

# The Icknield Primary School

Lynton Way, Sawston, Cambridge, CB22 3EA

## Inspection dates

4–5 February 2014

| Overall effectiveness          | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory                | 3        |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Requires improvement</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Good                        | 2        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Good                        | 2        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching since the last inspection has not been good enough to enable all pupils to make good progress and reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Despite major improvements in teaching this year, pupils have not been able to make up all the ground lost in the past.
- Some teaching still requires improvement. In some lessons, not enough is accomplished in the time available.
- In a few lessons, teachers do not check up frequently enough on the progress of all groups. This means some pupils' misconceptions are missed, so they do not make the progress they should, or pupils who are successful are not challenged to refine their work.
- Although there is some outstanding practice in the school, teachers have not had enough opportunities to share this, to learn from each other and raise achievement further.

### The school has the following strengths

- The clear focus by leaders, including governors, on raising achievement through ensuring that teaching improves, has been successful.
- Currently, most teaching in the school is at least good, and a significant proportion is outstanding. Examples of good teaching were observed in every class during the inspection.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good.
- Achievement is rising, helped by better systems to check on pupils' progress and the effective use of these to give pupils tasks that are neither too easy nor too difficult.
- Pupils behave well, enjoy school and take pride in their achievements. They work hard and get on well together. Their attendance is above average.
- Children get off to a really strong start in the youngest class and make rapid progress in their skills and understanding.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, four of these as joint observations with the headteacher.
- Examples of pupils' work were analysed in their books and in displays. Several pupils were heard to read.
- Discussions were held with staff, a group of governors, groups of pupils and with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took note of the 46 replies to the online parental survey, Parent View. They also checked the 32 replies to a questionnaire for staff.
- A variety of documentation was checked, particularly data showing how pupils were making progress, and paperwork showing how well pupils are kept safe.
- Pupils were observed at break-times, at lunch and in assemblies, as well as when moving around the school.

## Inspection team

Steven Hill, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Vreta Bagilhole

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than average for a primary school.
- The very large majority of the pupils are White British, with a few from a range of other ethnic heritages. Few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding is below average. This is extra government funding to help the education of pupils who are known to be entitled to free school meals, those who are looked after by the local authority, and those who have a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is above average. The proportion of such pupils who are supported at school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average. The level of need is high for many of these pupils, with six of them having statements.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are minimum expectations set for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There have been several changes in staffing since the last inspection, including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher.
- A privately-run playgroup, Pippins, operates on the school site. This is inspected and reported upon separately. There is also an after-school club on the premises, which is managed by the governing body.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and make up the remaining gaps in pupils' standards by making teaching consistently good, and increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching, in particular by ensuring that:
  - teachers check regularly on the progress of different groups in lessons, so that any who are confused can be helped back on track, and those who are successful can be challenged to refine their work and make more progress
  - good use is made of time in all lessons, so pupils do not waste time waiting to begin activities, and more is accomplished in the time available
  - teachers have better opportunities to share outstanding practice with each other, and so draw on each other's expertise.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils over the last eighteen months has been inconsistent across the school. Although recent improvements to teaching have accelerated progress considerably, they have not been enough to fully compensate for previous weaknesses in learning.
- Standards at the end of each key stage have varied considerably from year to year. Although some of this variation is due to small numbers and high proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in some year groups, inconsistencies in teaching have also impeded progress and lowered standards.
- Results of national assessments in 2013 were disappointing in view of pupils' starting points. Pupils in Year 6, for example, did not reach floor standards, and had made weak progress during their four years in Key Stage 2. Although they made excellent progress during Year 6, the majority making two years' progress over their final year, this was not enough to make up all the ground they had lost in the past.
- Progress across the school in the last school year showed improvement, but was patchy between classes and between year-groups. It was good in Year 6 and in Reception, for example, but was weak in Year 4 and overall in writing.
- The work in pupils' books and observations of their progress in lessons, both by the inspection team and by the school's senior leaders, show that much of this inconsistency has been ironed out since September. Although achievement still requires improvement in a few lessons, pupils are currently making good progress overall across the school, and making excellent progress in some lessons. A concentration on writing by staff last term has improved the consistency of progress in the subject, and standards continue to rise in pupils' books.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve similarly to their classmates. Their progress has also improved recently, and teachers ensure that they receive the right mix of challenge and help in class, giving them work at the right level. In addition, teaching assistants give support to individuals and groups that is very carefully tailored to their specific needs. The achievement of pupils who have statements of special educational needs is greatly enhanced by this. The staff are particularly skilled in helping those who struggle to conform to behavioural norms to improve their conduct, to fit in better with the routines of school and to make progress.
- The progress of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is at least as good as their classmates. They receive academic or social help that is based on a careful assessment of their needs, and the impact of this on their progress is measured carefully. Their attainment varies considerably, and it is not possible to make meaningful comparisons between their attainment and that of their classmates because of small numbers.
- More-able pupils' achievement has also been erratic in the past but is now good, and often they are given challenging, more difficult work. Occasionally, they finish quickly and have to wait too long before they are given their next task.
- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children enter the school with skills and knowledge that vary from year to year, but which are generally typical for their age or somewhat better. Attainment at the end of Reception is usually above average.

