



Buckinghamshire
Learning Trust

Ickford Combined School

28th January 2015

This review report has been produced on behalf of the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust to contribute to supporting the school's improvement.

BLT School Reviews_Ickford_09022015

REVIEW REPORT

School Name and Address:	Head Teacher:	Reviewer:	Date of Review:
Ickford Combined School, Ickford, Aylesbury, HP18 9HY	John Ronane	Dr Rosemary Litawski	28.01.2015

CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

- Ickford Combined School is a small rural primary school with 128 pupils. Most of the pupils live in local villages, although a few are from the towns of Aylesbury and Thame. The school is oversubscribed and has a small waiting list.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few are eligible for additional funding through pupil premium. All pupils have English as a first language.
- 3.9% of pupils are on SEN support. There are no pupils with statement. This is well below national averages.
- The Head Teacher has been in post 5 years. The school was inspected by Ofsted in October 2012 and judged to be good in all categories, except behaviour which was judged outstanding.
- The school has 5 classes: class1 -EYFS, Reception and youngest year 1 pupils, class 2- year 2 pupils and youngest year 3, class 3 - year3 and youngest year 4 pupils, class 4- year 5 and eldest 4 and class 5- with all year 6 pupils. Year groups are split according to age.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Evidence sources

- Pupil books and folders.
- Joint lesson observations.
- Relevant school documents e.g. tracking and monitoring documents, SEF, Schemes of Work, Lesson Plans, Raise, Ofsted report, School performance tables, Data dashboard.
- Most recent Data Dashboard.
- School website.
- Interviews with Head Teacher, assistant head and EYFS, literacy and numeracy coordinators.
- Interviews with pupils and parents.

Evaluation:

- The overall picture is one of an effective school, where attainment and progress are sig+ and, good and above national averages.
- At key Stage 2 in 2014 attainment was above national results in Reading and Mathematics and significantly above in Writing and SPAG. In all areas there was an upward trend.

- Progress at KS2 was above national results for Reading and Maths and significantly above for Writing for all pupils.
- There was no underachievement by any group of pupils.
- In 2014 81% of Year 1 pupils achieved the expected standard in the Phonics screening tests. The school predicts similar if not higher results for the present cohort.
- The school has in place rigorous and effective tracking and monitoring systems and information.
- Attainment and progress observed in lessons, and from pupil's books in all classes was outstanding, especially in numeracy and literacy.
- The small cohort of pupils in any one year group means that one pupil can distort the overall picture of pupil achievement on a yearly basis, but the school is fully aware and can identify individual pupils.
- The school graded student achievement in the SEF as good. The reviewer now judges, it close to outstanding, based on 2015 predicted outcomes.

Suggested steps to take:

- The school should continue to ensure the validity and reliability of teacher assessments across all age groups and subjects, by embedding the now more rigorous moderation procedures in school, and expanding the out of school opportunities for external moderation.
- Be clear about the schools predictions/estimations of outcomes for the 2015 cohort, especially for year 6, year 3 and year 1 pupils.
- Raise achievement and progress in Reading and Mathematics to sig+.
- The school should, using the Ofsted criteria for Achievement and its predicted pupils outcomes for 2015, reconsider if the school is good (see SEF).

QUALITY OF TEACHING

Evidence:

- Joint lesson observations of all classes.
- Pupils books and folders from all classes.
- School website.
- Relevant school documents – lesson plans, curriculum documents, schemes of work, tracking data, website, pupils reading logs.
- Data dashboard – school performance data.
- Interviews with Head Teacher, assistant head, literacy and numeracy and EYFS coordinators and SENCO.
- Interviews with pupils and parents.
- Lesson plans.

Evaluation:

- The majority of lesson observed were outstanding. None were less than good.
- All lessons were well planned with clear explicit learning objectives which ensured all pupils knew what was expected.
- All lessons have well organised with appropriate group work, and children worked well together supporting each other's learning.
- Pupils were fully engaged in all lessons observed, and active collaborative learning motivated them.

- Lessons were well planned and differentiated and addressed the needs of more able pupils as well as supporting weaker students.
- There was pace and challenge in lessons, and a wide variety of engaging activities.
- Books are extremely well marked with formative comments indicating how pupils could improve.
- The previous Ofsted report said "no use is made of targets to help pupils to become skilled in self - assessment and take greater responsibility for their own long term progress". There was evidence that pupils had individual targets of how to improve their work, and knew what they had to do to improve.
- There was limited use of self-assessment and peer assessment by pupils.
- There was evidence of targeted and probing questioning by teachers that deepened pupils' learning, but it is not consistent.
- Not all teachers regularly checked nor assessed pupils understanding during a lesson.
- The school SEF judged teaching good.
- The teaching and learning observed by the reviewer was judged as outstanding.

