



Iron Acton C of E (VC) Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109162
LEA South Gloucestershire
Inspection number 278143
Inspection dates 29 November 2005 to 29 November 2005
Reporting inspector Donald Mason RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Wotton Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Iron Acton
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Bristol BS37 9UZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01454 228322
Number on roll	60	Fax number	01454 228322
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Dr Katie Mansfield
Date of previous inspection	10 July 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Jill Bendeaux

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small Church of England school set in the village of Iron Acton ten miles from Bristol. Although most pupils come from Iron Acton and surrounding villages, a significant number of pupils come from further afield. Approximately a quarter of the pupils have learning difficulties and a few have behavioural problems. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. Attainment on entry varies considerably from year to year and there is a wide spread of ability amongst the pupils. All the pupils have English as their first language. A higher-than average-number of pupils join the school during Years 3 to 6. The headteacher was appointed fifteen months ago after an unsettled period of staff changes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors judge that the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory and its capacity to improve is good, as does the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money. Standards overall are in line with national averages and pupils make satisfactory progress. The headteacher was appointed fifteen months ago, bringing an end to an unsettled period of staff changes. She enjoys the enthusiastic support of parents, staff and governors and is providing strong, well-focused leadership. New arrangements to improve teaching and to check pupils' progress more effectively are leading to improved standards, particularly in English and mathematics. A five-year plan for improvement with clear priorities has been established. Teachers have responded well to opportunities they have been given to develop their leadership roles. Ten Reception children share a teacher with the Year 1 pupils and provision for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory because staff are doing everything possible to provide appropriately for these children.

Pupil-teacher relationships are good. Although attendance is unsatisfactory, pupils enjoy school and generally behave well. The school provides a friendly, welcoming environment. Pupils' participation in a wide range of enrichment activities makes a good contribution to their personal development, which is satisfactory overall. Whilst the school provides good support for a small number of pupils with behaviour problems, care and guidance are satisfactory overall. Relationships with the village community are very strong. Inspectors find that progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory rather than good, as the school believes, mainly because of limited progress in the teaching of information and communications technology (ICT). Resources for ICT are not yet used to the full.

What the school should do to improve further

- continue to seek to achieve its aim of raising standards by consolidating the improvement measures introduced in the last fifteen months
- ensure that maximum use is made of improved resources to raise standards in ICT
- improve levels of attendance

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards overall are in line with national averages and all pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards in the Year 2 tests have been in line with the national average for the last five years. All pupils, including those who join the school during Years 3 to 6, continue to make satisfactory progress so that, by the end of Year 6, standards are in line with national averages. The school feels that standards could be higher and is committed to making improvements. In the 2004 and 2005 Year 6 tests, some individual pupils made good or very good progress in relation to their starting point in Year 3, especially in English. This was mainly due to improvements in the teaching of writing, particularly in relation to checking pupils' progress and explaining what pupils have to do to improve further. Assessment arrangements have also been improved in

