

Ivy Bank Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111022
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	325275
Inspection date	26 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Kevin Johnson

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	299
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr R Bailey
Headteacher	Mr Q Thompson
Date of previous school inspection	11 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Valley Road Macclesfield Cheshire SK11 8PB
Telephone number	01625 422021
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: standards reached by pupils and the progress they make; provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); the quality of teaching and learning; and leadership and management of the school. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's own assessments, observation of the school at work, discussion with staff, pupils and governors and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized school. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average.

There is specially funded provision for pupils with complex and moderate learning difficulties. At the time of the inspection, 21 pupils were receiving this specially resourced provision. The proportion of pupils in the school overall with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average. A higher proportion of pupils than typically seen, however, have a statement of special educational need.

There is EYFS provision on site for children prior to entering Reception. That provision is funded separately and, although inspected at the same time as the school, receives a separate report. There is also a separately funded breakfast club and after-school care on site and they too are reported separately.

The school has achieved the National Healthy Schools Award and Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which has outstanding features. Ivy Bank is a school that is close to the hearts of the overwhelming majority of parents and pupils. The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is outstanding. Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils fully meet requirements. Parents speak very highly of the support provided for the most vulnerable pupils, particularly those who receive specially resourced provision. Children in the EYFS get off to a good start and, there too, parents comment very positively on how well their children thrive. Pupils are given very clear guidance about the importance of sensible relationships and their personal well-being and safety, including healthy lifestyles. As a result, pupils are extremely confident and self-assured. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is, overall, outstanding. Pupils' attendance is good, their behaviour is excellent and they enjoy their learning immensely, especially the opportunities to use their creative talents in art, dance, music and drama. They are mindful of others and respect social and cultural differences. As well as the generous work pupils do for recognised local charities, Year 6 pupils organise an annual Action Aid week to raise funds for communities overseas.

Pupils gain many of the important life skills they need to be part of a community because of the responsibilities they accept and the attitudes they develop in school. An outstanding example is that of a pupil who followed up a news report about the amount of power consumed through use of a single Internet search. This led to a detailed presentation to the class showing comparisons between the amounts of power used by different Internet search engines making others aware of the demand this places on energy and their responsibility within the global community. Pupils' independence is also developed through their work as school council members and, for example, their caring roles as buddies and guardian angels in the playground. Combined with the good skills they develop in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT), they are prepared well to take on future challenges.

Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school. Standards at both key stages show a rising trend over time but they faltered slightly in the 2008 national tests, mainly in mathematics. To some extent this was because of the school's strong focus on establishing the revised framework for literacy. The school's approach to developing literacy skills across the whole curriculum had a good impact on writing at the end of Year 2. The number of pupils who reached the higher level (Level 3) was double the national average while standards in mathematics were average. Provisional results in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 were broadly average in 2008. Bearing in mind the particularly high proportion of pupils in that cohort with learning difficulties and/or disabilities this was a commendable performance and demonstrates the good progress made by these pupils. However, fewer pupils than expected attained the higher level (Level 5) in these subjects. The school has recognised that this is an area for improvement and is working to ensure that the more able pupils are always sufficiently challenged to enable them to reach higher levels. The school is now applying the successful strategies used in literacy to the framework for mathematics. The impact is already beginning to show in pupils' work, especially in problem solving. School assessments and inspection evidence indicate that current standards in writing and mathematics in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. Given pupils' lower than expected skills on entry to Reception this represents good achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are supported well by skilful teachers who plan for pupils' particular needs well, and carefully check their

step-by-step progress. The very small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups make good, and sometimes remarkable, individual progress.

