

Education Inspection Framework

Agreed

Conisbrough Ivanhoe Primary Academy

URN: 137765

Overall

JUDGEMENT



School Context

BRIEF SUMMARY

Conisbrough Ivanhoe Primary Academy is a stand alone academy and has been since January 2012. We were one of the first primary academies in Doncaster. Since 2006, we have doubled in size from 168 pupils (F2-Y6) to 331 pupils. In 2006, 14 pupils entered F2; in 2019, 46 pupils entered F2. In 2006, Ivanhoe was the smallest school in Conisbrough and now it is comfortably the largest (except for the secondary school.) We are now in a position where we struggle to fit in all the children who want to come here and are having to purchase extra classroom space to meet demand (having already given up our staff room to accommodate a class!)

Ivanhoe out-performs all the other local schools academically. In 2017 and 2018, we were the best performing school in Doncaster and in the top 100 nationally in 2018.

In 2019, the school's results were as follows:

EYFSP - GLD: 80%, All ELGs: 77%

Phonics - Year 1 81%, Year 2 re-sit 67%, by end of Y2, 90%

Key Stage 1 - Reading: 74% (14%), Writing: 64% (5%), Maths: 69% (10%), Science: 79%, RWM: 50% (5%)

Key Stage 2 - Reading: 75% (31%), Writing: 92% (15%), Maths: 94% (25%), GPS:92% (52%), RWM 73% (6%)

In terms of deprivation, Ivanhoe has fewer children in the bottom 10% in Indices of Multiple Deprivation than locally or nationally, but many more in the bottom 40% than locally or nationally. Indeed, 95% of Ivanhoe children are in the bottom 40%. There is exactly the same pattern in IDACI. A major difference lies in Education and Skills where 47% of Ivanhoe children are in the bottom 10% which is much higher than local or national figures. This mismatch is Ivanhoe's battleground in that Ivanhoe is a community where financial deprivation is less of an issue than educational deprivation which means that our task is always to promote the value of education above financial security... so, for example, our community can afford to take nice holidays and they like to do so in term time as that makes them more reasonably priced whereas we have to continuously press the argument that a child's education has more value than a foreign holiday.

The school has a good reputation for working closely with parents: every week, the homework front page acts as a newsletter with a reply slip so that parents can pass comments on to the school. Parents know that they can speak to members of staff or to the HT without an appointment. Parents are invited in to assemblies every week (Learner of the Week) and there are a variety of workshops in KS1 and F1 and F2 for parents. The school has a blog that can be used for discussion between home and school - most recently, to discuss the change in the school week. From September 2019, there will be half-termly 'meet the HT' mornings where parents can informally meet with the HT to talk about school direction and school issues. In general, this relationship with parents is a great boost to the school (the good reputation of the school spread by parents is one of the reasons we have so many people applying to join the school at all key stages). However, when we have issues with children, it is most often when parents themselves cannot be of much support to the school - so they support our work, but sometimes cannot cope with children's behaviour themselves.

Conisbrough is a troubled town in many ways and alcohol misuse, drug misuse, domestic violence and criminal gang membership are all issues that we have to deal with regularly - and of course, children are the collateral damage in these cases. At the same time, aspirational parents send their children to this school so there are often such huge differences within a class that we all have to be aware of. As part of our response to this, we have a full-time parent-liaison officer who has responsibility for safeguarding, we have a UQT with a psychology degree (with another coming this half term) who spend a lot of time with our children who need extra help. We also buy in Speech and Language services, Learning Support Services and extra Ed Psych services so that we have a team whose focus is the most needy children in the school (as well as SEN leader and another one in training.) Our response to meeting the needs of all children shows our commitment to all - a philosophy which runs through the whole school - in 2017/18 we were allocated a child in Y6 who had been excluded from two other local schools and at great cost to the school we stuck by her until she transitioned to secondary school, but that example clearly shows our commitment to every child at this school. At the same time as recognising that there are children here with quite profound issues (physical, SEN as well as behavioural/emotional) I must stress that there is a wonderful atmosphere in this school where children are polite, hard-working, fun to be around, kind to each other, sensible and caring: that atmosphere is palpable and something that is always remarked upon by visitors to this school.