**The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Over time, teaching had not been good enough to help pupils make good progress. Expectations were not always high enough, often because there were inconsistencies in assessment information. Some inconsistencies remain in particular aspects of teaching.
- In some lessons, teachers allow too much time for pupils to complete tasks. This means that they either work slowly and do not make fast enough progress, or they finish the task and have to wait until they are able to move on to the next piece of work.
- There is variation in how frequently teachers check on the progress of different groups in lessons, although this is often done well. Good practice means that pupils who make mistakes quickly have them corrected so they go on to make good progress. Similarly, pupils who are doing well are challenged to refine their work, helping them reach higher standards. However, particularly when the adults do not check everyone's progress carefully enough, progress can be too slow. At such times, a few pupils can make a lot of mistakes before an adult is able to help them.
- Most teaching is now good, with much that is outstanding. A key strength is that work is usually given to pupils that is challenging but within their capabilities, so all progress well. For example, good use is made of teaching assistants to help pupils who find academic work difficult, and they are given easier work. This was seen frequently, showing much better use of staff than at the previous inspection.
- More-able pupils are often given harder work and, again, sometimes get extra adult input, helping them to refine their thinking and improve their work through challenging questioning. This was seen in a lesson with pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, when they studied how bodies were embalmed in ancient Egypt.
- The teaching of children in the Reception class is particularly strong. There is an excellent balance between exciting teacher-directed and child-chosen activities, so children are always engaged and absorbed by what they are doing. Good use is now made of the outside area, an improvement since the previous inspection, although the area itself still has some shortcomings in its facilities.
- Teachers across the school manage lessons well. Routines are well established and relationships are good. Generally, this means little time is wasted and a lot accomplished in the time, although this is not always the case.
- Teachers provide pupils with a good range of activities that engage their interest. Particularly good use is made of discussion which enables pupils to sort out their ideas and to clarify their thinking. They make good progress as a result, as well as developing their cooperative skills and improving their skills in speaking and listening. Discussion was used particularly well, along with very useful practical apparatus, in a mathematics lesson in Year 5, when pupils made outstanding progress in their understanding of angles.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good, in class, around school and in the after-school club. They are friendly, polite and sensible and get on well together. They are sensitive to others' needs and tolerant of the foibles of their classmates. Older pupils, in particular, take their responsibilities

very seriously, and explained how important it is that they are good role-models for younger children.

