

# Ilfracombe Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113155
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	311128
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Huard

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	336
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Iris Watson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christine Thompson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 September 2004
<b>School address</b>	Marlborough Road Ilfracombe EX34 8JL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01271 863462
<b>Fax number</b>	01271 863462

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a large infant and nursery school near the centre of town. There is a significant degree of social disadvantage in the area. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It provides an excellent education for its pupils in an exciting and stimulating learning environment. The school is successful because everyone involved with it shows whole-hearted commitment and dedication to the education and personal development of the children. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work extremely closely together and provide outstanding direction for the school's work. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. The following comment was typical of many: 'Although this is a large school, it has a small school feel because all the children are known and cared for as individuals.'

Children's skills and experiences on entry into the Nursery are limited, particularly in relation to communication, language and literacy. They get an excellent start in the Nursery and Reception classes, where there is a wide range of stimulating activities and a strong focus on the development of their social and communication skills so that they learn to listen, share and take turns. The exceptional progress they make continues through Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, standards are significantly above average and pupils' achievement is outstanding. Actions taken to improve the quality of boys' writing have been extremely successful and they are now inspired to write because themes such as 'The Ugly Bugs Ball' really stimulate and interest them. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress because the support they receive both in class and in small groups is extremely well focused and successfully motivates them.

Teachers plan thoroughly and they ensure that pupils know what they are going to learn and why. The animated responses and excitement generated in lessons illustrate how much pupils enjoy their education and they sparkle with enthusiasm. Teachers ensure pupils have all the resources they need. For example, when composing a reply to Emily about the whale in her pond, pupils had a 'whale word bank' to help them select exciting and relevant vocabulary. A particular strength is the way in which tasks are matched to the differing abilities of pupils, ensuring that all learning is highly effective. The school is always striving to improve the provision made for its pupils. The inspiring curriculum is based around creative and practical themes. The care and support provided for pupils, and their families, are excellent. Pupils receive outstanding support for both their personal and academic development and their efforts are valued and celebrated, particularly in the displays of outstanding artwork around the school. Teachers regularly give time to review pupils' learning with them, and all the pupils spoken to by inspectors both knew and understood their targets. The school's 'Family Learning Project' ensures that all parents have the opportunity to be fully involved in their children's learning and activities such as 'Family PE' help to strengthen already extremely strong links. However, some parents are concerned that the school does not always give sufficient notice of these activities and events, which means they are not always able to support their children as much as they would like.

Pupils are lively and responsive in class, and thoughtful and reflective in assembly. They understand how to care for each other and the playground is a safe and happy place. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the need to stay safe and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They eagerly discussed the contents of their lunch boxes and emphasised the importance of a balanced diet. The school council regards itself as the 'Junior Management Team' and enjoys taking on responsibilities in school and eagerly raises funds for national and international charities, such as a clinic in Africa. It has instigated several improvements in school such as the installation of blinds in the sunniest classrooms. Pupils' very good competence in

numeracy and literacy and their excellent personal skills provide an outstanding preparation for their future lives.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make outstanding progress and the majority join Year 1 having reached average standards in all the areas of learning except for language, literacy and mathematical development, where standards are a little below average. The curriculum and teaching are inspiring and exciting and focus strongly on language development. Pupils searching for Pirate Jack's treasure in Reception chattered eagerly about the sensations they felt in the 'feely box' where it was hidden, and the more able composed excited letters to Jack relating their experiences. There is an excellent balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. The use of the outside areas to develop children's independence is outstanding. The care and attention to children's welfare are exceptional and children with specific difficulties are particularly well provided for. Staff show an incomparable understanding of the needs of young children and children's progress is extremely well monitored, allowing activities to be planned at exactly the right level to help them develop and learn.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that parents and carers have sufficient notice of all the activities in which they are invited to participate, to enable them to fully participate in their children's learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Standards have consistently been significantly above average for a number of years. Pupils' achievement is outstanding, not only in the core areas of reading, writing, mathematics and science, but also in art, information and communication technology (ICT) and music. The school is always seeking to improve pupils' learning further and to this end small groups provide excellent support. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve outstandingly well. The progress of pupils who are gifted or more able is monitored rigorously and great care is taken to ensure they too are fully challenged.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils develop outstanding social and moral attitudes. Assemblies and lessons provide excellent opportunities for pupils to be quiet and thoughtful and 'Mary's Garden' is a wonderful outdoor area where pupils can be calm and reflective. They explore the faiths and traditions of other cultures, and have an excellent awareness of what it means to grow up in a multi-ethnic society. Rates of attendance have improved significantly since the last inspection and the school has worked, and continues to work, very hard with parents to bring this about. Behaviour in and around the school is excellent. Pupils are friendly, sociable and polite to each other and to adults alike.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

