

The Ickniel Primary School

Lynton Way, Sawston, Cambridgeshire CB22 3EA

Inspection dates

24–25 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable across classes and in different subjects. Despite improvement, there remains a proportion of teaching that does not ensure that pupils make the best progress that they can.
- Teachers do not always use assessment information effectively so that pupils are given the right level of challenge and so they do not reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Pupils' achievement in the 2015 Year 6 national tests showed improvement. However, from a strong starting point at the end of the Reception class, the pace of progress across the school is too slow. The rate of progress is directly linked to the quality of teaching and, over time, to the quality of leadership and management.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop deeper skills such as problem solving and reasoning in mathematics. Progress in English is slowed because teachers' checking is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that pupils do not persist in making the same errors.
- Subject leaders do not monitor pupils' standards in the subject areas for which they are responsible to ensure that progress is as high as possible.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has a clear vision of how the school will improve and, in a very short time, has already made a vigorous start on raising standards.
- Children in the Reception class make good progress and are well prepared for the work in Year 1.
- Pupils feel safe. They are well cared for. Behaviour has improved rapidly and is now good. Pupils are polite and welcome visitors to their school. They discuss their work with confidence. They enjoy coming to school and attend well.
- Although a large majority of governors are new to the role, they have quickly gained a clear understanding of key performance information. They make good use of it in supporting school leaders in their planning for improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Senior leaders in the school should improve teaching and, consequently, outcomes for pupils by:
 - ensuring that information about progress is used fully to set the right level of challenge for pupils, including the most able
 - continuing to develop teachers' subject knowledge so that it is secure across all aspects of the curriculum
 - ensuring that the school's policy for feedback to pupils so that they know how to improve is consistently applied so that misunderstandings are fully addressed and errors do not recur too frequently
 - ensuring that teachers consistently promote pupils' higher-level skills such as problem solving and reasoning in mathematics.
- Senior leaders should further develop the role of middle leaders so that they:
 - monitor standards in their subjects in order to recognise soon enough when standards are not good enough and take action to raise pupil attainment
 - play a full role in training other teachers and in modelling best practice for them.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has been in post since January. She made a very rapid and accurate assessment of the school's priorities for improvement. In a short time she has worked with vigour to change or to revitalise essential school policies and practices. An aspirational vision has been shared with the whole staff group and the road map to higher pupil outcomes clearly communicated. The responses to the staff questionnaire completed during the inspection confirmed that members of staff have confidence in the direction the school is taking and in its strategy for improvement. Support from the local authority and by a national leader in education has been utilised to provide valuable advice to the school's planning and to provide examples of outstanding practice in other schools.
- Performance management of teaching is effective and is leading to improvement. Teachers have been given detailed guidance in raising expectations. Changes last term raised the expected standards for the presentation of work. New guidance to improve the quality of the feedback to be given to pupils about their progress achieved improvement in the class in which it had been first introduced but has not yet had a significant broader impact. Other developments included revision to the teaching of handwriting. Decisive action has been taken in respect of any teaching not attaining the required standard and effective support to improve it is now swiftly put in place. Particular attention is paid to teachers' subject knowledge and gaps have been addressed with clear programmes of advice.
- School self-evaluation is accurate: the headteacher and governors have a firm grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The headteacher has wasted no time in making necessary changes. New systems for monitoring the quality of pupils' work and giving them guidance to improve have been introduced, as a first stage, in Year 4 and have had a positive impact in a short time.
- Programmes to improve the extent to which teaching in English and mathematics gives pupils a secure command of key concepts and also offer opportunity for stimulating challenge are being pursued. Gains show in pupils' progress but these initiatives are at an early stage.
- Middle leaders in the school are growing in effectiveness. The leader with responsibility for information and communication technology (ICT), for example, is an enthusiastic advocate for her subject. She takes a broad, ambitious view of the role of modern technology in extending pupils' opportunities to communicate and learn from a wider range of sources. However, subject leaders do not yet track and monitor pupils' progress in their areas and this reduces their effectiveness in raising standards.
- The curriculum is broad and suitably balanced with due prominence given to ensuring the acquisition of fundamental skills in English and mathematics. School leaders have decided to move to a more integrated, topic-based model. An early example of the close linking of different disciplines they aim for is evident in a Year 4 project to create an animated film, which requires pupils to exercise story-boarding, graphic design and modelling skills. French is taught by a teacher with specialist language skills and the sound foundation given to pupils was acknowledged by the secondary school to which most transfer. Science teaching benefits from links that show the practical impact of science such as that at the botanical gardens in Cambridge. There are also a number of options for pupils to take individual instrumental tuition or to join in group music making.
- Leaders make effective use of pupil premium funding and this has contributed to positive outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- The additional physical education and sport premium funding for primary schools is used effectively to broaden the sporting diet for pupils. A specialist sports coach gives additional quality to coaching in football at lunchtime and after-school clubs and also offers a multi-sports option.
- Leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is effective in monitoring achievement and gauging support so that it meets the differing needs of individual pupils and boosts their attainment.
- A high proportion of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, also made considered written contributions. Parents described an improving school, particularly noting rapid improvements in behaviour over recent months.
- The values of tolerance and respect are presented to pupils in broad terms through the school's programme of assemblies and reinforced by the way the school community operates on a daily basis. The concept of citizenship in modern Britain is embodied in ways appropriate to pupils' different ages.

