

Ickniel School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116609
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326417
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Anne Duffy HMI

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	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	66
Sixth form	14
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Rosemary Wilson
Headteacher	Ms Sharon Ghiacy
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 November 2005
School address	River Way Andover SP11 6LT
Telephone number	01264 365297
Email address	headteacher@ickniel.hants.sch.uk

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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

The inspectors visited 14 lessons. They held meetings with the vice-chair of governors, headteacher, staff, and representatives from other services. They also talked to pupils. The inspection observed the school's work, and looked at the school's policies, procedures and its monitoring of pupils' progress. The inspectors also took account of 31 returned questionnaires from parents and 32 from staff.

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

- the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils at all stages of their education
- the quality of teaching, assessment, and academic guidance across all departments
- the impact that the change in responsibilities for curriculum development has had upon the provision made for pupils

Information about the school

Icknield is a school for pupils who have severe learning difficulties and/or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Almost all pupils have associated communication difficulties. Pupils are aged between 2 and 19 years and generally come from Hampshire or the neighbouring authority of Wiltshire. They attend Icknield with a statement of special educational needs or for initial assessment. A small number of pupils are deemed to be 'high dependency' with additional needs such as challenging behaviour or significant medical requirements. A small minority of pupils have an autistic spectrum disorder.

There has been a change of leadership since the last inspection. The current headteacher joined the school in 2007. At the time of the inspection the deputy headteacher post was unfilled, with a new deputy headteacher due to take up post in January 2009.

Further information about the school

	School's figures	School's figures compared with other schools
School size	66	<i>Below average</i>
Free school meals	21%	<i>Above average</i>
Proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	100%	<i>Above average</i>
Proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities	0	<i>Below average</i>
Proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language	0	<i>Below average</i>
Proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	100%	<i>Above average</i>

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Icknield is a good and improving school. Since the last inspection staff have worked hard to improve a number of key areas. Actions taken include the establishment of a whole school communication policy, which has done much to enhance pupils' access to the improved and developing curriculum. Pupils achieve well and their personal development is outstanding. Much of the recent development has been led by the headteacher who is currently the main driver in setting suitably challenging targets. However, all staff are involved, motivated, and committed to continuing improvement. In this, they are supported effectively by a sound performance management process which links well to the school's priorities and underpins continuing professional development. The governing body provides a good level of challenge and is very supportive of the school. The school demonstrates that it has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enable all pupils to make as much progress as they can by:
 - making the best use of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning
 - making increased use of topics and themes to strengthen the links between different subjects
 - bringing together all systems of target setting, assessment and tracking so that they are cohesive and effective

How well does the school meet the needs of individuals and different groups of pupils?

2

Although levels of attainment are low in comparison with national expectations, the majority of pupils make good, and some make outstanding, progress. The knowledge and understanding of individual student needs by the staff supports this progress, which is often made in small steps. In school, pupils consistently make the most progress in personal and social education. Students attending the further education department make outstanding progress as a result of the very high quality provision. Expectations are rising rapidly thanks to the increased focus by the headteacher on monitoring and interrogating both group and individual progress.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. From the very early stages of their education, they demonstrate pride in their achievements and there is a very real sense of shared pleasure when a new skill is mastered. Pupils move safely around the different areas of the school and have confidence in every member of staff. As a result, they feel secure in a range of situations and are willing to attempt new tasks without anxiety.

Behaviour overall is good. Photographs and objects linked to different areas of the school, as well as visual timetables, generally cue pupils effectively into what is happening next. Occasionally a move to the next activity is rushed or not fully explained, resulting in more challenging behaviour from a few pupils. However, they respond well to the regular reminders of what is acceptable behaviour and all pupils are very tolerant of one another.

Lunchtime is a very social occasion and photographs help pupils to make individual and mainly healthy choices about what they will eat. Pupils make good use of the new playground equipment and respond very well to opportunities for physical activity, as well as the physiotherapy and occupational therapy programmes which are carried out very effectively. Younger pupils take their duties seriously, for example representing their class in the school council or taking the register. Older pupils develop entrepreneurial skills as they grow and sell produce for the local market. As a result, they develop the independence and self-confidence which will help them in future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1
Pupils' attendance and punctuality	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

The quality of the school's work

Successful changes have been made in teachers' responsibilities for curriculum areas so that they now work well together in curriculum teams. This has had a beneficial

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

effect upon the quality and range of the curriculum, which is good. There is an appropriate balance of subjects within an increasingly wide range of experiences which are well tailored to the school population. The curriculum is further extended by out of school opportunities which include participation in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. Themed days, such as 'around the world', and topic approaches, such as Spanish week, have been particularly successful in raising pupils' enjoyment and participation. The school's focus on communication has increased the skills of both staff and pupils so that concepts and new vocabulary are more readily grasped and understood.