When we became an academy in 2012, our expectation was that we would support other schools and then become a MAT. However, that has not happened, but the result of that has meant that all our focus and expertise has gone into our own school. There is a strong sense of teamwork at Ivanhoe and teachers are motivated by love of the school and their profession. The majority of teachers completed their ITT at this school which helps to inculcate the sense of passion for the school and for the community. Our team of support staff is very committed and very skilled. Ofsted reported in 2016 that: "the support that pupils receive from teaching assistants is exceptional" which sums up our own view - they are a key ingredient in an extremely strong staff. There is a sense in this school that every member of staff has a voice that is heard and considered, it is as much a top down as a bottom up school where we all have responsibility for what happens and we are all accountable.

We are a very successful school - and a major factor in that success is that we constantly question ourselves and push the boundaries of what we can offer, always looking for ways that change can lead to improvement: a good example of that would be that when Ofsted last visited (2016) our SEN and Safeguarding was paper based, we relied on Doncaster for speech and language support and Ed Psych support and any support in school was delivered by LSAs. Since then, we have moved to CPOMS, trained a new SEN (and are training another) moved Safeguarding to a full-time post and bought-in Speech and Language, LSS and Ed Psych services (with a corresponding number of EHCPs granted) as well as having one (soon to be two) members of staff solely dedicated towards support for the most needy children. This reinvention (in an area NOT highlighted by Ofsted) has transformed the way we meet the needs of our children. Similarly, since the last inspection, we have moved to a four week summer transition which means that classes don't cruise to the end of summer term (instead, re-energising towards the summer break) and we hit the ground running in autumn. This works from Nursery to Y6 and has led to a five point assessment cycle across the school.

At the same time, we have markedly changed our curriculum in response to Ofsted changes, completely rewriting it in 2018/19. We have changed our day around to reflect the importance of the wider curriculum so that maths and English do not take priority in the school day. We have introduced the concept of having 21 trips set in stone so that every child who has been through the school will have had 21 'essential' school trips (the list being developed by staff, students and parents) and we have changed the school week around so that not only do children have slightly more school based learning, but by going home early on a Wednesday, all staff can have PPA time together and uninterrupted.

We also offer wraparound care from 7.30 - 5.30 every day for those parents who need it.

This is a school that is seen as very successful, but it is one where there are many varied demands on us all - we work very hard indeed, but we do so out of love for the place and the profession, and of course, the children. We aim to make it a fun, happy, safe school where children get a great education.

Quality of Education

JUDGEMENT



If you are considering Ivanhoe as a school for your child, please take a good look at this website as it will tell you a great deal about us and about the way we operate.

We are very proud of the academic success of this school: we were in the top 100 schools in the country last year in terms of pupil progress and also have very high attainment. However, a glance at the website and a visit to the school will show that we are about breadth, depth and balance and about school being a great place for children - safe, enjoyable and friendly.

As a group of people, the staff at this school are committed to giving your children the very best possible start in life. We believe that through our curriculum and through our visits and other activities, we can help our children access the essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.

In the blink of an eye, your children will be adults: we recognise our vital role in shaping the learning of those young men and women, so that they are able to play a full part in our society, without feeling that they have missed opportunities along the way. If you would like your child to get the same opportunities then Ivanhoe may well be the school for you ...

This is the introduction to the school on our website and it is how we proclaim ourselves to the world. This is how we introduce our curriculum on the website:

At Ivanhoe, we recognise that children deserve a curriculum that has breadth, depth and balance and that is an exciting curriculum, personalised for our children; so that when children leave our school they will have had a great start with opportunities and experiences that will be embedded for life.

As someone who is now a very old head teacher, I can still see my top junior teacher (Mr Jacks) demonstrating air pressure by using steam to create a partial vacuum in a petrol can and then the whole class watching that petrol can fold in, crushed by the external air pressure. This happened in 1968 (when different Health and Safety rules applied) but I can still see it in my mind's eye. Equally, I have a clear picture of the Bayeux Tapestry which I saw on a school trip to France in the same year - and I can still remember how breath-taking it felt to be in close contact with something so delicate and intricate and yet 900 years old...

The point is that we want our children to be shaped by their primary school experience so that it is still with them into adulthood - still helping them engage with the world and still guiding them; the experiences still alive in them.