- Pupils witness democracy in action through the school council and join in helping others via the 'buddy' scheme that sees Year 6 pupils reading to the Reception children at dedicated times every week. Other schemes also bring pupils of different ages together – such as older assisting younger in the playground. The theme of the more experienced helping those less experienced is a strong element in the school's presentation of life lessons in practical ways.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Most governors are quite new to their roles. Only two members of the 14-strong body remain from the time of the last inspection. However, rapidly increasing their knowledge and skills has been tackled vigorously, including by consulting a national leader of governance. A serious and committed approach to their collective development has led to an improved capacity on the part of governors to support and challenge senior leaders. Governors' sound grasp of key school performance indicators is reflected in the minutes from meetings of the full governing body and of the associated committees focused on pupils' progress and standards. Increasingly, tough questions are asked of leaders and they are held closely to account for outcomes in school.
 - Governors maintain an effective overview of the arrangements for performance management of teaching. They have a full understanding of the initiatives being made to raise standards and are informed as to the ways in which their effectiveness will be assessed.
 - Individual governors carry clear specific responsibilities for areas of the work of the school and check upon them carefully. Reporting back to the full governing body is efficient and underpins informed debate.
 - Governors receive the necessary summarised information that allows them to monitor the spending of pupil premium funding and to have confidence that it is having the desired impact.
 - The school's website includes all the information required by law.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School procedures are clear and the training of members of staff in all roles across the school takes full account of formal requirements. Members of staff are properly equipped to be suitably vigilant with regard to child safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies between classes and subjects. Not enough yet consistently promote high standards. Evaluation in the spring term by the school's new leadership showed that there was significant variability between the expectations of different teachers with regard to standards of presentation and accuracy in written work, and even with regard to behaviour. It is 'early days' for the developments under way but the impact has begun to be seen. Teachers and parents confirm that better consistency in applying school procedures and a raising of expectations has had immediate benefits in improving the attitude pupils have towards their learning.
- Attention to pupils' progress is inconsistent. Teachers are frequently accurate in pin-pointing what pupils should practise or revisit in order to improve but, too often, follow-up tasks set for pupils are incomplete or not attempted at all. Because of this, a significant proportion of pupils persist in errors, slowing the rate of progress that they make. In English, pupils practise key skills with regularity but too many slips in punctuation or grammar are undetected or, when detected, not thoroughly addressed. Some of the lack of rigour and consistency in responding to pupils' mistakes and misconceptions derive from previous limitations in teachers' knowledge.
- In mathematics, fundamental skills in calculation are given close attention but pupils are offered relatively limited opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. Additionally, pupils are not required sufficiently to apply the skills they learn to exercises and contexts that reinforce their appreciation of their practical value and how they are linked to other concepts.
- Teacher's knowledge is developing but shows gaps. An art lesson in Year 6 took a First World War theme and pupils gained an appreciation of historical aspects, but there was no art-specific teaching, which led to pupils floundering in their task of drawing a battle scene. Some pupils were discouraged by the quality of the illustration they were producing.