mathematics and the information gained is now well used to set challenging targets, which pupils generally meet. The school has not yet made sufficient use of the new resources to improve teaching in ICT and is not able to provide evidence of the standards reached by pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils make sound progress in their personal development. Their spiritual and cultural development and knowledge of other faiths is satisfactory, having been improved since the previous inspection. There is a strong community spirit in assemblies, where pupils sing hymns joyfully and show respect in prayers. Most pupils behave well, although there is some misbehaviour in lessons and rough play outside. This is mainly due to a very few pupils, including those newly arrived, with significant behaviour problems. However, sound procedures are in place to deal with any incidents that arise. There have been no recent exclusions. Pupils say that they feel safe and know who to turn to if they have a problem. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. New playground equipment ensures that playtimes are enjoyable. Pupils enjoy school and willingly take on responsibilities. Their economic understanding is well developed, for instance, through charitable fund-raising. Pupils' basic skills are sound, but their ICT skills are underdeveloped. Pupils work well together in lessons, although lower juniors sometimes work too slowly. School council members do well in discussing issues of concern and acting as prefects. Measures taken by the school to improve very low attendance levels have not yet been successful.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning, from Reception to Year 6, is satisfactory overall. Monitoring of teaching is now well established. Teachers are regularly observed teaching and given the opportunity to observe a colleague. In this way, areas for improvement are identified and teachers benefit from working in a supportive team. In the best lessons, assessment is well used to identify what the pupils have to do next. Teachers do not talk to the whole class for too long and work is well matched to the needs of groups of children of different abilities. Improvements in the teaching of English and mathematics have not been extended to other subjects where expectations are not high enough and work is not closely matched to pupils' needs. Pupils generally enjoy their lessons and usually apply themselves well to the task in hand. Teachers make learning objectives clear to the pupils and are beginning to encourage pupils to evaluate their own achievements. Marking of pupils' work does not give pupils enough advice on how to improve their work. Pupil-staff relationships are good. A limited number of well-trained teaching assistants are effectively used to support pupils in the mixed-age classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curriculum provision is satisfactory and a two-year cycle of planning is well used to avoid repetition in mixed-age classes. Tasks are usually adjusted to take account of the range of ages and abilities in each class so that pupils with learning difficulties achieve well. This is most successful in English and mathematics, less so in other subjects, especially in ICT. Generally, the work set for more able pupils is suitably challenging and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. It is a good feature that French is taught to all ages. A weekly activity afternoon is a promising initiative to increase creative expression. The curriculum offered to the Reception children is satisfactory. A good range of special events, visits and visitors and after-school activities broadens pupils' experience. Pupils develop personal skills by taking an active part in community life, for instance, by performing at church services, village festivals and sports competitions.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Child protection procedures are well understood and are effective. Pupils are encouraged to discuss issues of concern and are listened to carefully. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall. They are best developed in English and mathematics, where progress is monitored through marking and formal tests. The information is used effectively to set work for different ability groups, ensuring that all pupils make satisfactory progress. The school has begun to set targets for individuals, and this is a good initiative to guide progress and involve parents. This good practice is not applied consistently in other subjects, and the lack of information on progress in ICT is a significant weakness. Care is taken to assess and check the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and those who have recently joined the school. As a result they make satisfactory progress. Outside agencies are properly involved in providing specialist support for those who need it.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory overall and the school's capacity to improve, much influenced by the relatively new head, is good. The headteacher provides strong leadership and under her guidance the school has produced 'ten goals', related to raising standards, which influence everything the school does. The school's plans to improve attendance and to raise standards in ICT are detailed here. The teachers are conscientious and enthusiastic. They have welcomed the opportunities which they have been given to develop their management and leadership skills, which are satisfactory at present. The staff work very well as a team. The school's self-evaluation processes are now good and the staff are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Over the last fifteen months, good use has been made of support from the Local Authority (LA) and advanced skills teachers to raise standards.

Procedures to check pupils' progress and to provide support when necessary have been improved. Teaching has been monitored and areas for improvement identified. Parents are very supportive of the school and acknowledge the improvements which have been brought about. Governors provide strong support for the school and have set themselves a goal to be more effective in monitoring the school's performance.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Iron Acton Primary School Wotton Road Iron Acton Bristol BS27 9UZ

30 November 2005

Dear Children

We really enjoyed our visit to your school. It was good to talk to you and see you at work. You behave very well most of the time and usually try your best in lessons. Your school is friendly and welcoming and the teachers work hard to provide interesting lessons for you. Although playtimes sometimes get a bit lively, the teachers quickly sort out any problems which occur. Those of you who sometimes find work difficult and those of you who joined the school in Years 3 to 6 are well supported. We know that you enjoy, and often help to organise, the many visits and special events which the teachers arrange for you.

We found that Iron Acton provides you with a safe place to work in and gives you satisfactory standard of education. To make your school even better we have asked Mrs Bendeaux and your teachers to:

- continue working on the improvements they have made in the last fifteen months so that you reach even better standards in your English, mathematics and science work
- make full use of your new computers so that you develop your ICT skills
- do their best to make sure that you are absent from school as little as possible so that your learning is not interrupted.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly. We wish you good luck in school and in your future lives.

Don Mason Lead Inspector