In Conisbrough, we have a rich heritage that we use to support our curriculum. Our History teaching is blessed by the fact that we have the oldest church in South Yorkshire (St Peter's) and the wonderful Conisbrough Castle that inspired Walter Scott to write 'Ivanhoe'; we focus on these by visits and using other visits to contrast our castle with another castle, and our church with a Cathedral, thus we can personalise using our locality, but also expand by taking the children further afield to contrast their experiences. We have tried to approach our whole curriculum in the same manner, for example, by seeing how we can apply 'next steps' to what we teach - using local pathways in our music teaching so that those who enjoy our brass music lessons can access the brass opportunities in the wider community, and those who wish to do so in sport can access the pathways to local sports beyond the school - and this is an area rich in brass music tradition as well as sport.

Our focus regarding the curriculum is to ensure that its breadth, depth and balance will mean that children are properly prepared to take their next steps when they leave us - but that they will also retain what they have learned so that it continues to shape them into the future.

Our focus on cultural capital marries with our desire to give our children experience of the best that has been thought and said. With that in mind, our children will read classic English texts which otherwise they would probably not access - and they will see that you can enjoy Robert Louis Stevenson as much as you can David Walliams.

At Ivanhoe, we understand that our children will have far better life chances if they are highly literate and numerate, but we are determined not to pursue those aims if it leads to a curriculum that is narrowed and starved of opportunities to develop the whole child. By understanding our children and by recognising how we can help them to be fully rounded citizens we can redress any social disadvantage that may have chained our community in the past. Our children are the future and our curriculum will give them the very best chances in life.

And this is how we introduce the notion of cultural capital:

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty; that is all you know on earth, and all you need to know." (Keats)

This school is committed to ensuring that children are given every opportunity to taste the best cultural experiences that we can offer in the hope that by gaining access to the best, children will understand that the most beautiful experiences are accessible and that they are their birth right. We see this as just as important as their understanding of British Values.

We are delighted that in the new Ofsted Framework, Cultural Capital heads the Curriculum Content section with the quotation:

It is the essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.

With this in mind, we have decided to support our new curriculum with a series of school trips that will be set in stone so that by the time a child goes from Reception through to the end of Y6, they will have had the opportunity to have twenty-one experiences that, added, together, should show them some of what the world has to offer. The list was compiled by children, parents and staff - and these will not be the only school trips, but they will be the ones that are guaranteed to every child. We were constrained by distance from school and to some extent by expense, but we believe we have a very good selection.

Reception, Y1 and Y2.

A stately home, the Railway Museum, Conisbrough Castle and one other castle, a zoo, a theatre (for a play, music or dance) Eureka Museum, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, The Deep (and the Humber Bridge) and a windmill and wind turbine.

Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6.

National Space Centre, a coal pit, a visit to the Peak District (Iron Age forts) a lighthouse and Flamborough Head, a cathedral, Castle Museum (York), Whitby, Beamish, the Derbyshire Caves, the theatre to see a Shakespeare play, a residential, and art museum (possibly the Lowry or Hockney museum).

Schools can endeavour to use the curriculum to introduce children to the best that has been thought and said, and a glance at our English curriculum will demonstrate that clearly with our commitment to sharing classic children's literature and the best of poetry - but the curriculum needs to be supported by an exciting range of school visits in order to give a more complete range of experiences, which is our aim.

We take very seriously our task of providing an exceptional education - it is what we are here for! As a staff, we spent 2018/19 rewriting our curriculum to meet the stated aims of the New Ofsted Framework and were delighted to do that as it gave voice to what has always underlain our philosophy. Our mission statement of some years, which is proudly expressed through large pieces of signage to welcome visitors to the school is stated this:

We will make our school a place where children are happy and where they have fun. Ivanhoe will be a safe, secure school where great teaching inspires children to reach their potential and achieve their ambitions. In this place, imagination will be as important as knowledge; children will enjoy a creative, enriching curriculum with school trips they will never forget. No child can learn and attain academic excellence unless they love their school; we will do all that is possible to help each of our children to believe, to achieve and to succeed.