- Pupils themselves are positive but realistic about behaviour, saying that it is usually good. They acknowledge that some pupils find it harder to conform, and that friends sometimes fall out. However, they say that any real problems are quickly sorted out by the adults, so that their learning is not disrupted and they feel happy and secure around the school. The very large majority of parents confirm their children's positive views on behaviour.
- Pupils in Year 6 say that they feel their behaviour has improved over time as they have progressed through the school, and that it is their responsibility to help others to improve. They also said that the school council and eco-council now make a much stronger contribution to school life, and help to improve things.
- Pupils are keen to learn. They listen attentively in class to their teachers and to each other. Their good relationships support their strong collaborative skills when they work together. They respond quickly to instructions, work hard and take a pride in their success. They value the system of rewards for good work and positive attitudes. They generally concentrate well. Occasionally, their concentration lapses when they have finished their work and have nothing specific to go on to.
- Following a stress on this by the school, pupils are taking much greater pains to present their work well. This was particularly apparent in the high-quality and varied work seen in topic books in Year 6.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils themselves say they are safe and well-looked after in school, and most of their parents agree. They know how to help keep themselves safe, and have a good understanding of internet safety, and what to do if they have problems either in school or at home.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the difference between bullying and other misbehaviour, and say that occasional instances of bullying are rare. They are confident that staff deal with these quickly.
- Staff manage behaviour well. There are notable instances of the school helping pupils with particular behavioural problems to conform to expectations, to manage their own behaviour, and to integrate into the class and improve their progress.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher, deputy and governors, backed increasingly by a coherent staff team, have worked very effectively to raise standards through improving teaching since the previous inspection. There is a strong shared set of values, with the well-being and achievement of the pupils at its heart, which is firmly underpinned by improvements to the assessment systems. This has enabled the school to overcome many of the weaknesses from the past, although some shortfalls in pupils' attainment still need to be overcome.
- The progress of pupils is now tracked carefully and accurately. Leaders use this data to identify the progress of different groups and of individuals, so they quickly identify if any are in danger of falling behind, and organise extra help for them. The impact of this help is now monitored carefully, so that it can be modified to ensure that it is effective. Data also show any general issues. For example, a relative weakness in progress in writing last year has been addressed

effectively since September.

- The impact of improved teaching on eliminating the erratic progress made in some year groups demonstrates the leaders' successful approach to ensuring equality of opportunity and eliminating any discrimination.
- Tracking is also used to hold teachers to account for the progress of pupils in their classes. Combined with regular checks on teaching in lessons, this has enabled senior leaders to give teachers feedback on how well they are doing and advice about how to improve their practice. This good management of teachers' performance is appropriately linked to systems to reward success and to address any shortcomings that arise.
- Improvements have also been backed by extra training for staff, based on a careful assessment of need, as well as opportunities to observe excellent practice in other schools. As yet, little use has been made of the outstanding practice in this school to help colleagues to improve.
- Subject leaders have played an increasingly effective part in the management of the school. They have good opportunities to find out what is happening in their areas of responsibility, and to promote improved practice based on what they find.
- Pupil premium money is spent effectively, and the school's careful tracking of the impact on individuals' progress shows this. Money is spent on extra adult support, particular items of equipment, and on ensuring that all pupils are able to play a full part in school life, through participating in instrumental music lessons, for example.
- The school has a good emphasis on sport and exercise, and is using the extra funding available for this wisely, for example to enhance the range of pupils' experiences, to buy in outside expertise which also enhances staff skills, and to purchase new equipment. Early indications are that this is generating greater participation and enjoyment from pupils. A more formal audit of impact is being implemented.
- The local authority has provided good support to the school in a variety of areas, all focused on improving achievement. There has been a particularly strong contribution to the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs from the 'locality team', made up of staff from the local authority and other agencies, including the health service.
- The school's curriculum covers a wide variety of topics and pupils say lessons are fun. They particularly appreciate practical activities and the good range of after-school clubs. Swimming is well-established and French taught throughout Key Stage 2. Visits, visitors and 'creative days' are greatly enjoyed and enhance pupils' learning. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good, and is reflected clearly in pupils' positive attitudes, good relationships, their thoughtful contributions to difficult topics in religious education lessons and their conduct in assemblies.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are extremely well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their understanding of data is good, and they understand its complexities. They also use their secure knowledge of the management of teachers' performance to give them a clear overview of the school. This has enabled them to challenge the school about its performance but also to provide support in moving forward. Governors have an extremely good understanding of the use of the pupil premium funding, and of sports funding, and have insisted on having detailed information about the use of teaching assistants, a weakness at the previous inspection, and now a strength. Governors have supported staff well in addressing all the issues from the

previous inspection. They have ensured that safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

## What inspection judgements mean

| School  |                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Grade   | Judgement            | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding          | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Grade 2 | Good                 | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate           | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

## School details

|                                |                |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 110671         |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Cambridgeshire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 430729         |

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

|                                            |                              |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                      |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Foundation                   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–11                         |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                        |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 178                          |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body           |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Sarah Wightman               |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Sarah Robins                 |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 14 June 2012                 |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01223 508750                 |
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