

Iron Acton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109162
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	324914
Inspection date	26 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Martin James

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	82
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alex Jones
Headteacher	Jill Bendeaux
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Wotton Road Iron Acton Bristol BS37 9UZ
Telephone number	01454 228322

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	26 February 2009
Inspection number	324914

Fax number

01454 228340

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	26 February 2009
Inspection number	324914

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much smaller than most primary schools. Nearly all pupils are from a White British background. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than the national average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. A significantly higher than average proportion of pupils leave or join the school at times other than those normally expected, especially in Years 3 to 6. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of Reception, which is integrated into one class with pupils from Year 1. In recognition of its work, the school has received the Healthy School and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, where pupils achieve well. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy school, and their behaviour and attitudes to their learning are good. The school's overall care, support and guidance for pupils is good. Parents are very positive about the school and, for example, one said, typically, 'Iron Acton School has exceeded all my expectations.' Another added, 'My child loves school.'

Standards are above average, and pupils achieve well. As a result of the very small and varying numbers joining the Early Years Foundation Stage each year, the children's knowledge and skills on entry vary significantly. However, they are generally below the levels expected, especially in relation to their literacy skills. During their time in Reception the children achieve well, and they reach average standards by the time they leave. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 to 6, with the result that standards at the end of Year 6 are above average.

Good teaching is a key factor in pupils' good progress. Relationships are good, teaching assistants are well deployed and teachers make good use of a variety of resources and strategies to make the lessons interesting. Lessons are suitably planned, with careful provision made for the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Similar allowance is not always made for the needs of other pupils, especially the more able.

The good curriculum contributes well to both pupils' enjoyment of school and their learning. It is interesting and varied and, for example, helps to make the pupils aware of the need to follow a healthy lifestyle. The school routinely reviews its curriculum, with a current emphasis, for instance, being placed on the provision of more cross-curricular links. Pupils report that they enjoy the good range of visits, visitors and clubs that are provided.

The headteacher and other members of staff are a dedicated team providing good leadership and management. Self-evaluation is effective in pinpointing where improvement is needed, and the current recognition of the need to improve the quality and consistency of marking and target setting illustrates this well. Governors are fully involved in supporting the work of the school. The good quality of the current provision and the improvements made since the previous inspection show that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because they are taught well. The children are happy in school; they enjoy themselves and they particularly value the company of the older children in the class. Their behaviour is good, although occasionally a very small number find it difficult to maintain concentration on the tasks they have chosen. The staff work hard to create a friendly and caring learning environment, and the children also benefit from the good links that are established with parents. Adults provide the children with a good balance between teacher-led activities and a provision for them to choose for themselves. The staff take every opportunity to help them develop their various skills. Adults frequently talk to the children, and the good range of reading and writing activities helps to tackle weaknesses in literacy skills. Although space is limited, a good range of resources is provided, with the outdoor area being used effectively in all areas of the curriculum. The leader uses her specialist

knowledge and enthusiasm well in making good provision for the children, and other staff members support her well in providing for their various needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers provide work that is challenging enough to meet the needs of all pupils, especially those who are more able.
- Ensure that marking and target setting give pupils a clear awareness of how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average, and pupils' achievement is good. Children get off to a good start in Reception, and by the end of the year they reach average standards. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress, and by the end of Year 2, standards are above average.

By the end of Year 6, standards remain above average. This represents good achievement through Years 3 to 6 for these pupils. In 2008, pupils did not perform quite so well in science. The school recognised this, and the strategies introduced to address the issue, in particular the further development of pupils' investigative skills, have been successful. As a result, current classwork shows much improved standards. The school makes good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and this is helping them to make good progress in their work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils clearly like school very much, and this is reflected in their good behaviour and their evident enjoyment. They have very sensible attitudes to their work. Pupils are polite and courteous, and they move around the school in an orderly manner. Pupils feel safe in school, and they express complete confidence in the school's ability to sort out any issues that do arise. Attendance has much improved and is now good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. For example, although some find the concept of the multicultural nature of society difficult to grasp, pupils have a good awareness of different faiths and cultures. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to live healthy lives, and they enjoy the opportunities provided by the school for exercise.