So this is a school that is delighted to see that Ofsted has caught up with what we have been aiming towards for years. Our intent is clear and absolutely matches what Ofsted considers best practice as can be seen from reading the curriculum area on the website. Each Subject Leader has taken responsibility for redesigning their curriculum and writing a statement of intent - they have taken on board the need to personalise it for this school and to emphasise both the inward and outward intent - inward to the child, outward to how the child can use the curriculum to engage with the world (not just theoretically, but emphasising next steps, taking advantage of local offers.) As a staff, we have spent a considerable amount of time ensuring that we are all fully engaged in that process - and by the nature of this staff, that means that we are all on board: subject

leaders speak with a powerful voice in this school and we share responsibility for all outcomes. Because of this, we are secure in the knowledge that neither SEND nor disadvantage prevents our children from excellent outcomes.

A glance at the English curriculum will show that we have four separate policies for reading: Reading Policy, Reading for Pleasure Policy, Set Reading Texts Policy , Progression of skills in Reading - this will show our commitment to the pleasure principle as well as to our desire to introduce children to the best quality writing in the English language. Referring back to the Education and Skills deprivation element of our deprivation report, about 48% of our children come from families in the bottom 10% in terms of educational background so we understand the battle to allow our children their entitlement in terms of reading and writing (and speaking and listening.) We work extremely hard on phonics - which is a whole school effort - and we complement that with high quality reading texts and with a focus on the enjoyment of reading...and of course, we reward children for their reading at home so that they get a sticker for every time they read at home and then they can spend their stickers on a whole variety of goodies through the course of the year, culminating in a free sweatshirt for those who read every day across a year (76 children in 2018/19).

The impact of our curriculum is clear - our children achieve highly: "Pupils leave the school attaining standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are consistently above that expected for their age and above other pupils of the same age nationally." (Ofsted 2016) and we believe that we send our children to secondary school completely prepared for the next stage of their education and as lifelong learners. We know that many of our children do very well at secondary school, accessing university education at the end of Y13.

Behaviour and Attitudes

JUDGEMENT



Ofsted has always found the behaviour of children at this school to be outstanding - and visitors to the school are always impressed by what they see, and this includes the many parents who look around the school seeking to have their children admitted into the various year groups (twenty two children joined the school during the course of 2018/19). Children are sunny, happy, polite and friendly and also respectful - this is what is taken as the norm at Ivanhoe. This is something that we work hard at but it is also part of the school tradition - so it isn't a particular task to instil: all adults are treated with equal respect and children are respectful of each other.

There are children at Ivanhoe who come from very troubled backgrounds and those children may struggle to demonstrate appropriate learning behaviour in class - but on a weekly basis, we celebrate learning behaviours with parents at Learner of the Week assembly (Respect, Resilience, Independence, Pride, Curiosity and Determination) as well as daily Learner of the Day postcards, so there is a great deal of focus on behaviour(s). At the same time, we have a whole-school graduated behaviour system as well as graduated responses to poor behaviour. At playtimes and lunchtimes we have Nurture Groups to help children to develop social skills and to play safely on the yards. In 2019, we have set up an isolation area for children really struggling to cope in class and by using the Thrive approach as well as Lego Therapy, in a designated Nurture Room, we are also addressing the emotional and behavioural needs of children who might struggle with behaviour. Our overarching SEN approach is to put a large amount of resources into meeting the needs of children as early as possible and thus making learning easier and more fulfilling which reduces the number of behavioural issues that arise in class. Behaviour in school is also helped by our excellent relationships with parents: we are very much supported by parents, some of whom clearly struggle with their own children - but we rarely get into dispute with parents and so children understand that school and home work closely together.

We have a zero tolerance towards aggression, discrimination and bullying. We deal with children who struggle with social skills through use of nurture groups and/or supervised play as well as the therapies that we run in school. Children know that if there are issues on the playground, they will be dealt with appropriately. The more difficult issues around aggression, discrimination and bullying are most likely to occur outside school and through social media. We spend a lot of time offering advice to parents and children about the ill effects of social media, but undoubtedly, social media is a cause for conflict amongst children and grown ups in Conisbrough - we do spend a considerable amount of time in school trying to unpick issues that have occurred on social media.

