

Ivy Chimneys Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115013
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	326110
Inspection date	25 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Marianne Harris

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)	254
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	Mrs Lisa Siggers
Headteacher	Mrs Denise Drew
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Ivy Chimneys Road Epping Essex CM16 4EP
Telephone number	01992 573518
Fax number	01992 560417

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how successful the school has been in raising the standard of boys' writing, what is being done to improve attendance and what impact the senior leadership team is having on pupils' standards.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with staff and pupils, pupils' work and from representatives of the governing body. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors 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

This is an average size school where the majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small minority of pupils have Asian heritage and none are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have additional learning needs is close to that usually found, although the number with a statement of special educational needs is higher than usual. These needs vary but mainly relate to moderate learning and speech and language difficulties. The school has provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, most of whom are in a single aged class, but the oldest children are mixed in with a Year 1 class. When they join the school, children have skills and knowledge that are close to those expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ivy Chimneys Primary School provides a good standard of education for its pupils. One parent, typical of many, refers to it as, 'A wonderful little school with a real close knit family feel'. Most parents agree that their children enjoy school and that they make good progress.

Whatever their starting points, pupils achieve well and reach standards that are above average. There has been a fluctuating trend over the recent past and boys have not always achieved as well in writing as they could have done. The school has taken many steps to tackle this and standards in boys' writing are now rising. These effective steps include looking at the curriculum to see if boys are interested in what is being taught. Topics and themes are chosen with this in mind so that boys are fully involved in lessons. There are annual 'Dads to school' days where male family members are invited in to sample some exciting activities. These are very popular with the pupils, and all look forward to the experience. Practical resources are used well so that lessons in mathematics and science are captivating. In English lessons, texts are carefully chosen, and poems such as 'The Highwayman' are selected so that boys and girls can explore meanings and express their preferences. Pupils who find learning difficult are supported effectively so that they can achieve well. Teaching assistants are skilful at using practical resources and giving careful explanations so that all are involved in lessons.

The curriculum is excellent because staff have taken into account the needs of all pupils in the school. It is exciting and stimulating. There are many extra activities, including residential visits and clubs that cover an extremely wide range of activities. Partnerships with other schools result in competitions in activities such as cross-country running and music festivals. A particularly successful partnership is with the local secondary school that supports Ivy Chimneys by providing French lessons for all pupils in Years 3 to 6. Standards in art are very high with all pupils confidently using a wide variety of materials and tools. Pupils have worked with various artists to produce a colourful mosaic and sculptures at the front of the school. Displays show work of a high standard, including painting in the style of Missouri Jenkins and monochrome sketches.

Pupils are very keen to learn because of the outstanding curriculum. Their personal development and well-being are excellent. They have a very good understanding of how to keep healthy and many take up the hot school meals offered by the school. They talk knowledgeably about the importance of exercise and know exceptionally well how to keep healthy and safe. Parents report that behaviour is good and so do the pupils. Inspectors judged behaviour to be exemplary, with all pupils respecting each other and adults in the school. Opportunities such as enterprise schemes encourage pupils to share their own ideas about how to make money. This has resulted in classes working together to produce something to sell. One successful enterprise has resulted in an Aztec cookery book, something pupils are very proud of. They are also proud of the money they raise for a variety of charities, both local and national. Overall, pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. Attendance has improved lately and is now average. The school has worked hard with outside agencies to reinforce the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. Staff have used many strategies to improve attendance, including awarding good attendance certificates and having a dedicated absence telephone line.

The outstanding care, guidance and support that staff show towards the pupils has a significant impact on their personal development. They are friendly and polite because teachers treat them

with respect and are excellent role models. Pupils know their targets because teachers have them displayed on the walls or in books. These targets are referred to in lessons and pupils know what they have to do to improve their work and reach higher standards. The systems for ensuring that pupils are safe and those for child protection follow the local authority guidance. The school is warm and welcoming and pupils know that there is someone they can go to if they have a problem. Pupils receive excellent care if they have minor bumps in school and the place for them to receive treatment is safe with all that is needed to treat minor ailments.