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. Pupils acknowledge that teachers always try their best to make lessons interesting and enjoyable and they respond well to challenging work and teachers' high expectations. Good use is made of learning resources, especially the use of ICT, to bring lessons to life. Teachers use questions well to probe pupils' understanding and encourage speaking skills by asking them to explain their thinking. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution by giving sensitive support to groups and individual pupils in lessons. Teachers' marking is of a very high quality. It focuses sharply on how well pupils meet their learning targets, and consistently points out ways to improve. Pupils also check their work and record their own ideas about what they should do next. There is good pace to learning and good sense of urgency in classrooms because teachers and pupils share the enthusiasm generated by the innovative approaches to the curriculum. Links between subjects have resulted in topic work of outstanding quality about India, for example. ICT is a major feature, with opportunities for media studies and blogging projects in conjunction with the local high school. The range of clubs and visits has also improved enrichment and helped raise the overall quality of the curriculum to outstanding.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides clear direction for the school and is focused strongly on improvement. Since his appointment he has overseen good improvements to the indoor and outdoor learning environments, which have had a huge impact on pupils' personal development, the quality of care and the curriculum. Teaching and standards are improving and the school has a high profile in the community. Senior leaders' roles have been revised recently in order to make management more inclusive. They play an important part in the rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance but it is too soon to judge the full impact of their work in raising standards, particularly in mathematics. Nevertheless, past records of improvement and accurate self-evaluation indicate good capacity to improve further. Systems for checking pupils' academic progress are very effective and are used well to set challenging targets in order to raise standards further. The school is fully inclusive and effectively promotes the well-being and achievement of all pupils. The school contributes well to community cohesion. There are good links with the local community, for example, through participation in community environmental projects, work with other schools, business links and school performances. The curriculum promotes understanding of different faiths and cultures well. A contribution to this is the annual Global Awareness Week in school during which pupils explore cultural differences and global issues such as pollution. Governors support the school well. They monitor curriculum developments regularly and are quick to hold the school to account, for example, over the dip in mathematics standards. Finances are managed efficiently to ensure good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children's learning and development in the EYFS is managed well. Their skills are below typical expectations for their age in all areas of learning when they enter Reception. Good teaching and well-planned activities ensure that children make good progress so that by the end of Reception most are working securely within the early learning goals. For example, children's imaginations were really fired up by a letter from Skeley (a plastic skull) to say that he had lost all of his bones. This made some children draw maps to show where the bones might be. Others discovered some of them buried in the sand pit while others were checked in the

'doctors surgery' to make sure all their bones were in place. All of the activities were punctuated by prompts and questions from teachers to make sure language skills were developed alongside children's other learning, both indoors and in the outside classroom. Children's progress in personal, social and emotional development is rapid. This is because of teachers' very high expectation that children will cooperate with others and take some responsibility for their own learning. Consequently, children become confident, curious learners who are willing to share with others and happily engage in activities either independently or with adults. Provision for children's welfare fully meets requirements and is an outstanding aspect of overall provision. Teachers establish excellent relationships with the parents and carers of children designated to their care. Introductions to Reception are managed smoothly and children settle very quickly into a happy, safe environment. All teachers are involved in assessing their children's progress and planning the next steps of their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the number of pupils who reach the higher levels in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	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 learners' needs?	2
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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Ivy Bank Primary School, Macclesfield, SK11 8PB

Thank you all very much for making us feel so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. It was a real delight to talk to you and to find out how much you enjoy school. We were highly impressed by your politeness, good manners and excellent behaviour, and very pleased to see that your attendance is good. All of these things are very important, so do continue to be happy, polite and as eager to learn as you are at present.

Ivy Bank is a good school and it helps you to achieve well. It also has some outstanding features. Apart from your behaviour and excellent attitudes to school, the way in which you are cared for and looked after by the adults in school is outstanding. You also have outstanding opportunities to learn new things, enjoy clubs and visits and learn how to keep yourselves safe. Although the standards you reach in your work are generally above average you could do even better, especially in mathematics.

Teachers, parents and school governors are just as proud of your school as you are and want to make it even better. We have asked that more pupils are helped to reach a higher level in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Of course you have a part to play by always working as hard as you can to reach your targets.