- Assessment information about pupils' progress is used with variable efficiency. Consequently, there are occasions when pupils are not given a sufficiently high level of challenge and do not move ahead as quickly as they might. In a religious education lesson, pupils' initial interest in the image of Jesus was not capitalised on and, for many pupils, the central aspect of the lesson became the colouring-in of their initial sketch. This did not stretch pupils or build on the understanding they had already demonstrated.
- Phonics (the sounds that letters represent) is well taught in Year 1, building on the good skills that pupils learn in the Reception class.
- Some teaching in the school is now characterised by higher expectations of what pupils can achieve and due attention to pupils' prior learning. Although these are strong features of an increasing number of lessons, and are reflected in the school's improvement planning, they are not yet sufficiently consistent in teaching across the school.
- Teaching assistants are typically well deployed and managed efficiently to support learning. They are effective in leading learning for small groups of pupils. The support they provide to pupils who have special educational needs or disability ensures that they are fully integrated into learning and receive the help they need.
- The school has refined the appearance and clarified the purpose of displays. It is now immediately apparent why work has been mounted on the wall and what achievement is being celebrated. Displays provide a ready support to the work in the classroom.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have no doubt that they are kept safe in school and are well looked after: something their parents confirm. Parents are generally confident in their children growing well as individuals in the school.
- Appropriate to their ages, pupils have a good understanding of the fundamentals of keeping themselves safe in different situations. They understand the huge value of the internet for learning and communication but appreciate the essentials of doing so safely, such as not giving personal information online or taking advertisements at face value. Pupils, including younger ones, have a ready familiarity with these principles and articulate them with the slightest of prompts.
- Pupils have little direct knowledge of bullying because it is so rare in school, but they are clear about which adults they would approach in the event of a problem and have full confidence that any difficulty would be solved quickly.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted across school life including in the programme of assemblies. One on the themes of 'peace' drew an interested response from pupils who related the broader concept of peacefully living together to their experiences of resolving minor playground disputes. Pupils are encouraged towards a broader view of the world by initiatives such as the video link established with a school in the Middle East allowing class-to-class dialogue. A web dialogue established for Year 4 pupils with an author gave pupils a very real insight into the creative process. Specific events celebrate different cultures: one, for example, being 'India day'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Conduct around the building at all times of the day is orderly. Visitors are welcomed with courtesy. The etiquette of turn-taking and opening doors for others is well established. Lunch is a pleasant, sociable time.
- Members of staff, pupils and parents all confirmed that there had been a marked and rapid improvement in behaviour. There were particular concerns for one class during the autumn term. Responding to greater consistency in how teachers applied school policies, pupils' behaviour has improved across the school. This is confirmed by records showing a rapid decline in incidents over only a few months. Parents praised the rapid improvement.
- Pupils arrive at lessons ready to learn. They enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. Current attendance, measured from the start of the year to the time of the inspection, showed a small improvement over the previous year. Overall, attendance is broadly in line with the national average.
- Pupils' eagerness to learn contributes well to their progress. Concentration and perseverance in tasks are the most usual attitudes when teaching is strong. Inattention and distraction are occasionally evident and

linked to lessons where expectations or delivery of subject matter are not well judged.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- At the time of the previous inspection, pupils were judged to have made very rapid progress in Year 6 but too little through key stage 2 as a whole. Consequently, the results in the national tests were not at a level that represented good progress. In 2015, the Year 6 national tests showed a trend of improvement having been sustained against 2013 and 2014 results but outcomes remained too low given pupils' starting points. In mathematics and reading, pupils' attainment was just below the national average. Writing was above. Taking a broad view of progress through the school, despite improvement, pupils were not achieving as highly as they might, with the exception of a strong showing for those pupils achieving the highest level in mathematics. Current work and records for pupils in Year 6 show that progress is not sufficiently rapid.
- Inspection evidence shows significant variation in attainment between classes and subjects: a consequence of the unevenness in the quality of teaching. There is further unevenness over the course of the current year where progress has accelerated but is doing so from a starting point that was below what would be expected. Standards at the beginning of Year 6 were lower than starting points of pupils in the school indicated that they should have been. Decisive action by school leaders to address this problem has led to improvement but not all lost ground has been made up and progress is not yet of a good standard.
- In the 2015 national tests, pupils in Year 2 achieved below the national average in mathematics and writing. Reading was a little above the national figure. The work of current pupils shows improvements in presentation following recent school initiatives but the same mistakes are repeated for too long in both writing and mathematics and this hinders the progress that pupils make.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching the expected standard in the phonics check has risen steeply over three years. The 2015 results were the first in which the school was broadly in line with the national average figure (it was two percentage points above). Current school pupils' progress information suggests that the trend of improvement will be maintained this year.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in each school year are too few to allow statistical generalisations to be made. School progress records and the sampling of pupils' work indicate that the progress of this group of pupils from their starting points is at least as good as that of other pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress from their starting points.
- The most able pupils typically make steady progress but the proportion attaining the upper levels in tests is not high enough. In some classes and subjects, the most able pupils demonstrate deeper thinking about topics but this does not occur consistently. In mathematics, the most able pupils show high levels of security in their calculation skills and rapid recall of number facts but do not routinely appreciate how they may be broadly applied.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years provision is well led by a skilled teacher. Safeguarding is maintained to the same effective standard as in the rest of the school.
- Children are well cared for. They feel safe and secure, which allows them to build their confidence and helps them to develop the persistence they show in staying with a task and seeing it through. They behave well, sharing the play equipment contentedly, taking turns and tidying things away briskly when asked to by the adults.
- Children are able to describe their activities and during the inspection many were able to explain something of the consequences of what they were doing, making good progress in understanding cause and effect. One group of children puzzled over the progress of a ball along the slide they had made and, responding to the questions from adults, made modifications to ensure it went from one end to another by adjusting the height of its supports.
- Afternoons in the Reception class begin with concentrated practice of the sounds that letters make. This is a lively session and elicits high levels of concentration and enthusiastic response. Although answers are