Suggested steps to take:

- Pupils should be encouraged and given the opportunity to respond to the formative and detailed marking by their teachers.
- Ensure the use of probing questioning is consistent and is further developed to challenge more able pupils.
- Ensure all teachers regularly checked pupils understanding during a lesson.
- Give pupils more opportunity for both peer and self- assessment.

BEHAVIOUR AND SAFETY

Evidence:

- Observations in classes, around the school, before school, lunch and break times.
- Interviews with pupils.
- Interviews with parents and a governor.
- Attendance data and school documentation.
- Interviews with Head Teacher, coordinators and SENCO.
- School documentation – SEF.

Evaluation:

- Attendance is high. Pupils say they enjoy school. Parents talked about them "running into school in the morning" and their children's love of the school.
- It is welcoming, calm, and yet vibrant and exciting learning environment.
- Behavior in lessons and around the school was exemplary.
- Pupil's attitudes were positive and enthusiastic about their learning. They talked with excitement about their French PE and Violin lessons. One pupil when asked what was good about his school said "it is a lovely learning environment", and it is.
- Pupils have a pride in their school, in their appearance and the presentation of their work.
- Relationship between staff and pupils is excellent, as is relationships between same and different age groups of pupils.
- A wide range of clubs and activities, the school council and the house system provide opportunities for pupils to be involved in the life of the school and participate in leadership roles.

- The school is a safe and secure place. All safeguarding procedures are in place.
- Pupils know what to do about bullying and were aware of the dangers of cyber bullying. They and their parents say there is no bullying.
- The school judged behavior and safety outstanding in the SEF. The reviewer agrees.

Suggested steps to take:

None.

QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Evidence:

- Interviews with the Head Teacher, assistant head, coordinators and SENCO.
- Interviews with parents and a Governor.
- Interviews and conversations with pupils.
- School documentation. - SEF SDP, tracking data, raise on line Ofsted report, etc.
- School website.

Evaluation:

- There is strong high profile leadership by the Head Teacher, who clearly communicates his vision and high expectations, and has the full support of parents.
- There is an excellent wide creative curriculum with a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, but also includes specialist teaching of French, PE and whole class Violin lessons, It is enriched further by a wide range of extracurricular activities including a German club and a range of sporting activities the curriculum provides sporting, academic and technological activities, and contributes to pupil's love of learning.
- There is a stable high quality teaching staff.
- There is strong teamwork among the coordinators led by the assistant Head Teacher, who are committed to improvement.
- There is a supportive and challenging governing body who are fully involved in the school. Each class has an allocated Governor whose picture is displayed in each classroom.
- The SEF is too long, in places descriptive rather than evaluative and not closely linked to Ofsted criteria.
- The school judges leadership and management and with the capacity for further school improvement and raising standards.
- The reviewer judges the aspects of leadership and management observed as outstanding.

Suggested steps to take:

- Ensure that all the previous Ofsted "issues" are consistently addressed by all teachers.
- Review the schools SEF against the present Ofsted criteria and write in a more concise judgmental manner. (Less description). – Or produce a summary document. When quoting percentage results it would help to also give actual figures to illustrate and emphasize the small cohort of pupils involved in the data.
- Ensure that on the school website in your curriculum statement you make reference to British values.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Evaluation:

Attainment and progress is above national results and sig+ in 2014, and is improving. Standards of work observed from pupils books and folders and observed in lessons in all age group from EYFS to Year 6 is outstanding. The majority of teaching observed was outstanding as was behaviour and safeguarding. If the school is able to sustain this level of achievement then it will be an outstanding school.

Suggested steps to take:

- Be clear about the schools predictions/estimations of outcomes for the 2015 cohort, especially for year 6, 3 and 1 pupils.
- As part of an exercise to review and redraft the SEF, the school should consider carefully its predicted pupils outcomes for 2015, and using Ofsted criteria for Achievement reconsider if the school is good or has moved into the outstanding grade for Achievement.

Reviewer's evaluation of key documents:

- The school is well documented.
- Data tracking documents are clear and provide valuable information about progress and attainment of all pupils. (Ensure they are fully used by all class teachers in planning their lessons).
- The SEF is too long, too descriptive and needs to be linked more closely to the Ofsted criteria in order to reach a judgment for each aspect. It would help to involve more staff and Governors in its production. At the moment it is not accurately reflecting the key strengths, and areas for development, of the school.

Points for development in key documents:

- Add to the school website a stronger whole school statement on the curriculum –its aims and values. Include an explicit statement to how the school actively promotes British values (such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs).
- The SEF – see above.

Strengths observed during the review:

- Strong committed leadership by the Head Teacher, the assistant head and coordinators.
- Outstanding behavior from pupils and a thirst for learning.
- An exciting and broad curriculum.
- Outstanding and good teaching.
- Outstanding writing by all pupils from EYFS to year 6.

Areas of disagreement with school self-review and reasons why:

None.