

Inkpen Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109817
Local Authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	337378
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Rodney Braithwaite

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	58
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Day
Headteacher	Gerard Heaton
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2006
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation relating to the attainment and assessment of pupils' progress, self-evaluation, safeguarding of pupils and various policies. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work, governing body minutes and the school improvement plan. They analysed 30 parent questionnaires and other written responses from staff and older pupils.

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

- the consistency of pupils' attainment and achievement in Years 3 to 6, especially in writing and mathematics, and the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the effectiveness of the curriculum in classes with wide age ranges and several year groups
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school, particularly in the accuracy of school's self-evaluation, and the impact of staff changes on the school's capacity for improvement.

Information about the school

Inkpen is a small rural school with three classes. There is a privately funded pre-school group on the premises whose children regularly join children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception/Year 1 class. Most children are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, with a majority having moderate learning difficulties, and three have a statement of special educational needs. The majority of teaching staff have been appointed in the last three years, including the headteacher, who took up his post 18 months ago.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Inkpen is a satisfactory school which has gone through a period of transition in the last two years with the appointment of a new headteacher and changes in most key staff. There is much evidence of widespread improvement in a number of areas and the school has a number of strengths. Improvements include good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, more effective teaching throughout the school, realistic and accurate self-evaluation and the provision of a good, exciting and creative curriculum. Most importantly, both the headteacher and chair of governors have a very accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the priorities for improvement. This strong recent track record shows that the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement in the future. Existing strengths in the school have been maintained. These are the very good relationships between staff and pupils and a warm and welcoming ethos. The school has very strong links within the local community, although these are less evident nationally and globally. In addition, pupils enjoy coming to school and have good attendance. One pupil expressed the views of many saying, 'Our school is kind, helpful and happy.' The school cares for its pupils well and safeguarding procedures are rigorous. The behaviour of the very great majority of pupils is good. There are excellent relationships with parents who are delighted with what the school offers. Typically one commented, 'We could not have picked a better or more supportive school.'

The main priority for the school since the last inspection has been to improve the attainment and progress of pupils, especially in English and mathematics, throughout the school. This has been successful in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 where standards and skills are now consistently above average. In Years 3 to 6, attainment has been patchy and pupils have been leaving the school with average standards. There is now clear evidence of improvement in these year groups and pupils are beginning to reach higher standards, although this is not yet consistent. Teachers are using challenging targets more effectively; new systems for assessment have been introduced and are giving staff a clearer picture of pupil progress. This is proving to be particularly helpful in planning for the development of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The key priority for the school is to ensure that these new initiatives become firmly in place in order to continue to improve the achievement and standards in writing and mathematics in Years 3 to 6.

Teaching has been generally satisfactory for some time, but now the teaching staff is stable, there is far more good teaching which is improving pupils' learning. Teachers are starting to use more group learning strategies which are effective in classes with wide ranges of age and ability. However, sometimes pupils are not clear about what they

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need to improve and are not encouraged sufficiently to do the best they can or evaluate their own work. The highly respected headteacher is a compassionate and caring role model and is leading a team of staff determined to deliver the best education possible. There are good partnerships with other schools and providers. The governing body makes a sound contribution to school leadership and management.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise pupils' attainment and achievement in writing and mathematics in Years 3 to 6 by:
 - rapidly embedding and using newly introduced assessment systems to improve the learning of pupils whose progress has slowed
 - ensuring that all pupils reach their full potential and achieve their challenging targets.
- Maintain recent improvements in teaching, so that learning is consistently good throughout the school, by:
 - encouraging and expanding learning in small groups, regardless of age
 - helping pupils to understand clearly what they need to do to improve and communicating high expectations for pupils' evaluation of their own learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The school is focusing well on raising the attainment of all pupils. As a result, after entering the school with generally average skills, pupils are making good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 and are reaching above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' attainment has been average and achievement generally satisfactory in the last three years with some variation in subjects. There is evidence that standards are now rising in Years 3 to 6 in writing, mathematics and science, and that pupils' achievement is also improving, although this is not yet consistent. The next stage is for the school to ensure that all pupils reach their full potential, reach the realistic targets being set for them, and make consistently good progress. During the inspection, pupils showed considerable enthusiasm for learning when working in lessons, for example, on activities relating to their own personal experience such as problem solving in mathematics in Years 5/6. Occasionally however interest wanes if more able pupils are not moved on quickly enough to planned extension activities. Pupils work effectively across a wide range of enrichment activities which they recall in discussion in great detail. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making satisfactory progress, but this is improving as their learning programmes are made more specific to their individual needs. Pupils are achieving well in design and technology, music, and information and communication technology (ICT).