given in chorus, the teacher quickly identifies any children not fully involved and draws them in.

- From their starting points, all groups of children make good progress and achieve above the national average in the knowledge and skills they have acquired by the end of the Reception Year. They are well prepared for their entry to Year 1. Children develop good habits of learning and enjoy what they are doing. The building blocks for later progress in reading, writing and mathematics are set in place.
- Teaching assistants are well directed by the teacher and their input is incorporated into the planning of learning. They have good knowledge and lead individual groups skilfully. This allows sessions to offer a range of simultaneous learning activities for children.
- An effective balance is maintained between children choosing activities for themselves and teacher-directed guidance that offers essential learning. The Reception class areas, indoor and out, are well equipped and give good support to play and learning. An unusual feature much enjoyed by children is the real piano, located under a shelter in the outdoor area. Seats are arranged to form an open air concert area. Children improvised on the piano for an audience, being careful first of all to ensure that all names of participants were properly listed on the whiteboard. This linking of the practice of literacy skills with imaginative play is typical of Reception class activities.
- Learning in mathematics is skilfully embedded, including in innovative ways. For example, children complete three sums to discover the code to unlock a bike for play: a practical reward for completing the calculation at the same time as demonstrating its usefulness. All children have a 'challenge book' with a list of four new challenges for each week, and so they are constantly motivated.
- The use of an online reporting tool to give parents a frequent account of their child's progress is much appreciated by them. This acts as an efficient, electronic counterpart to a learning journal and a number of parents commented on the good quality of the information they receive. One parent remarked that she knew what her child had done that day before collecting her in the afternoon. The same system allows a rapid transfer of information about children in the pre-school expected to move to the Reception class.
- For a number of reasons, early years provision is judged to be better than the overall effectiveness of the school. For example, the quality of teaching is consistently good and there is close attention to assessment information in planning each session. Parents are united in their praise for the good start they rightly believe the Reception class gives to their children.

School details

Unique reference number	110671
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10011803

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pierre Lao-Sirieix
Headteacher	Anneka Stockdale
Telephone number	01223 508750
Website	www.ickniel.cambs.sch.uk
Email address	head@ickniel.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 February 2014

Information about this school

- The Ickniel Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- There is an average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups.
- There have been changes to the leadership of the school since the previous inspection. The deputy headteacher has been in post since September 2015 and the headteacher since January 2016.
- Two governors remain from the time of the previous inspection. The chair was elected in September 2015. There are currently three vacancies.
- The school receives support from a national leader in education within the Cambridge and Suffolk Schools Alliance.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in all classes. The headteacher joined in observations with both members of the inspection team. Visits were also made to small-group sessions led by teaching assistants.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and middle leaders. Other meetings were held with four governors, including both the chair and vice-chair and a representative of the local authority. A telephone discussion was held with the national leader in education providing support to the school.
- The 48 responses to Parent View were considered. A high proportion of parents responding also chose to make a written statement with the 'Freetext' online facility; these also were taken account of. Additionally, there were informal discussions with parents at the school gate.
- Twenty members of staff completed the Ofsted survey of their opinion which was also considered during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered a broad range of school documentation: school records for current and past progress and attainment; attendance and behaviour records; minutes of governing body meetings; and information about safeguarding and pupils' welfare.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' workbooks and spoke to them about their learning. There were also meetings with groups of pupils. Inspectors observed pupils at lunch, at play, arriving in school and moving about the building.

Inspection team

Paul Copping, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Nicholas Rudman

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