We work very hard to meet the needs of children - we recognise that in society there are increasing numbers of children with emotional and behavioural issues that need addressing. Our response to this has been the increase in spending on Ed Psych services and Learning Support Services as well as employing dedicated staff who work with children whom we recognise as vulnerable: this is an ambition to **meet** the needs of children rather than **managing** the behaviours that result from their needs. We are convinced that this is the right approach. Ivanhoe staff want to help children - which can be exemplified in the way in which we catered for the child that had been put into the school by the LA (without any discussion or prior knowledge!) who had been excluded from two local schools. We had to work extremely hard to minimise that disruption and to help that child to make the most of their Y6 year. We took the decision early on that we **would not** permanently exclude her but that we would use our resources on her behalf. That was an exhausting struggle for the school - but we managed. We do temporarily exclude children when lines are crossed, but our aim is always to help children to help themselves and thus manage at school. We consider that particular child a success, and we can demonstrate many other examples where interventions have helped children to manage themselves much more successfully.

One of the visible ways in which children are motivated towards having a positive attitude is the school's use of coloured sweatshirts. If you are a 99%+ attender, you get a red sweatshirt from the school with '100% attendance' embroidered upon it. If you are a Reading Champion you get a purple sweatshirt, if you are a School Counsellor it is a green sweatshirt - and the Y6 choose their own colour top (burgundy in 2019). Children wear their achievements with pride which helps with that sense of community. We have a community of children who love school and who do their utmost to contribute fully to the life of the

school - taking on extra work and being proud of their achievements. Our Y6 children take part in a year-long Junior Citizenship programme run by the LA which enables them to understand how they can take a responsible part in their community: we consider this an important aspect of what the school can offer to enable our children to become well-rounded citizens.

In terms of attendance, we have bettered the national average for the past three years in both overall attendance and in persistent absence. We have many ways of motivating children to be in school. Good attendance is a constant message in our newsletters (homework front page) to parents. We have manipulated the school year to create a two-week summer half term holiday in order to give parents the opportunity to have cheaper holiday choices (the difference between the first and second week in terms of holiday prices is enormous.) We certificate children for attendance of 99%+ on a termly basis and we have the sweatshirts awarded for a full year of excellent attendance. We monitor attendance very closely and set up meetings with parents whose children fall behind. In addition, we are always prepared to pick up children when parents are struggling to get them in. Every member of the school community understands our view on attendance. Unfortunately, as I explained in the 'school context', this is a community whose wealth is more obviously expressed in terms of finance rather than in education and it is a constant battle to persuade parents that a holiday is less valuable to their children than time in school. We always pursue parents who have taken holidays in term time as well as those parents who try to trick the system by claiming that their children are poorly (when they are on holiday.)

Staff and students have a very positive relationship: staff love to work at this school, and their love for the task and their pride in their work, and their joy in the children are all obvious - especially to the children.

Personal Development

JUDGEMENT



At Ivanhoe, we recognise that pupils' broader development is essential if we are to produce citizens of the 21st Century who can go forward confidently and take the world in their stride. This is a deprived community, but the deprivation is greater in educational terms than it is in cash terms (see school's context). In general, it is the range of experience that our children have in their home environment that we have to develop in the school environment if we are to succeed in our desire to see them well-rounded. As a school, we created a list of 21 'essential' trips that every child will experience from Reception to Y6 (in addition to class trips that might also be organised) so that every child will have seen the best of human endeavour - whether it's a castle, a lighthouse, Shakespeare at the theatre, a cathedral, a country house and so on: we want them to know what the world has to offer.

Our curriculum is designed to help children to be literate and numerate whilst at the same time exposing them to a broad curriculum that shows them the world whilst at the same time allows them to take steps to take part beyond school in valuable activities locally. At the same time - we want to give them the very best, which is why all children have the opportunity in Year 4 to play a musical instrument, and those who want to continue this beyond year 4 will have that facilitated by the school. Not only do we put on ambitious plays/musicals, but we have taken it a step further by partnering with Doncaster's Cast Theatre to include one performance at a theatre to make the experience more valuable and more complete. At the same time, this school promotes learning behaviours as we believe that if we can help to inculcate an appreciation of the best approach to learning, we will have developed a skill for life that can be utilised for whatever new academic experiences are face by our pupils. We make pupils proud of their great learning attributes in the hope that those attributes will always be part of their make-up.