The school has a friendly, welcoming and creative ethos, and is often filled with the sound of laughter. Pupils report great confidence in their school, the adults, and the way

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they are cared for, their safety and the friendship of their peers. One pupil commented, 'I like how everyone has a friend, the teachers provide us with the things we want and they are so kind.' They all enjoy school, have good attendance, and are lively and confident when dealing with adults. The behaviour of almost all is good and at times during the inspection was excellent. They do not report any bullying or anti-social behaviour and are fiercely loyal to each other. Pupils appreciate the wide learning opportunities they have and mentioned at least ten different favourite activities in discussion. They enjoy many clubs ' 'We have more than big schools' ' and take part in numerous events in the local community, sometimes providing things they have made for the nearby farmers' market. They have a good knowledge of keeping healthy and safe and enjoy their contributions through the school council, and charity fund raising. Their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is continually evident through the whole school. Pupils are steadily developing their basic skills and personal qualities in preparation for the next stages in their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Although at present satisfactory overall, teaching and learning are developing well. Most teachers started in the school fairly recently and are rapidly coming to terms with the specific challenges of small cohorts and mixed-age classes. Teaching seen during the inspection was consistently good because teachers engage well with pupils, have very good relationships with them and have competent teaching assistants. As a result, many pupils are receiving more personalised learning for their individual needs. This is particularly so for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is still scope, however, for an even greater emphasis on small-group learning, especially in classes with a wide age range. The school has initiated new assessment strategies which are helping to clarify the progress made by each pupil. As a result, the small number of pupils in every year group whose progress has been slow in the past are now making better progress. The introduction of more realistic challenging targets is starting to help teachers to clarify for pupils exactly what they have to do to improve their learning. However, teachers do not communicate their expectations often enough that pupils should always strive to do their best and evaluate their own work more often.

The curriculum provides pupils with many interesting, exciting and creative opportunities. During the inspection older pupils entertained local residents to a re-enactment of the celebrations for Victory in Europe (VE) day as part of their studies of the Second World War. This involved history, singing, cooking and much speaking and listening and is typical of the breadth and practicality of the curriculum. The curriculum is further enriched by many varied clubs and visits, for example to the National Gallery, and practical activities such as pottery and learning to play a variety of musical instruments. The school is providing some additional activities for more able pupils through links with several specialist providers and a neighbouring secondary school. Pupils are given good opportunities to write across different subjects and to use ICT in their research. This clearly enhances their spiritual and cultural experiences.

Pupils are very well supported, guided and cared for because the needs of all are very well known to the staff. Pupils know that there are always adults to help them through difficulties and that their safety is paramount. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving rapidly following the appointment of a substantive coordinator. Procedures for dealing with attendance issues are good and, as a result, very few pupils have unsatisfactory attendance or punctuality. Provision for child protection and risk assessment are fully in place. Arrangements for transition of pupils to secondary education are excellent.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

During the last year the headteacher has rapidly identified and communicated the priorities for school improvement. The whole staff have responded positively and enthusiastically to his caring and perceptive leadership and the school is making good progress in a number of areas. This includes a wider dispersal of leadership responsibilities, detailed and regular monitoring of teaching and learning and a very strong team ethic amongst the staff. Self-evaluation by leaders has become more realistic, although the school realises that while some aspects of leadership and management are strong, others have not yet had time to become fully effective. This is reflected by the contribution of the governing body. The chair has a detailed and accurate knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses, is very clear about school improvement priorities and is in the process of developing a comparatively new body of governors with a wide range of skills to offer.

