

# Iver Heath Junior School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	110279
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	325124
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Graham Lee

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jean Howard
Headteacher	Ms Vivienne Canter
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 May 2006
School address	St Margaret's Close Iver Heath SLO 0DA
Telephone number	01753 651382
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at assessment information, school documents and pupils' books. They also took account of the views of 90 parents, expressed in questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the extent to which teaching is sufficiently challenging to accelerate progress for all groups of pupils
- the consistency of academic guidance in helping pupils to improve their work
- provision for pupils with learning difficulties, in both the additional resource unit and the main school
- the strengths of pupils' personal development, and the strengths in care and guidance.

## Information about the school

Iver Heath is a smaller than average junior school. Most pupils are of White British heritage and none are at the early stages of learning English. Around one in three have learning difficulties, a proportion that is much higher than average. The school has an additional resource provision (ARP) for pupils with speech, language and social communication disorders. There are currently six pupils in this provision and all of them have a statement of special educational needs. In the wider school, pupils' needs relate largely to moderate learning difficulties and behavioural problems. A new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2008.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

### Main findings

Iver Heath Junior continues to provide a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils as it did at the time of the last inspection. At the heart of its work is a commitment to welcoming and including pupils with a wide range of needs. In particular, the school works effectively in partnership with a range of agencies to meet the needs of its vulnerable pupils. As a result of this good quality of care and support, pupils behave well and develop positive attitudes to learning, and many other good personal qualities. Pupils' academic achievement remains satisfactory, however, because the teaching they experience is not yet of a consistently good enough quality to ensure that all pupils progress well.

Teachers are making increasingly good use of assessment information to plan for the wide range of abilities within their classes. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties, both in the ARP and elsewhere, is especially good. The needs of these pupils are identified clearly and they are given effective and sensitive support from a skilled team of teaching assistants. In consequence, they make good progress. This approach is not yet used consistently for all groups of pupils. In some lessons, activities are not challenging enough, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils. There are some good examples of targets and teachers' marking that help pupils to improve their work, but this is not yet embedded throughout the school. Pupils' progress accelerates in Year 5 and 6, where the teaching is regularly of a high quality.

Pupils generally enjoy school, and say that it is a safe place to be. They take their responsibilities as school councillors, for example, very seriously, and feel confident that their voice is heard. Many parents share their children's confidence. The vast majority say that their children enjoy school most of the time. One, for example commented, 'We are extremely pleased with the teaching and experiences that our child is receiving.' A sizeable minority, however, note some concerns, in particular about communication and the extent to which their views are taken into account. Also, a number of parents do not feel that the school does enough to inform them about their children's progress. The arrangements for providing information to parents and seeking their views appear to be adequate, but clearly this is not the perception of these parents.

The headteacher and other leaders are successful in providing good quality care for

pupils. They are well aware of the school's strengths, and have tackled the weaknesses identified at the last inspection with some success. They have not, however, been able to make significant improvements to teaching and learning, or to raise achievement. Leaders have made a start in devising a strategy to promote community cohesion, but this remains at an early stage of development. In consequence of all these factors, the school currently has satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

A small proportion of the 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.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards by:
  - ensuring that teaching is consistently good or better throughout the school by the end of the spring term of 2010
  - using assessment information more effectively to ensure that teachers consistently challenge pupils to achieve as well as they can
  - sharpening target setting and marking to help all pupils to understand how to improve their work.
- Improve the partnership with parents in order that, by July 2010:
  - parents feel confident that their concerns are listened to and their views taken into account
  - all parents believe that they are well informed about their children's progress.
- Develop a robust strategy for promoting community cohesion by the spring term of 2010.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3
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Pupils clearly enjoy their learning, and respond with interest and enthusiasm in lessons where they are actively engaged and encouraged to develop their thinking. This is less evident when they are required to sit for too long or are not challenged sufficiently. In these lessons, some pupils become disengaged and their progress slows. Consequently, pupils' progress, although satisfactory overall, is too variable given their broadly average starting points. When they leave the school, attainment in English, mathematics and science is broadly average. Pupils in the ARP with speech and communications issues, and others in the school with moderate learning difficulties and behavioural problems, achieve well as a result of the very good support that they receive. Pupils' attendance is broadly average. When this is taken into account with their sound basic skills and good attitudes to learning, pupils' preparation for secondary school and the world beyond is satisfactory.