Teachers plan their lessons carefully and make very effective use of a range of pictures, objects and sounds to encourage choice and support learning. Pupils generally join in enthusiastically and demonstrate that they are building well upon skills and knowledge gained from previous lessons. There is occasionally an over-emphasis upon good sitting or listening which stretches pupils' attention spans to the limit. As a result, they become restless. When this happens, teaching assistants are used to keep pupils on task in a group rather than work with them individually and so opportunities for extending individual progress are missed. All staff contribute to an evaluation of pupils' daily progress and detailed records are kept. However, targets set, progress made, and levels reached are not always brought together effectively to ensure that pupils are making as much progress as they can at every stage of their school career.

The school provides a very high quality of support, guidance and care. Pupils are encouraged and enabled to supply their own views, particularly when decisions are being made about their future. The support provided by the school-home integrated project makes a positive difference to the pupils involved and to their families.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment and academic guidance	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's considered and consultative approach has been very effective in involving all staff. Good support and well planned professional development opportunities are allowing staff to take on increasing responsibility for different areas of school improvement. The focus upon improving the communication skills of staff as well as pupils has made a significant contribution to ensuring that all have equal access to every part of school life. Good use is made of resources; the appointment of a teaching assistant to work part-time as a fund raiser has recently had its first success, thereby contributing well to the school's planned development.

Arrangements for safeguarding are secure and any issues regarding individual pupils are dealt with very sensitively. The school has built up very strong links with services

such as Connexions, and with health professionals. These very effective partnerships contribute strongly to the outstanding support, guidance and care provided by the school. As a result, pupils and students manage their own health needs with increasing competence and are well supported in making choices about their future. The school has recently become more active within the community, particularly in developing partnerships with other local schools. Pupils increasingly participate in curricular and extra-curricular opportunities outside school and there are good plans to extend community involvement further. Parents are well represented on the governing body which fulfils its responsibilities diligently and effectively.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Monitoring, evaluating and planning for improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	1
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	1
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and make good progress overall. Their welfare is given a high priority and their health and medical needs are well met. Routines are well established and this increases children's feeling of safety in and around the school. As far as possible, they develop an awareness of healthy lifestyles because their diet and exercise programmes are monitored closely. Children's personal development is outstanding. This is because staff form very effective relationships with the children, manage them thoughtfully and are committed to creating a range of opportunities for them. Staff encourage children to express their feelings and ideas and each contribution is welcomed and respected. Consequently, children feel valued and develop trust in those working with them. Given their range of needs, children's behaviour is good. They gradually develop an awareness of others and an understanding of what is expected of them. The school's approach to communication supports different aspects of language development successfully. While much has been done to provide a welcoming environment, opportunities to develop very early reading and counting skills are sometimes missed by displays which are not at the children's level or are too small.

Leadership and management are good. The school has responded thoughtfully to the new requirements of the EYFS, adapting it appropriately to suit the needs of the children. Record keeping is thorough and children's progress is well observed. However, plans and records are not always linked in a way that ensures that the best possible progress is being made.

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 the children in the EYFS promoted?*	2
How effectively is the provision in the EYFS led and managed?*	2

* Common judgements made across all inspections of the EYFS

Sixth form

Almost all students choose to move into the sixth form from Year 11. Based within a separate building, the schools' further education department provides students with a variety of enriching experiences. The leaders and managers work extremely well with other providers to create a range of opportunities to support the outstanding progress made by the students. Students develop the skills needed for everyday living and benefit greatly from the activities which take place outside school. They take part successfully in a range of work experience including at stables, a farm, local shops and cafes. In addition, they grow their own produce in their allotment and manage the money which this venture brings in. All students gain awards through ASDAN, an awarding body which provides programmes and qualifications to develop key skills and life skills. This excellent preparation for adult life enables students to transfer successfully to the next phase of education or training.

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents are positive about the school. Their satisfaction is reflected in a few of the comments made: 'Icknield school is a wonderful school, my daughter is very happy and most importantly safe'; 'the care and learning exceed expectations'; 'we have 100% confidence in every aspect of our son's school; and 'we could not do without it '.

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 2006-7, 14% 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 2006-7, 46% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing for its pupils suitably. In 2006-7, 34% 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 2006-7, 6% 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:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
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.

3 December 2008



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Icknield School, Andover, SP11 6LT

Thank you for helping us to learn about your school. We really enjoyed our visit. It was good to meet so many of you and to see how well you are doing. I am writing this letter to tell you what we found.

We think Icknield is a good school and the further education centre is outstanding. You all seem to enjoy school; you are safe and very well cared for. We could see that you and the staff have all worked very hard to improve your communication and this has helped you to behave better and to learn more. There are plenty of interesting things for you to do both in and out of school. The school council told me about the good ideas that they have had and we were pleased that these have helped to make things better for everyone, especially in the playground.

Your headteacher leads the school very well and all the staff work hard to help you. We think that it is important that everyone who works with you helps you to learn, as well as keep you safe. We know that you enjoyed the special days you have had, such as the one world day, and we have asked your school to arrange more things like that. We have also asked the staff to look at the way they keep records so that everyone, including you, can see clearly how well you are doing.

We hope that you will all try your best and wish you good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Anne Duffy
Her Majesty's Inspector

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