The school has excellent engagement with parents, who share the pride of leaders in the school's status as a centre of the local community, and are regularly consulted about school issues. They appreciate that the school ensures the safety of all pupils. All safeguarding procedures are meticulous. Leaders effectively promote equality and tackle discrimination. For example, all pupils are treated equally, and the school has improved its management of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has a good range of partnerships, especially through the confederation of local small schools, and services promoting the safety and health of pupils. Although the school has very good links with the local community, provision for pupils' wider knowledge of national and global communities is still developing.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with the skills expected for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning because provision for learning has improved, children's care, safety and welfare are a high priority and teaching is consistently good. The well-organised leadership and management of this class ensure that both Reception and Year 1 children are given suitable opportunities to consolidate and extend their learning. Clear and regularly used assessment procedures enhance the provision for each child. Teaching assistants play an effective part in ensuring that children make good progress through a mixture of adult-led and child-chosen activities. Planning is often informal, and leaders are prioritising a more formal structure to ensure continued improvement in provision. Children play and learn very happily together and are rapidly developing confidence and independence. During the inspection their behaviour was excellent. This was seen to good effect while they were rehearsing for their Nativity Play, when they sang and spoke delightfully, and watched respectfully when others performed. A feature of the Early Years Foundation Stage is the very positive way in which children interact with the pre-school 'Inkspots' group on a regular basis. This greatly benefits transition into the school, which is equally effective when they move on to the next class.

Adults work very closely with parents and relationships are excellent. The classroom environment and resources are good and children have regular learning opportunities outside. However, the outside area is in need of extensive refurbishment, which the school is shortly to provide.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Over half of parents responded to the questionnaires. They showed overwhelming approval of the school with ten of the 13 questions producing unanimously positive views of the school. Parents feel that their children are safe, that teaching and leadership are good, that they have strong engagement with the school and are very happy with their children's experience in school. Although a number expressed concerns

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about isolated instances of challenging behaviour, they felt that the school handled this issue as well as it was able. Typically a parent commented, 'The children attending Inkpen benefit greatly from a wonderful village school.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Inkpen Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 58 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	77	6	23	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	73	8	27	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	60	11	37	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	70	9	30	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	73	8	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	70	9	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	57	13	43	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	20	67	9	30	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	67	10	33	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	43	16	54	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	57	13	43	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	77	7	23	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	80	6	20	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Inkpen Primary School, Hungerford RG17 9QE

We really enjoyed visiting you recently and thank you for your warm welcome and friendliness while we were with you. You go to a school which gives you a satisfactory education, looks after you very well, keeps you safe and gives you many exciting learning activities.

We are especially pleased that you like coming to school so much, get on very well with each other, think so highly of your teachers and are proud of your school. It is very pleasing that your parents share your views about the school, the staff and your very kind and musical headteacher. He is why you have such a good choir ' but why are there no boys in it? It was great to hear you describe the school as 'brilliant' and 'caring', but I wasn't sure about 'hair raising'!

Although your writing and mathematics skills have been satisfactory in Key Stage 2 for a while, they have been improving in Years 1 and 2 and in Year R/1 more quickly, and are now good. We think that there is improvement in Key Stage 2 as well and we would like you to help speed this up. Your teachers and teaching assistants give you many interesting things to study and you have many enjoyable clubs and visits. We have asked them to help you do even better and this is how they can help you.

- Continue to improve your writing and mathematics skills in Key Stage 2 by making sure that none of you fall behind in your learning so that you all reach your targets. You can help by telling your teachers when you don't understand what you have to do.
- Secondly, letting you work in small groups more often and making sure you understand what you have to do to improve. We have also suggested that they make sure all of you do your best at all times and help you to judge whether you think you are doing as well as you can.

Thanks again for being so helpful. We hope you enjoy the new outdoor area in Year R/1 and the new computers you will have next year. Good luck!

Yours sincerely

Rod Braithwaite

Lead inspector

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