Teachers are imaginative in their planning and make learning relevant and fun for pupils. Excellent subject knowledge gives them the confidence to be adventurous. Strong relationships and very high expectations ensure that pupils behave very well and work hard. They are eager to learn because they find the teaching inspiring and exciting. Pupils respond to questions thoughtfully and are encouraged to explore and share ideas with their groups or partners. Teachers keep the pace of learning brisk. Marking is outstanding, and teachers give pupils regular opportunities to assess their own learning against given success criteria. Support staff offer outstanding support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so they make the same exceptional progress as their classmates.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The excellent curriculum is designed to promote great enjoyment of learning and enables pupils to develop skills in all areas, as evidenced by the award of Gold Artsmark and Activemark. As the chair of governors said, 'We want to ensure that our children have a wonderful time while they are learning.' However, there is still a strong focus on developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The school has worked particularly hard to develop ideas and strategies to motivate boys to write and has been extremely successful. There is an excellent programme to promote pupils' personal and social education and the wide variety of visits and visitors enable pupils to improve their understanding and skills. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities which excite pupils and further enhance their learning experiences. Care is taken to ensure that all pupils, including those who are gifted and more able, are fully provided for through challenging activities.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

All staff have an excellent commitment to the care and support of every pupil. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and receive exceptional support. There are outstanding links with a wide range of outside agencies to further support pupils when needed. Rigorous arrangements for risk assessments and secure procedures for safeguarding children ensure their safety in and around the school, and Internet safety is paramount. The monitoring of pupils' progress is outstanding and time is given to discuss this with pupils individually. As a result, they fully understand their targets and know exactly what they need to do to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 1

The school's outstanding leadership and management are characterised by shared values and a clear vision for further improvement. This is reflected not only in the excellent leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, but also in the exceptional quality of guidance, as result of rigorous monitoring, provided by the key stage and subject leaders. This helps to

ensure that the school continues to improve on its already high standards. The governors monitor the work of the school closely and highly effectively through monthly performance plan meetings with the headteacher. Targets for development are regularly set and reviewed. As a result, the school has an excellent picture of how well it is doing and its self-evaluation is totally accurate. However, there is no complacency and the school's drive to improve further is illustrated by the excellent improvements made in boys' writing. There is an outstanding capacity for further improvement and meeting the challenging targets set. The school has the overwhelming confidence of the community it serves and parents are hugely enthusiastic in their support of the school. Comments ranged from 'an exceptionally well run school' to 'excellent facilities, excellent teachers' and 'as a parent I couldn't ask for a better school, my child loves it'.

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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?	1
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

How good is 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
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 the learners' needs?	1
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

<sup>1</sup> Grade 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 June 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Ilfracombe Infant and Nursery School, Ilfracombe EX34 8JL

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You certainly seem to be very happy and it was good to hear how you really enjoy your work and all the extra activities in which you are involved. Your school gives you an excellent education and is working hard to make it even better.

- These are the things we liked best:
- Your behaviour is excellent and you are really keen and enthusiastic about your learning.
- You are all doing very well in English, mathematics and science and in many other subjects as well.
- You take very seriously the importance of eating healthily at school and taking physical exercise.
- Teachers make learning interesting and fun for you, and you know how to improve your work from marking and target-setting.
- You have an outstanding and varied curriculum and the special activities arranged to enhance it are excellent. Your work in art is stunning.
- The teachers and staff take excellent care of you while you are in school.
- Your headteacher and governors lead the school extremely well.

There is only one small area that could be a little better:

- Your parents would like a little more notice of events in which they can take part with you. You can help them by reminding them when they are to take place.

I am glad you enjoy your school so much and hope you will continue to work hard.

Very best wishes

Yours sincerely

Mrs Christine Huard Lead inspector