The school puts considerable extra resources into pastoral support. We understand that it is parents as well as children who require support and our approach is thus about teamwork with the family. Increasingly, we are moving towards meeting needs as early as possible utilising the extra LSS, Sand L and Ed Psych support we buy in as well as having two members (three if you include the parent liaison officer) working with those particular children identified as vulnerable for one reason or another. We understand that we are vital in promoting healthy lifestyles as well as healthy attitudes and that is our work on a daily basis across the curriculum as well as through PHSE, PE etc.

We work tirelessly to ensure that our children can take a full part in the society in which they live - our aim is to equip our children to go into the world so that they have choices about their lifestyles and the way in which they live: they can only do this if they understand the world and how to take a part in the world. An important part of moving freely in the world is having a real sense of the values of society - and so British Values (in the widest sense) is a thread that is woven into the whole fabric of the education we offer. Our Website is clear about our aims.

Conisbrough society is recognised by staff here as quite closed and inward looking in many respects. Many parents and grandparents of our children have been fastened to this area - often for economic reasons, but also being tied to tradition. We want our children to have a university education and to have the freedom to take their place in the world - this begins with education, but we also understand that we need to make the world accessible, with all its amazing difference and thus we need to teach children to acclimatise themselves to difference and accommodate all that is beyond what they have considered 'usual'. Our children are by nature accepting of others - we have a great many children who join mid year and no problems with integration, and our children are accepting of children who attend school with any special needs and of any ethnicity; however, this is an inward-looking part of the world and we have to develop children's understanding of diversity so that it is well-established by the time they leave us: this is what we do across our curriculum as well as through PHSE and other opportunities (for example, in a Y6 lesson recently, the teacher (showing a Shakespeare DVD) was explaining how the Royal Shakespeare Company was making their productions colour, disability and even gender blind as part of their commitment to diversity, which led to a discussion about diversity in society.)

Our children are encouraged to think about their positive role in society. Ours is a very caring school where the many charities we support are well-funded by the generosity of children and parents. The Y6 take part in a year-long citizenship programme

to help them make the next steps as they prepare to leave us for the next phase of their education.

Leadership and Management

JUDGEMENT



In many senses, this is a school where we are all 'leaders'. As in all schools, there is a hierarchy of leadership, but we are as much a bottom-up as a top-down institution - we listen to each other and share ideas and we judge decisions in a collegiate fashion and on their merit. Obviously, those in senior leadership positions shape the direction of the school but we are all leaders in that everything is shared and fashioned as a staff team. We all have strong, shared values - and a good example of this is the fact that all the curriculum policies are written by curriculum leaders who have responsibility for ensuring that staff understand and follow policy; this means that we are able to deliver an excellent education.

Teachers are encouraged to develop their understanding at all times, expanding their knowledge and working towards future ambitions. The school embraces a 'grow your own' culture, so most teachers on the staff were trained here which maintains a committed and valued staff cohort. The NQTs in the school each have a mentor and share weekly meetings and observations in order to fast-track development. All teachers have planning time together which means that communication and the sharing of best-practice is facilitated to the highest extent.

We all aim to help children complete their programmes of study. As a school, we have devoted considerable additional resources to help those children most vulnerable in terms of falling behind. Our SENCO works assiduously to meet the needs of pupils with particular needs - harnessing additional speech and language, learning support services and educational psychology services to meet our needs, in addition, we have employed two people to be designated additional support (not classroom based) so that we can meet the needs of all.

We work extremely effectively with our school community. Parents and carers know that they have access to the HT, the PLO (Parent Liaison Officer) and the SENCO at all times (parents and teachers also have excellent working relationships.) The HT has an open meeting with parents once every half term to talk about school directions and to answer questions. There is a newsletter every week (the homework front page) with a comments box on it which is read by the class teacher and passed on if necessary. We now hold parent consultation meetings during the day and the evening so that it is open to all, and we have increased the time allocated (from ten to twenty minutes) to make the consultation more detailed and focussed. Parents come into school to learn how best to help their children through workshops - and for celebrations when children's work is showcased as well as weekly during Learner of the Week assemblies.

This school is run with the view that staff work best when they feel valued. We keep administrative tasks to the minimum and seek to work efficiently at all times. Every member of staff knows that every voice is heard. We particularly value family commitments, and staff know that we support staff to attend family celebrations as well as family crises - we all support each other in this - which makes for a very strong and loyal team. Staff do work very hard at this school - but this is out of mutual respect for other staff and love of what we do; but no one feels that they are pressured to do so.

