

Irthlingborough Junior School

College Street, Irthlingborough, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN9 5TX

Inspection dates

20–21 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the pupil premium funding has been used successfully to raise standards for disadvantaged pupils over time.
- Leaders do not have a precise overview of the effectiveness of the primary physical education and sport premium funding.
- Teachers do not match the work consistently well to pupils' abilities. Some teachers do not consistently adhere to the school's policies and procedures.
- Teachers' subject knowledge and the effectiveness of their planning and questioning skills are inconsistent. This hinders pupils' learning and progress in lessons.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 was significantly below the national average in 2016 and 2017.
- From their starting points, the progress of disadvantaged pupils has been well below that of other pupils nationally over time.
- Pupils' behaviour around school and their attitudes to learning in lessons are not consistently good.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher quickly and accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school. He has made a good start in bringing about much-needed improvements.
- The school's latest assessment information indicates that a higher proportion of pupils are currently on track to achieve at age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics than has previously been the case.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that the school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is effective.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make increasingly good progress from their starting points.
- As a result of the school's effective work with pupils and families, attendance is improving.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management in order to ensure sustained improvement by:
 - using the findings of accurate monitoring to identify and spread the existing good practice in teaching across the school
 - precisely analysing the impact on outcomes of recent improvements to provision for disadvantaged pupils, ensuring that these pupils' rates of progress continue to accelerate and their attendance continues to improve
 - providing better playtime resources for pupils, and increasing staff training in behaviour management, so that pupils' behaviour improves to be consistently good both in lessons and around school
 - providing clear guidance to the sports leader to ensure that the impact of the additional funding that the school receives through the primary physical education and sports premium is measured accurately.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to be consistently good, so that pupils attain more highly and make faster progress in reading, writing and mathematics, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - adhere consistently to the school's policies and procedures
 - set work that is consistently well matched to pupils' abilities
 - plan effectively so that their expectations are clear and consistent, enabling pupils to use their time in lessons productively
 - develop secure subject knowledge in English and mathematics and use questions effectively to challenge pupils and move them on in their learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not been effective in reversing the school's declining standards in the past. For at least the past two years, standards of attainment and rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 have remained well below average.
- Despite extensive staff restructuring, leaders have not completely eliminated underperformance. Teaching is not consistently good across the school, and some teaching remains inadequate.
- Until recently, leaders and governors have not ensured that the school's use of the additional funding it receives for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to raise standards. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils' rates of progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics have been well below those of other pupils nationally.
- Leaders do not currently have a sharp enough view of the trends and patterns of the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, some interventions are not targeted as precisely as they might be.
- Leaders have not provided guidance to the newly appointed sports leader on how to evaluate the effectiveness of his work. Consequently, the impact of recent changes in sports provision and the effectiveness of the additional funding received by the school are not clear.
- Since his appointment in September 2016, the effective headteacher, ably supported by his deputy, has quickly identified the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, he has accurately prioritised plans for school improvement, which contain precise and measurable targets and actions.
- Leaders and governors have an ambitious vision for the school. The headteacher has made sure that an effective senior leadership team is now in place. Over the past six months, leaders have continued to appoint new staff into middle leadership positions. There is evidence that these middle leaders are becoming increasingly effective in their roles. However, it is too soon to see the impact of their work on pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since her appointment in January 2018, the leader for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has provided particularly strong leadership. As a result, these pupils are making increasingly good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have ensured that a broad and balanced curriculum is available for pupils. For example, a recent focus on science has been effective in sparking pupils' interest and enthusiasm. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were observed taking part in an activity day to promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics learning. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their activities throughout the day and about how these had enhanced their skills of 'working scientifically'. Visits to school from 'real' scientists, such as a road collision investigator, have provided pupils with a valuable insight into the world of work. As a result, pupils are acquiring a range of knowledge and skills across the curriculum.

- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. For example, through effective links with community fundraising projects, pupils acquire a keen understanding of social responsibility. In their conversations with inspectors, pupils showed an accurate grasp of fundamental British values. In particular, pupils spoke confidently about democracy and could relate it to their own school council elections.

Governance of the school

- The newly appointed and knowledgeable chair of the local governing body has a realistic view of the school's past and current performance because he plays an active role in the life of the school. Consequently, the local governing body is becoming increasingly effective in providing rigorous challenge for school leaders.
- The Irthlingborough and Finedon Learning Trust, which the school joined in 2015, has a clear vision for the school. Through its astute appointments of the headteacher and the executive headteacher, and through the substantial and ongoing support that it provides, the trust is systematically bringing about improvement.
- Trust officers and members of the local governing body rightly believe that the headteacher has the capacity to lead further improvements required for the school to succeed.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have made sure that all the necessary checks are in place, in line with statutory requirements.
- Pupils, parents and staff say that the school is safe. Pupils confirm that they receive teaching about how to stay safe in a variety of situations.
- The deputy headteacher provides effective leadership of safeguarding. Working closely with the school's family support workers, she has put rigorous systems in place for recording and following up any child welfare concerns raised by staff.
- The school's work with other agencies is strong. For example, monthly meetings with a range of community-based professionals ensure a coherent overview of and response to any local concerns.
- The governing body pays due regard to its statutory duties relating to safeguarding. The governor with designated responsibility for safeguarding liaises effectively with the school and reports his findings regularly to the full governing body.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school mean that pupils do not learn as well and progress as quickly as they should.
- Inspectors' observations of learning in lessons showed that pupils' progress typically slows when the work is not well matched to their abilities. In other instances, pupils' attention wanders when teachers' ineffective planning does not make the focus of the lesson clear.