Pupils readily and conscientiously take on the many responsibilities that the school offers them. The school councillors are proud of their role, and they recognise that they are working on behalf of other pupils. Pupils are also very involved in the wider community through such things as fund-raising and taking part in village activities, especially those involving the local church. The school successfully develops in its pupils a range of personal skills, such as self-confidence, and the standards being achieved in literacy and numeracy are preparing them well for their next stage of education and later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers provide interesting lessons for pupils, using a good range of resources and strategies. For example, good use was made of practical activities in a mathematics lesson on measuring in Year 1. Classes are well managed and relationships are a strength. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and ready to work hard. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards to motivate pupils and to develop their understanding. Teaching assistants are well deployed to promote learning, especially that of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers make good use of questioning to help pupils clarify their ideas and understanding.

Teachers plan carefully for the different groups and ages of pupils in their classes, and that produced for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. However, although planning takes account of the needs of more able pupils, it lacks consistency. On occasions, the work provided for these pupils is not challenging enough, so that their knowledge and skills are not fully extended during the lesson.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum enables pupils to study a broad and interesting range of subjects and topics, and this contributes to their good progress. There is a good emphasis on the use of the school's very attractive grounds, as well as the wider area of Iron Acton. The teaching of French and German further enhances the curriculum, and the provision for information and communication technology has improved since the previous inspection. The school recognises that the curriculum overall might be made even more interesting and relevant for pupils. As a result, further links between subjects are currently being developed, to produce topics that will motivate pupils even more. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are carefully identified, and these pupils are provided with a good range of tasks and activities.

There is a good emphasis throughout the school on developing pupils' personal and social skills. The curriculum makes a most appropriate contribution to pupils' safe and healthy lifestyles. There is a good range of outings, visitors and clubs, which pupils much appreciate and which they support with enthusiasm.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The welfare of the pupils is at the heart of the school's work, and adults ensure that there is good pastoral care. Parents in turn speak highly of the provision the school makes for their children. There is a strong focus on ensuring the well-being of every pupil. Child protection procedures are good, and safeguarding arrangements are robust. Good use is made of outside bodies in supporting this care of the pupils. Staff ensure that pupils work in a safe and clean environment. Safety checks and risk assessments are routinely carried out. Pupils are taught about the importance of healthy living, and they are regularly reminded of the need to take care, for instance, when doing physical education.

Helpful advice is given to pupils during lessons. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but whilst they often add words of praise, they do not all provide pupils with written advice about

improving their work. Pupils have targets for improving their work. However, discussions with pupils suggest that, whilst some know them well, others are less certain, and these pupils do not have a clear enough understanding of what they need to do to make their work better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads the school with dedication and skill, and she is supported well by other staff members. The sharing of roles and responsibilities within the small number of teaching staff is done well. Staff are keen to make the best possible provision for pupils, especially to help them achieve as well as they can. Staff have been successful in creating a caring and happy environment, and good care is also taken to ensure that no form of discrimination is evident in the school. The school's self-review has been accurate in identifying strengths and areas for development. For example, the current focus on providing more challenge in the work given to pupils is a suitable priority for the school. Community cohesion and pupils' understanding of cultural diversity are developed well. There are strong community links both in school and locally, and the school has successfully enhanced these through links made with schools in other parts of England and in the Netherlands.

Subject leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of the strengths in their various subjects, and they have actively initiated strategies for making improvements. At present, they have limited opportunities to observe lessons in other classes, although plans are in hand for this to happen more frequently as different subjects become priorities for review. Governance is good, with the governors being fully involved, for example, in producing the school development plan and monitoring its implementation. They readily exercise their role of 'critical friends' should the need arise.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Pupils,

Iron Acton CE Primary School, Iron Acton, Gloucestershire BS 37 9UZ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed our visit. We both enjoyed joining you in assembly and talking to you in lessons, and my colleague especially liked talking with the school council. I am writing to tell you what we found out about the school, what we think is good, and what we think could be made better. Overall, you are in a good school, where you are doing well with your work. The headteacher and other staff know what they need to do to make the school even better.

These things are some of the strengths of the school:

- Teaching is good, and teachers provide you with interesting lessons.
- Your behaviour and your attitudes to your work are good.
- You really enjoy the range of activities that the school provides, such as visits and different clubs.
- You know about how important it is to eat healthy food and take exercise.
- The staff know you well and take great care of you.
- Your parents are very pleased with the school.

These are things the school has been asked to improve:

- Make sure that you all get work in lessons that suits you and is hard enough for you, especially those of you who find learning easy.
- Ensure that the targets you have and the comments teachers add when marking your books help you understand clearly how to make your work better.

You can help too, by making sure you know how to improve your work further.

We wish you all good luck for the future.

Best wishes,

Martin James

Lead Inspector