Pupils get on well together and cooperate and collaborate effectively. They say that bullying is rare and that they can rely on the adults around them if they have any problems or difficulties. They understand the importance of adopting a healthy

lifestyle. This is reflected in their sensible eating choices and in their enthusiastic participation in the range of physical activities on offer. Pupils behave well both in lessons and around the school, and exclusions are few, even though some pupils present challenging behaviour from time to time. These pupils are managed well by staff, who ensure that they are able to play a full part in lessons.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	3
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

## How effective is the provision?

In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher used pupils' familiarity of a popular text very effectively to develop the language and structure of the beginnings of stories. Very challenging teaching through discussion and modelling enabled pupils to develop their writing skills very effectively. In a Year 6 lesson, lively and engaging teaching of mathematics enabled pupils of all abilities to develop understanding of pattern and relationships in number. These examples illustrate why teaching is of uniformly high quality in Years 5 and 6. There is some good teaching elsewhere, but it is not consistent. Sometimes teachers do not use assessment information well enough when planning lessons. Consequently, work is too easy for some pupils. At other times, pupils are asked to sit for too long without being actively engaged. This slows their progress.

The curriculum is suitably matched to the needs of pupils to allow them to make satisfactory progress in basic skills. It enables pupils with learning difficulties to make good progress because of the effective support they receive. Provision for the more-able pupils, however, is not always as challenging as it could be. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development, and this permeates the curriculum. For example, in an English lesson in Year 6 the teacher helped pupils to explore sensitive issues in a mature and open way. The curriculum is also enriched through

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<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

very effective teaching of French, a good range of visits and visitors, and some clubs, although the school acknowledges that these are fewer than was previously the case.

A strength of the school is the care, guidance and support which it provides to its pupils. This is illustrated very effectively by the good support provided for pupils with learning difficulties, and others who are vulnerable. This was commented on by a number of parents who indicated that the school had been very supportive during difficult times for their families.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	3
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, based on providing a caring and inclusive environment which welcomes all pupils whatever their background and ability. In this endeavour she is effectively supported by her leadership team and staff. This is illustrated by the schools' commitment to the successful ARP and other vulnerable pupils, including those with a range of learning difficulties. Hence the school is successful in promoting equality and tackling discrimination. All requirements for the safeguarding of pupils are fully in place.

A variety of initiatives have not led to significant improvements to teaching and learning, or to accelerated progress for pupils. The new deputy headteacher has given the drive to raise achievement a new impetus with her work on assessment for learning, which is helping teachers and pupils to focus on what pupils need to do to improve. This has been embraced by staff and is leading to better progress in some lessons. However, it is too early for the impact to be seen on accelerating achievement and raising standards. The school uses data to assess the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. It is beginning to use the data to identify potential underachievement at an early stage and to hold teachers to account for the progress of their pupils. This work is at an early stage and its impact on the school's performance is not yet clear.

Governors have made some improvements since the last inspection but are not yet as effective as they might be. They have improved their involvement in assessing the school's needs, through very good financial systems, for example. However, responsibilities lie with a limited number of governors. Although they have a better understanding of data, they are not yet sufficiently involved in setting school priorities or in holding the school to account for its performance.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

## Views of parents and carers

Returns were received from just under half of the parents in the school, which is a much higher proportion than average. The great majority of parents feel that their children are happy and safe at least most of the time. Responses to other questions were more mixed. While every question drew a positive response from many parents, an appreciable minority expressed some concern on a range of issues. The most important of these are discussed in the 'Overall effectiveness' section of the report. Additionally, some parents felt that their children were not adequately prepared for the 11-plus examination. Inspectors note that the school is preparing pupils for secondary education by teaching the National Curriculum requirements satisfactorily. The school follows the policies for preparation for examinations as laid down by the local authority.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Iver Heath Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 90 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 199 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	39	8	8



## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment: the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress: the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement: the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
- Capacity to improve: the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management: the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



02 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Iver Heath Junior School, Iver Heath, SLO ODA

You may remember that I visited your school last week with another inspector. I am writing to thank you for being so welcoming and helpful. I thought you would like to know what we found out.

We found Iver Heath Junior to be a satisfactory school. It also has a number of strengths. The most important of these is you, the pupils! You are friendly and polite and generally work hard in lessons. During the inspection your behaviour was very good. Well done! You also told us that you feel safe and can rely on the adults around you. We very much appreciated how seriously you take your various responsibilities around the school.

The school takes good care of you, especially those of you who find learning a bit more difficult. Teachers work hard to make lessons fun and interesting. You told us how the focus this year on assessment for learning is helping you to improve your work and make better progress. In some lessons, though, work is still a bit too easy for some of you. You make satisfactory progress overall, and standards in English, mathematics and science are about the same as they are in most schools by the time you move on to secondary school.

Your headteacher and all the staff are working hard to improve the school for you. We have asked them to do a number of things that might help.

- We want them to make sure that all your lessons build on what you already know, to help you to work hard and make good progress. We also want them to make sure that teachers' marking and your targets help you to improve.
- Some of your parents do not feel that the school gives them enough information about what is happening in school and how well you are doing. We have asked them to improve this. You can help by making sure that you tell your parents what is going on in school.
- Finally, we want the school to look at ways it can reach out to the local community as well as places further afield in this country and overseas.

Wishing you all the best in the future, particularly those of you moving on to secondary school.

Yours faithfully

Graham Lee  
Lead Inspector

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