

Isle of Ely Primary School

School Road, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB6 2FG

Inspection dates

20–21 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and the leadership team, including governors, are successful in sharing their vision and ambition for the school with pupils, staff and parents.
- Leaders' high expectations that the curriculum nurtures the academic, social and emotional needs of every pupil are evident throughout the school.
- Parents are unanimous in their praise of the school's leadership.
- The Active Learning Trust, the school's sponsor, has provided effective support to leaders and staff in embedding high-quality teaching and learning throughout the curriculum.
- The leadership team's rigorous focus on improving standards through the monitoring and management of teachers' performance has ensured that pupils receive consistently good teaching in every year group.
- The curriculum is broad and enriching. It prepares pupils well to become 21st century British citizens. Pupils understand the importance of inclusion and equality.
- The curriculum enables pupils to develop positive attitudes towards learning.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Consequently, the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard in the phonics screening check is above the national average.
- Current progress for pupils at the end of key stage 1 is strong. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress in reading, mathematics and science.
- The school ensures that all pupils are safe. The curriculum helps pupils to develop effective strategies to ensure their physical safety and emotional well-being.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are respectful of the needs of others and demonstrate kindness and empathy.
- Leadership of the early years is strong. Staff develop children's innate curiosity about the world very well. As a result, children make good progress and most achieve a good level of development.
- Staff are not consistent enough in extending the knowledge and skills of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, across the curriculum.
- Staff do not help pupils in key stage 1 and children in Reception to develop their writing skills consistently well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To develop the support and challenge for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, across the curriculum so that:
 - they make accelerated progress in every area of the curriculum
 - their attainment is significantly higher than the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- To implement a consistent approach to teaching writing across key stage 1 and Reception so that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make consistently good progress in writing in each year group.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The leadership team has embedded an ethos of high expectations and aspirations for each and every pupil in the school. Leaders work together very effectively to ensure that this vision is translated into effective action in the classroom. The executive headteacher has positive and supportive relationships with staff. Consequently, there is a shared vision for all pupils to succeed.
- Pupils' outcomes in the early years and key stage 1 have continued to improve well as a result of the unrelenting focus on raising achievement. Leaders regularly scrutinise each pupil's progress across each area of the curriculum. Staff use this information to ensure that no pupil falls behind or, if they do, they are supported to catch up.
- Subject leaders have clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in their respective curriculum areas. The leader of mathematics has supported staff with planning well designed lessons that develop pupils' understanding of mathematical reasoning. The leader of English recognised the inconsistencies in the teaching of spelling and introduced a uniform approach across the school. It is too early to measure its success. The science leader recognised the importance of strengthening the teaching of scientific skills, which has improved pupils' understanding of specific scientific ideas.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong. Leaders ensure that pupils are supported to participate in classroom learning alongside their peers. Teaching assistants are trained and deployed highly effectively. Leaders review pupils' educational plans regularly to ensure that the most appropriate support is provided.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching frequently. They are rigorous in their analysis of a range of evidence such as work in pupils' books, lesson observations, pupils' perceptions and achievement data. Drawing on expertise within the school such as coaching and mentoring, support from the Active Learning Trust and external training, leaders ensure that teachers provide a good education to pupils.
- The design of the curriculum is innovative and challenging. It is testament to the strong leadership skills of the executive headteacher and head of school that staff, parents and pupils have embraced the curriculum so successfully.
- Pupils develop strong language and communicative skills through a range of cross-curricular activities. For example, connected by a theme drawn from a book such as 'Commotion in the Ocean', Year 1 pupils develop their spoken language through a range of self-selected activities focused on art, science, writing and role play.
- Pupils have a rich and varied curriculum. All Year 1 pupils learn the violin and perform to an audience of parents. Pupils also experience the world beyond the school. Children in Reception visited a local archaeological dig with a professional archaeologist. Pupils also learn about the styles of famous artists such as Monet, Kandinsky and Seurat.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, pupils in all years gain an understanding of the world of work through visiting

places such as Addenbrooke's hospital and the Ofsted offices in Cambridge.