Pupils make good progress and achieve well because teaching is good throughout the school. The purpose of each lesson is clearly explained and pupils receive clear guidance on how to be successful in their learning. Marking is of a high quality, with time being given in lessons for pupils to respond to teachers' comments. Most lessons move at a brisk pace and have exciting elements. A science lesson for older pupils was really stimulating as the teacher demonstrated what happens when vinegar and bicarbonate of soda are mixed together. The pupils described it as 'spectacular'. Lessons are planned well to take into account the differing ages and abilities in each class. There are times, however, when pupils sit for too long on the carpet and this means that they sometimes get fidgety and lose concentration on the lesson theme.

The senior leadership team makes a positive impact on standards in the school. They are learning from the excellent leadership and evaluation skills of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, and new members of staff are learning what is involved in being a manager. They analyse data and take an active role in improving standards. Governance is good, with governors involved in the everyday life of the school. They have been proactive in improving the building and facilities, but acknowledge that there is more to be done. One parent mentioned the poor state of the windows and the uneven surface in the playground. Pupils also commented on the need to improve the school building. The kitchens and information and communication technology suite have been greatly improved.

Community cohesion has a high profile within the school. Pupils learn about the cultures and beliefs of others through well-planned lessons that explore these in detail. The pupils have a very good understanding of what it is like to be part of a community and to be responsible. The Eco-club members are very keen to encourage recycling and growing, whilst pupils acknowledge the need to work together and help one another. Overall, leadership and management are good. There has been good improvement since the time of the last inspection. Issues have been successfully tackled and standards are rising. There is good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start to their education. They make good progress during their year in the Reception class and make outstanding progress in their personal development. By the time they enter Year 1, most have reached the expected learning goals and a significant number exceed them. Children settle into school quickly and make friends easily. The well-established induction programme means that children meet their teachers before they start and parents are involved in settling their children into school. Children quickly gain the confidence they need to explore all of the activities and enjoy learning. They particularly enjoy the current theme of 'Bob the Builder' and are excited by the building work that is going on in their outside area. Some children can say that they helped build the planters by handing the bricks to the builder. They enjoy using the outside area and there are plans to add to this to make learning more interesting and stimulating. Resources are plentiful and varied so that

children are confident when choosing what they want to use. There are many activities that cover all areas of learning and a good balance of those that children choose for themselves and those that adults lead. Basic skills are well taught so that children learn to be confident when reading and writing. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The leader ensures that children in the mixed class have the same opportunities as those in the Reception class and many activities are shared.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils do not sit for too long on the carpet during lessons, so that they do not lose concentration.
- Seek ways of improving the building and the large playground so that the learning environment is more comfortable and exciting.

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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 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	3
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 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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

4 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Ivy Chimneys Primary School, Epping, CM16 4EP

Thank you for welcoming us into your good school recently. You helped us find out about what school is like for you and I am now writing to let you know what we found out.

You make good progress in your work. We looked particularly at boys' writing and found that this has improved recently. This is because teachers have thought about what makes learning interesting for everyone and have chosen some very good themes for you to explore. The science lesson with the 'exploding' film case and the thoughtful work in the English lesson on the poem called 'The Highwayman' showed that learning is fun for you.

You behave excellently. There is a great deal of respect in the school and a pride in the way that you look after one another. You have raised much money for charity and for the school through your enterprise schemes. The Aztec cookery book was very interesting and there are other schemes that are both useful and help you work together.

We visited every classroom and talked to your headteacher. Teaching and learning are good in the school. Teachers help you by setting targets and by marking your work very well so that you know what it is you have to do to improve. We have asked the teachers to make sure that you do not sit on the carpet for too long and become fidgety during lessons.

Some of you told us about the leaking windows and the uneven playground. We know that there have been many improvements lately, but have asked the governors to look for ways in which they can improve the accommodation further so that it is bright and exciting.

Thank you once again for your help. We wish you good luck in the future.

Best wishes

Marianne Harris

Lead inspector