

Inspection of Ivingswood Academy

Greenway, Chesham, Buckinghamshire HP5 2BY

Inspection dates:	21 and 22 January 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The head of school is Claire Flynn. This school is part of the Kings Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Joanne Garlick, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anthony Kent.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to belong to the school. They are happy here and feel safe. Pupils talk warmly about their teachers. They like that staff are always on hand should they have any worries or concerns. Relationships are positive and warm.

Pupils are really pleased with the recently improved lunchtime outdoor equipment and activities on offer. Most pupils behave sensibly and try their best in lessons. They respond well to the school's expectations for them to 'be ready, respectful and safe'. Pupils who need support to manage their emotions are supported kindly and sensitively.

The school's extra-curricular clubs contribute well to pupils' enjoyment and experience of school. From yoga to sporting clubs, pupils say that there is something for everyone. Older pupils enjoy having extra responsibilities, including being peer mentors to some younger pupils. Visits to London and the pantomime hold lasting memories for many pupils.

The school aspires for all pupils to achieve well and to enjoy learning. Despite this ambition, pupils do not currently benefit from a good-quality education. This is because of weaknesses in the curriculum and teaching. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not always get the support they need.

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

The school has been through a turbulent period, including changes of leadership and staff. However, throughout this time the school has maintained its focus on improving all aspects of its work. This has included making significant improvements to pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. The school has acted decisively to address the low outcomes in key stage 2 published outcomes. Focused professional development and a stronger approach to reading and mathematics have led to improvements in current pupils' achievement. However, while improved, pupils are not achieving consistently well. This is in part due to a legacy of historic underachievement and gaps in pupils' knowledge.

The school has worked hard to reshape the curriculum so that it meets pupils' needs and interests. It is broad, suitably ambitious and well sequenced. Nevertheless, there is considerable scope to refine the curriculum and approaches in the early years. The school has not considered carefully enough how the curriculum builds towards the early learning goals. Consequently, during independent learning times, activities and teaching are not targeted well enough on supporting children to achieve their next learning steps. Across the school, sometimes activities do not focus precisely enough on what the school intends pupils to learn. This can divert pupils' attention to the activity rather than the knowledge they need to learn and remember.

Improvements to the mathematics curriculum have been successful. In the early years, children learn to count and recognise numbers and learn about shapes. The increased

focus on fluency, problem-solving and reasoning helps pupils to understand key concepts, and to remember and apply mathematical knowledge.

The school's approach to phonics is well considered. Sound awareness in Nursery paves the way for phonics teaching in Reception. Children get off to a secure start in learning to read. Staff routinely identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. The success of the reading programme is seen in pupils' strong achievement in the 2024 Year 1 phonics screening check. However, there are some weaknesses in the school's approach to teaching writing. Currently, the school does not give sufficient priority to handwriting and basic punctuation. As a result, pupils are not developing secure enough foundations to enable them to write fluently and accurately.

Across the school, there are inconsistencies in the support for pupils with SEND. Although pupils' needs are accurately identified and assessed, the curriculum and teaching are not consistently adapted well enough to meet some pupils' needs. As a result, some pupils with SEND are not achieving the best possible outcomes.

The school's sharp focus on improving attendance is leading to some improvement. Staff are relentless in supporting families and getting to the root of any issues. Leaders know that they need to continue this work so that the momentum of improvement continues. Nevertheless, the school's analysis of attendance and behaviour is not as precise as it needs to be to inform its strategic understanding and planning.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn about different religions and cultures and the values of respect and tolerance. They learn about significant figures who have championed equality and brought about lasting changes to society. Enrichment and community events broaden pupils' horizons and foster a sense of belonging.

Governance roles and responsibilities are understood and fulfilled. The trust and the local academy committee work closely together. Systems for information-sharing and accountability are sound. The trust is considerate of staff and leaders' well-being, rightly considering workload when making changes and improvements to 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)

- Teaching approaches and the curriculum are not consistently adapted well enough to meet the needs of pupils with SEND, particularly pupils with very significant needs. This means that some pupils with SEND are not achieving well enough. The trust must ensure that staff have the expertise they need to adapt learning to fully meet pupils' diverse needs.

- The school's approach to the teaching of writing is not fully effective. Too little focus is given to securing handwriting and sentence construction. Gaps in pupils' knowledge are not being systematically addressed. This means that children in early years and pupils in key stage 1 are not securing this important knowledge, and weaknesses in their writing persist into key stage 2. The trust must take effective action to strengthen the school's approaches to the teaching of writing.
- In the early years, the school has not yet identified clearly enough the knowledge children need to learn as they progress through the curriculum towards the early learning goals. This means that staff are not clear enough about children's next learning steps when they are planning activities and guiding and teaching children. As a result, children are not building well enough on what they already know. The trust needs to strengthen the school's early years curriculum and ensure that it is implemented consistently well.
- Learning activities are sometimes not well matched to what teachers intend pupils to learn. As a result, pupils are not building their knowledge securely. The trust should ensure that learning activities are more consistently and carefully designed to maximise pupils' learning and improve achievement.
- The school's strategic analysis of some aspects of its work, such as attendance and behaviour, is not sufficiently robust or precise. This means that the school does not have a clear enough strategic view of trends over time to inform its decision-making. Additionally, this limits the information the trust has to support its accountability processes. The trust needs to strengthen this aspect of its work.

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	149096
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10341921
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	152
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anthony Kent
CEO of the trust	Joanne Garlick
Headteacher	Claire Flynn (Head of school)
Website	www.ivingswoodacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Ivingswood Academy converted to become an academy in March 2022. When its predecessor school, Ivingswood Academy, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate for overall effectiveness.
- The school is one of four primary schools in the Kings Education Trust. Prior to joining the Kings Education Trust in March 2022, the school was formerly part of a different multi-academy trust since its initial conversion to become an academy in 2015.
- The board of trustees has delegated responsibilities for some key aspects of governance to the school's local academy committee. This is set out in the trust's scheme of delegation.
- The school has nursery provision for two- to four-year-old children. Most children attend the Nursery part-time.
- A new senior leadership team was formed in September 2024. The current head of school and deputy head of school took up post at this time.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils who attend the school.

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, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum and sampled pupils' work in other subjects. This included religious education and French. Inspectors sampled pupils' writing.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the board of trustees and three members of the local academy committee. She held a separate meeting with the CEO.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss aspects of the school's work, including behaviour, attendance, personal development and provision for pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector held a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered pupils' views during meetings with them and talked to pupils when visiting lessons and at other times of day, such as lunchtime. They took account of pupils' responses to Ofsted's online survey.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views through their responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. An inspector spoke with some parents on the afternoon of the first day of the inspection and at the start of the second day of the inspection.
- Staff's views were considered during discussions with them and through their responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- 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.

Inspection team

Sue Cox, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lorraine Greco

Ofsted Inspector

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