

Inspection of Ilfracombe Infant and Nursery School

Marlborough Road, Ilfracombe, Devon EX34 8JL

Inspection dates:	18 and 19 March 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Ilfracombe Infant and Nursery School follow a broad curriculum but they do not achieve as well as they should. School leaders are not ambitious enough for what pupils can do. This means that pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils are well cared for. They are safe and know that if they have any concerns there is a member of staff they can speak to. However, at times staff do not deal swiftly with low-level behaviour and this disrupts the learning of pupils.

The school provides pupils with a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as dance, construction and creative clubs. These help to develop pupils' talents and interests. Pupils learn new skills during outdoor learning, such as cutting wood. Pupils regularly go on school trips that link to their topics. However, pupils do not always associate these visits to their learning in the classroom.

Some parents and carers have mixed views about the school. While some parents comment positively about their children's experiences at school, others feel that the school does not communicate with them effectively when they raise concerns.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

School leaders have designed a curriculum that aims to build pupils' knowledge and skills progressively. However, leadership including governance, does not make robust or rigorous checks to assure that the curriculum is having the impact the school intends. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

The teaching of phonics is a strength of the school. Staff are well trained to implement the scheme effectively. Those pupils who fall behind their peers are quickly identified and receive the support they need. Teachers read regularly to pupils. However, the teaching of reading beyond phonics is not clearly defined. The reading curriculum is not ambitious enough and does not set out what pupils need to know and by when. This means pupils do not access a wide variety of rich and stimulating texts in a systematic and purposeful way. As a result, pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Teachers do not systematically make checks on pupils' learning to understand what pupils know and remember. This means teaching does not plan learning activities that take into account what pupils already know and can do. Furthermore, most pupils regularly complete the same task regardless of their ability. As a result, pupils do not build knowledge securely or achieve as well as they should.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) experience similar inconsistencies in the quality of education as their peers. The school does not robustly monitor the impact of the support for pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND do not have targets related to their needs that are specific enough to help them to learn effectively.

Children get off to a strong start in the nursery. They develop a love of learning from the time they start school. Their needs are identified early and learning activities are designed to hook their imagination. Children in nursery are happy and well supported by adults. However, as children progress into Reception Year the quality of the provision is inconsistent. Staff do not have a robust understanding of what children know. This means learning activities within the continuous provision lack ambition and do not always reflect what children can do.

At times pupils behave well. During playtime, pupils enjoy playing games with their friends. However, staff do not have high enough expectations of pupils' behaviour. Low-level disruption is common and not effectively challenged by staff. Some pupils have not developed positive attitudes to learning. The school does not consistently address instances of poor behaviour or support pupils to develop more positive behavioural habits. While the school has taken measures to improve attendance, the number of pupils who are persistently absent remains too high.

The provision for pupils' personal development is not as effective as it should be. Pupils know what it means to eat healthily and the importance of drinking water. They benefit from regular swimming lessons in the school's swimming pool. However, the school does not support pupils well enough to develop confidence and resilience. Pupils are not given opportunities to develop a rich understanding of different religions and cultures. Pupils' knowledge is limited in this aspect. As a result, pupils are not as prepared as they could be for the next stage of their education.

The school does not always take into account the workload and well-being of staff, which leads to some staff feeling unnecessary pressure. The school does not effectively evaluate if its actions are having the intended impact. Furthermore, governors accept information from school leaders without robust challenge. This means governors and school leaders do not have an accurate view of the quality of education across the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not fully defined the reading curriculum beyond phonics. It is not clear what pupils need to learn and by when. Therefore, pupils do not build the knowledge and skills they need to read well. The school should ensure that the reading curriculum beyond phonics is ambitious and identifies the important knowledge and skills that pupils need to read confidently and understand what they have read.
- Assessment is not used with enough precision to check what pupils know and remember. As a result, teachers do not plan tasks which take into account what pupils

already know and can do. As a result, pupils do not build knowledge securely. The school needs to ensure that teachers use assessment effectively to check pupils' understanding and to plan tasks which help pupils to build their knowledge securely over time.

- The school's programme for personal development is not as effective as it needs to be. The school does not provide sufficient opportunities to develop pupils' wider knowledge of different cultures and beliefs or develop pupils' confidence and strength of character. The school should ensure that provision for personal development equips pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to be well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The school's strategic oversight of some aspects of its work is not sufficiently robust. As a result, school leaders do not have a strong enough understanding of aspects of the school's work or check whether their actions have the impact they intend. The school needs to put in place stronger systems to provide a clearer understanding of its work, so that leaders can fulfil their strategic responsibilities more effectively.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	113155
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10344471
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nadine Sampson (co-chair) Cathryn Hewitt (co-chair)
Headteacher	Claire Grant
Website	www.ilfracombe-inf.devon.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with teachers, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders, and members of the governing body.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspectors gathered parents' views by considering the responses to Ofsted Parent View and by talking to parents. The inspectors also reviewed responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

James Gentile, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Tustain

Ofsted Inspector

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