington CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125637
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	315276
Inspection date	16 May 2008
Reporting inspector	David Cox

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hugh Beecham
Headteacher	Sally Naish
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2003
School address	Back Street Ilmington Shipston-on-Stour CV36 4LJ
Telephone number	01608 682212
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ilmington CofE Primary School is smaller than average. Nearly all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ilmington CofE Primary School provides its pupils with a good education. Parents are very happy with the school's provision and appreciate the good quality care that their children receive. A typical parent's comment encapsulates the school's successes: 'My child is achieving well in a lovely environment. I feel the school offers pupils the opportunity to excel.'

The good care, guidance and support, together with a rich curriculum, support pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils are very happy and thoroughly enjoy their time at Ilmington. Behaviour in classes and around the school is impeccable. Pupils know how to stay safe and healthy because, for instance, older pupils, supported by high quality adult supervision, ensure younger pupils are safe at lunchtime and break times. During these times, pupils enthusiastically embrace the multitude of activities on offer. Pupils are confident and know what to do if they have a concern. Extremely productive links with schools in China and Norway help pupils to develop an excellent knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live. Good development of basic skills means that pupils are well prepared for secondary school and their later lives. The thriving school council, led by house captains, helps pupils feel that they have a 'say' in the running of the school as well as taking responsibility for choosing charities to support.

Well-planned, interesting activities enable children to make good progress in the Reception class. Children make good progress in most areas of learning and standards are above average by the time they join Year 1. However, the outdoor area for Reception children is not large enough and this slows their development in some areas of learning. The overall good progress continues throughout Years 1 to 6 because of the good teaching pupils receive. Pupils achieve well and by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, standards are above average. Standards of reading are very high because of the rigorous approach to developing this aspect of pupils' literacy skills. Pupils' writing skills are closer to average because tasks are not always closely matched to the needs of all pupils, neither are pupils given enough opportunities to practise their writing skills across all subjects.

The school has continued to improve well since its previous inspection and is well placed for the future. At the heart of its achievements is a strong team spirit. The headteacher provides good leadership and management. She is well respected and knows the school and its families well. The governors bring a wide and relevant range of skills to their roles and they support and challenge the school well. The systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are generally good, but lack a sharp enough focus to ensure consistently good practice across the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. They settle quickly because carefully thought out preparations are in place for their arrival. Good leadership of the Foundation Stage, good teaching and a good curriculum result in a myriad of opportunities for them at the start of their school life. Children quickly develop the security and confidence to answer questions in assembly and talk to adults and pupils throughout the school. Some take their turn as members of the school council and take an active part in meetings. Children have opportunities to work independently and to make choices, as well as experiencing focused activities alongside

adults. Children's progress is monitored carefully and this ensures new activities successfully extend their knowledge and understanding. The stimulating indoor environment does much to encourage children's speaking and listening skills. The Reception children do not have the advantage of a large enough outside area. This slows children's development in some areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

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- Raise standards in writing by ensuring all staff match tasks more closely to the needs of all pupils and by further broadening the opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in all subjects.
- In the Foundation Stage, improve children's skills by providing them with access to better outdoor facilities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When children start school, their skills and knowledge are typical of four-year-olds. Provision in the Reception class is good and children make good progress. By the end of the Reception Year, standards are above average.

Pupils' achievement is good. In Years 1 to 6, pupils make good progress and by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, standards of attainment overall are above average. Pupils' skills of writing are closer to average and do not develop as rapidly. Younger pupils struggle with sentence construction and do not develop good grammatical skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' huge enjoyment of school is reflected in their exemplary behaviour, very good relationships and above average attendance in school and at extra-curricular clubs. Pupils learn how to work effectively and, because their basic skills are well developed, they are prepared effectively for secondary school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and makes a very strong contribution to their education. Pupils are proud to represent their school when participating in competitive sports or performing for others. For example, pupils enjoy performing for members of the village community at the school's May Day celebrations. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to shine, to take responsibility and to be rewarded, so they grow in confidence. The school council gives pupils a very strong voice that is heard and acted upon. Each child adopts a village friend through the (Elderly) Village Friends Scheme and writes to them, offers harvest gifts and invites them to school events. This fosters cross-generation friendship and promotes cultural awareness.