There is no harassment or bullying at this school - probably due to what is written in the paragraphs above: we take shared responsibility for decisions, we look after each other in times of celebration or crisis and we like each other very much - and we love the school and our school community. The only people who have chosen to leave this school within the past five years are those who have been promoted to other establishments.

The governors are very effective at holding the school to account - they are very active on behalf of the school - and extremely thorough and supportive.

The school has a very strong culture of Safeguarding, with a full time, dedicated Safeguarding Officer: we all use CPOMS which is the best way of keeping a record and sharing information. Our safeguarding training is up to date.

Early Years

JUDGEMENT



Intent

At Ivanhoe, FS leaders construct an ambitious Early Years curriculum which is designed to give all children the knowledge, skills, self-belief and cultural capital they need to succeed. We believe that building upon children's experiences is as important as building upon their knowledge and skills, and thus trips, experience days and bringing people into school are woven into the curriculum. For example, a trip to the theatre, the wildlife park and a stately home, as well as African drummers and dancers, the space dome and workers from the 'helping' professions coming into school.

The curriculum is reviewed and re-designed each year to reflect the changing needs of its children. Leaders consider carefully the needs of the children in context, and plan and sequence the curriculum to build on what children know and can do, towards the desired knowledge and skills for their future learning. Our ambitions for each and every one of our children are limitless, and so our curriculum provides no limits or barriers to children's achievements, regardless of their backgrounds, circumstances or needs. We ensure that where necessary, the curriculum and its approach to delivery, is personalised to ensure that success is inevitable, not just possible!

Most children enter our FS with speech and language skills that are below or well below those typically expected (?), and so we have a sharp focus from day 1 on developing children's ability to communicate effectively and in acquiring a rich vocabulary. We invest in private Speech and Language Therapy services to help us effectively assess and build strategies and programmes to realise our aim, which is for EVERY child to leave the FS with the communication and language skills – including a wide vocabulary – necessary to best ensure successful future learning and life skills.

Our phonics teaching begins early in F1, and focuses upon children developing the underpinning skills needed for successful systematic teaching of phonics later on. We use the RWInc programme as the school's approach to teaching early reading and synthetic phonics to ensure all children are able to meet the ELG's in reading and writing, and be ready for Year 1 where they will continue to build on the skills necessary to become fluent, confident readers.

Implementation

At Ivanhoe, we plan learning across the curriculum that is meaningful and useful – always asking ourselves 'why' and 'what for?' to ensure that learning meets the needs of our specific children.

We believe that for children to learn and develop to the best of their ability, they need the adults in place who understand best how young children learn and develop, and possess the necessary skills to support them. This is why, in our FS, the majority of teachers and support staff are EY 'specialists'. They use their expertise to ensure that the pedagogy throughout the FS matches the needs of pupils, and evolves sensitively as it responds to the changing needs of the children as they progress.

Staff in the FS are skilled and experienced in teaching synthetic phonics through the RWInc programme, for which the school buys into an annual support package, providing developmental support throughout the year ensuring practice is highly effective. Whilst we believe in the principles of the RWInc programme, and its impact is evident in our school, staff use their pedagogical knowledge to adapt the programme and their approach to it, for those children who need it.

In reception, we have a reading challenge which operates throughout the whole year so that children are encouraged and rewarded for reading at home. Reading books are aligned with the RWInc programme and are chosen for children according to children's developing phonic knowledge alongside their reading confidence and ability. We want to develop capable, confident readers, and so we spend a lot of time ensuring that parents understand our aims, how they can help, and ensuring that the books children take home match this.

Teaching throughout the foundation stage is found by leaders to be highly effective. Staff present information clearly to children, in a way that engages them and allows them to be actively involved in learning discussions. Staff use questioning well to clarify and extend children's understanding, addressing misconceptions before moving on. Staff respond and adapt their teaching where and when necessary to ensure all learning opportunities are maximised.

In the Early Years, we use stories as part of our everyday teaching: to introduce new mathematical concepts, PSHE teaching, supporting topic themes and prompting lines of enquiry. We also have a minimum of 15 minutes dedicated storytime every day. Staff tell stories with enthusiasm and expression, in a way that engages and excites children. In F1 stories are often accompanied by props to aid engagement, a strategy which is reduced as children progress through the foundation stage, to enable children to develop skills in listening to stories without the need for visual stimulation. At Ivanhoe we have a sharp focus on the need to develop children's vocabulary. Stories is one way in which we work upon building vocabulary with our youngest children - that and through the RWInc programme.