- In Years 3, 4 and 5, teachers' subject knowledge and their levels of expertise in questioning pupils are not consistently good. As a result, teachers do not consistently ensure that they deepen pupils' knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Evidence from pupils' books shows that, where teachers do not adhere to the school's marking and assessment policy, pupils' progress is hindered. This is because pupils are not given precise guidance on how to improve their work.
- When teachers' expectations are clear, pupils focus well on their learning. For example, in Year 6, pupils make good progress and display enthusiasm for learning. This is because the work is well matched to their abilities and pupils receive effective support from teachers and learning support assistants.
- Interventions for groups of pupils in English and mathematics are increasingly effective across the school. This applies to pupils who are less able or who have SEN and/or disabilities. As a result of good communication between teachers and learning support assistants, leading to effective teaching, pupils in these groups currently make good progress from their starting points. In particular, the impact of recent staff training has led to some pupils making accelerated progress in reading.
- Evidence from pupils' books and from discussions with pupils shows the positive impact of the school's recent focus on improving pupils' use of vocabulary.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The group of pupils who met with inspectors spoke with confidence and pride about their school. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and feel that all staff are there to support them with any worries or problems. Pupils are clear that bullying is strongly discouraged. They specifically name the headteacher as someone who will always take their concerns seriously.
- Pupils speak confidently about the school's ethos and rules. They understand, and can articulate well, how the rules keep them safe and encourage respect.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors were full of praise for the school, particularly in regard to the support provided for pupils who require additional help.
- Leaders and teachers plan thoughtful activities to support pupils' understanding of moral and social issues. For example, pupils take part in fundraising activities which are linked to community needs.
- The headteacher has retained a number of school traditions which have meaning for pupils, their families and the local community. These include attending the town's annual Remembrance Day ceremony and continuing the school's long-standing 'house' system. Such activities help to enrich pupils' cultural awareness.
- In a small proportion of classes, the school's new scheme of work for personal, social and health education is not systematically followed by teachers. This means that some pupils receive inconsistent teaching in this part of the curriculum.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Where teaching is not consistently strong, pupils' attitudes to learning are equally weak. Not all teachers have secured the respect of pupils, and they do not manage pupils' behaviour effectively. In these classes, pupils talk over teachers, make little effort in their work and consequently make little or no progress in their learning.
- There are examples where specific groups of pupils do not conduct themselves sensibly around school. During the inspection, Year 5 children entered school boisterously at the start of the afternoon session. Individual pupils were not respectful or kind to one another and poor behaviour went unchallenged by staff.
- Leaders recognise that the school does not currently resource playtimes sufficiently in order to effectively promote pupils' good behaviour and positive social interaction. The interaction of support staff does not model warm and respectful behaviour at lunchtimes.
- Where teaching is strongest, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, try their best and take pride in their work.
- Pupils behave well, and show good manners, in the dining hall. This is because leaders have put effective systems in place which ensure that the lunchtime service flows quickly and smoothly.
- As a result of the school's effective work with pupils and families, overall attendance has improved significantly under the leadership of the current headteacher. The persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils, while still higher than that of other pupils, has also reduced over the past year.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' current rates of progress, as seen in the quality of work in their books, are not consistently good. The current inconsistencies in teaching in Years 3, 4 and 5 continue to have a negative impact on the pupils' progress, and particularly those who are disadvantaged.
- The school's latest assessment information does show that an increased proportion of pupils are currently on track to reach age-related expectations by the end of Year 6. The current figures for reading and mathematics, and the combined figure for reading, writing and mathematics, show improvement from 2017, although still below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are currently on track to achieve age-related expectations in writing by the end of Year 6 is above the national average.
- Historically, published information shows that pupils' rates of progress and their standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics have been significantly below the national average over time.
- The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils in July 2017 were well below those of other pupils nationally in all subjects, and below those of other pupils in

school.

- The picture of achievement for disadvantaged pupils is beginning to improve, and the gap is closing between those pupils and others in school and nationally.

School details

Unique reference number	141910
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10048630

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	467
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Steve Ward
Headteacher	Nicholas Garley
Telephone number	01933 654921
Website	www.irthlingborough-jun.northants.sch.uk
Email address	office@ift.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to academy status on 1 April 2015. It is a member of the Irthlingborough and Finedon Learning Trust.
- Irthlingborough Junior School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is in line with the national average.
- The current headteacher and executive headteacher were appointed in September 2016. Other middle leaders were appointed in September 2017 and the school's coordinator for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities was appointed in January 2018.
- The current chair of the local governing body took up his position in January 2018.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics

by the end of Year 6.

- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 28 lessons or part lessons, some jointly with senior leaders, across all classes.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and considered the school's assessment information on the progress and standards achieved by pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with them about their reading.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and the executive headteacher, the senior leadership team and leaders with responsibilities for mathematics, reading, writing, sports, safeguarding, attendance and behaviour. Inspectors also met with those responsible for leadership of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. Inspectors also spoke with a range of teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body, including its chair. The lead inspector also met with the chair of the Irthlingborough and Finedon Learning Trust, its chief executive officer and other directors of the trust.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils and also spoke informally with pupils during lessons, lunchtimes and breaktimes.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day. The lead inspector considered the 42 responses from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation summary, minutes of meetings of the local governing body, the school's current information on pupils' attainment and progress, attendance records, behaviour logs, external reports on the work of the school, monitoring and evaluation records and a range of documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Clare Cossor	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Moore	Ofsted Inspector

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