Pupils' cultural development is outstanding. They have a great interest in different cultures around the world as well as their own local and wider British culture because of the excellent partnerships with schools in Coventry, China and work on India. Good links with local schools enable those who have particular gifts or talents to develop these further. Pupils have an excellent knowledge and understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to look after themselves and each other. For example, older pupils help younger ones at lunchtime and encourage them to become healthy eaters.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have excellent relationships with their classes and very high expectations of behaviour, which ensures lessons are conducted in a calm and purposeful manner. The staff work hard to ensure that activities are enjoyable. Thoughtful planning for year group and mixed age classes has a positive impact on pupils' progress, their self-motivation and their sensitive attitudes to learning. Occasionally, not enough is expected of pupils and work is not always well enough matched to the different abilities of pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has been adapted well to take account of pupils' individual needs and local and national initiatives. A rich and diverse curriculum responds to local and national requirements so that pupils are kept abreast of current issues. There is a strong tradition of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum, with pupils taking part in the Stratford Festival for instance. An excellent range of extra-curricular activities encourages safe and healthy lifestyles, for example cycling proficiency schemes, sports, cooking and mind games. Gifted and talented pupils in Year 6 work with similar pupils from other local schools to enrich their learning. They thoroughly enjoy the challenges they are set and are positive about their experiences. Good links with a local secondary school help the pupils enhance their science and design and technology skills and these links also help to prepare them for secondary school. Some initiatives, such as those to improve pupils' writing, have not yet had a full impact on standards. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their new found writing skills outside literacy lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is a strength and praised by parents. Adults know pupils well and respond effectively to their needs. Systems support pupils' outstanding personal development so that pupils trust adults and know they are well looked after. The school has excellent links with a wide range of external groups, which help support pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Procedures to safeguard pupils' welfare are very thorough. Academic guidance is good. Analysis of assessment information has enabled the school to see that standards in writing, while improving, are not as high as those in reading. Suitable action has been taken and recent assessments indicate that progress in this area has accelerated. The tracking of pupils' progress is thorough although inconsistent marking reduces its effectiveness and leads to pupils not always having a clear understanding of how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's clear vision and focus for the school, shared by all members of the school community, has had a good impact on improving the school's performance. The very good working relationships between teaching and non-teaching staff and governors enable the

'Ilmington Way' of preparing pupils for life outside school to be effectively implemented. Parents have high expectations and the school has a very good reputation within the local and wider community. All staff are fully committed to extending and improving their own practice by visiting other schools to observe new teaching and learning strategies. The school has good systems for self-evaluation although inconsistent practice is not always identified.

Governors have a clear understanding of the direction of the school leading to improvement. They discharge their responsibilities conscientiously and effectively. Governors offer focused support that ensures good leadership and management at all levels, and which secures the school's good capacity to improve.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	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	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

19 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ilmington CofE Primary School, Ilmington, CV36 4LJ

Thank you all very much for making us feel so welcome in your school when we visited recently. We were impressed with you all and the way you were very happy to tell us about your school. You and your parents are rightly proud of Ilmington. Like you, we think your school is good. There are so many good things to report about your school. Here are the main ones.

Your headteacher and staff want the best for you and are determined that you make as much progress as you can in lessons. Younger children get off to a flying start in Reception. Because you really enjoy school, attend well and work hard, you make good progress and reach above average standards. Those of you who need extra help make the same good progress because the staff give you lots of attention to help you learn. Teachers know you well and generally ask you to do quite demanding work. There are lots of good things that happen in your classrooms. You also have lots of exciting opportunities through visits and projects such as the 'Slam Poetry' project and your visit to the Stratford Festival.

You go to a caring school. The school helps you to gain confidence in yourselves and you all have excellent attitudes to learning. We saw you all working very hard in school and enjoying your activities. Your behaviour is excellent and you are polite to visitors. You show an exceedingly good awareness of how to stay healthy and you enjoy the many sporting activities that are available to you. You show consideration for others and are friendly and helpful to each other. We liked the way the school council works to improve your school. You have an excellent knowledge and understanding of cultures from around the world and those represented in Britain.

- To make your school even better, we have asked your teachers to do two things.
- To give you more opportunities to develop your writing skills and also to set work that is more demanding.
- To improve the outdoor area for children in the Reception class.

Thank you again for making us feel so welcome.

David Cox Lead inspector