Mathematics is taught throughout the Foundation Stage using the White Rose Maths materials as a starting point. Our maths curriculum is designed to ensure that children spend sufficient time exploring, using, and understanding numbers, so that they have a strong basis for more complex learning later on.

Children are assessed throughout the Foundation Stage using both short incidental and longer planned observations. Longer observations are used to focus on the Characteristics of Effective learning and help staff develop a clear understanding of how children in their care learn and how they can best support them in developing the Characteristics further. We use the knowledge gained through adult-led activities to deepen our understanding of children's attainment and next steps, and use these to inform future planning. Leaders understand the limitations of assessment and therefore work to develop systems that avoid unnecessary burdens for staff and children. Staff organise targeted interventions for children who need it in a timely manner, enlisting the support of 'specialists' where necessary. At Ivanhoe we try and involve all stakeholders in children's assessment, and work to engage parents in the process through our home/school books and by sharing achievements and experiences through Class Dojo.

Staff in the Foundation Stage work tirelessly to create an environment that supports the school's intent of an ambitious curriculum. Resources are carefully chosen to promote learning in the prime areas and in developing the Characteristics of Effective Learning. Open ended provision encourages our children to explore, co-operate, think creatively and problem solve.

Behaviour in the Early Years is excellent. Children are supported well to develop high levels of self-control, co-operation and respect for themselves and others. The curriculum is designed to afford children a wide range of experiences that promote understanding of people, families, communities, religions and traditions beyond their own. Through experience days, children learn about religious festivals such as Diwali, Holi and Eid, alongside Easter and Christmas, and are encouraged to explore similarities and differences between them.

Through PSED teaching and circle time activities, children in the Early Years are tasked to consider the importance of keeping ourselves healthy – physically, emotionally and spiritually. Outdoor equipment – both static and open-ended - has been carefully selected to enable children to develop the necessary skills to create and manage their own risks (within reason) under the supportive and watchful eye (and if necessary, intervention) of an adult. Equipment that also helps develop the vestibular system, supports physical development in both gross and fine motor ways.

Engaging parents in Children's learning and development is something that we are passionate about at Ivanhoe. In the Foundation Stage, we hold parent workshops in both F1 and F2. F1 workshops focus on the importance of play in developing early mathematical and literacy concepts, as well as developing those physical skills needed for successful learning later on. Workshops in F2 focus more carefully on how parents can support children's learning in reading, phonics and maths, including observing teaching sessions, watching video clips of teachers modelling reading with children, and receiving resource packs to take home. Reports are issued to parents three times per year about how well children are progressing, and parents are invited to attend parents evenings three times per year also. Parents have online access to children's observation and assessment information and can view this at any time. Homework is sent out in F2 with detailed information about what children have been learning that week.

Impact

Children make good progress through the foundation stage, considering low starting points on entry to F1 (and F2 for those joining our reception class that did not attend our Nursery).

Attainment on entry is found to be below the level expected in most areas with attainment in the Prime Areas MR, MFB, U, S and MH all with less than 27% of pupils working at the expected level. A significant proportion of children come to us with poor levels of development in speaking and understanding (27% and 20%), which impact upon all other areas of development.

The percentage of pupils working at the expected levels in Reading, Writing and Maths are similar to those in the Prime Areas (23% reading, 17% writing, with prior attainment in Maths slightly better at around 30%)

Children at Ivanhoe also enter with attainment levels below that expected in TW, PC and BI (around 10% at the expected level).

By the end of the foundation stage, children attain in line with National expectations at GLD.

Attainment in the Prime Areas where levels on entry were particularly low (MR, MFB, U, S and MH) has been at least 80% for the last 4 years.

In Reading, Writing and Maths, attainment has been at or above National in two of the past three years (significant SEN issues in 2018).

As a result of high quality teaching and experiences, children have developed the skills and attitudes needed to begin Year 1, and for those children who did not meet ELG's, Year 1 teachers are well prepared as to how best support them to achieve them quickly in the Autumn term.