- Although leadership of the curriculum is robust, the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, do not have consistent support to deepen their understanding, skills and knowledge across the curriculum.
- Leaders have recognised the development of the writing curriculum as a whole-school priority. There are ample opportunities to practise writing in a range of genres. Pupils who the inspectors spoke to were unanimous in their love of writing. However, teachers are inconsistent in their guidance to help pupils improve their writing.

Governance of the school

- The school has a highly effective governing board. It is strategic in its focus and ensures that its priorities match those in the school development plan. Questions raised in the governors' meetings demonstrate that they provide the leadership team with sufficient challenge.
- Regular monitoring of expenditure such as pupil premium and funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has ensured that the money is spent well and enables the pupils to make good progress.
- Governors ensure that the sports premium funding is used effectively and measure its impact on pupils' progress and engagement with sport. Additional dance lessons alongside training for class teachers to improve their teaching of sport have improved outcomes for pupils.
- Governors receive effective training to ensure that they are able to hold the leadership to account effectively. The governors bring a range of experience to support the school's development. They work well as a team as evidenced by their unwavering commitment to raising standards as the school grows to full capacity.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding leads are tenacious in ensuring the physical and emotional well-being of their pupils. They provide personalised support to vulnerable pupils to ensure that their needs are met.
- Safeguarding leads are alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and liaise with external agencies to ensure that pupils are provided with the best possible support.
- Appropriate checks are made on all staff before they begin work at the school to ensure that they are fit and proper to work with children.
- All staff are trained to spot any safeguarding issues or concerns. As a result, all staff know how to make a referral and pupils know who to go to if they have a problem.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils are excited to learn. Inspectors observed pupils in a range of lessons and their curiosity and enthusiasm to learn was evident throughout. This is testament to the high

expectations of staff and the well-designed lessons. Pupils are able to articulate how they learn and how well they have achieved.

- The teaching of language and communication skills is strong. Throughout the school day, pupils move seamlessly between activities using their language skills to support each other's and their own learning.
- Imaginative role play is a feature in all classes. Children were observed exploring the world of the sea using words such as 'binoculars' and 'telescope' in the Nursery. Pupils in Year 2 talked about their ideas for writing a pirate story. Pupils can articulate their understanding of what they learn with fluency and clarity across the curriculum.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning skilfully to extend and develop pupils' understanding in most curriculum areas. For example, inspectors observed the successful ways in which teachers extended pupils' understanding of the column method in mathematics in Year 2.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well to enable the inclusion of all pupils, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, inspectors observed the skilful ways in which teaching assistants supported pupils' letter formation in a Year 1 class.
- The teaching of reading is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy listening and reading a range of texts. Teachers plan exciting lessons where stories are brought to life. Classrooms are transformed into the setting in books such as a pirate ship.
- Teachers develop pupils' understanding of how words shape meaning. For example, pupils in a Year 1 class used pictures to stimulate their understanding of characters' feelings. Pupils were able to write very perceptively about the ideas in the book.
- Pupils with different starting points are included well in every activity. Pupils choose activities at a level of difficulty that is appropriate for them. Pupils spoke to inspectors about how much they enjoyed their lessons and choosing their tasks. As a result, pupils' self-esteem and confidence as learners are high.
- Parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and those who spoke to an inspector were very positive about the school's reporting system. Parents were confident that the reports they receive are accurate and supportive of the personal needs of their children.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make good progress but there is often insufficient support to extend their progress more rapidly when they are working by themselves on an extended piece of work. For example, the extension question or 'stupendous' question is challenging but pupils do not have sufficient guidance to help them to respond to it in enough depth.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about writing. However, staff do not consistently provide effective guidance to accelerate the progress and attainment of pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is successful in developing pupils' curiosity as learners. They have very positive attitudes towards learning and readily embrace new challenges.
- Pupils respond well to teacher support. Pupils' work in the classroom and in their books demonstrates a strong sense of pride.
- Relationships across the school are strong. Pupils are kind, welcoming and inclusive of each other. The school has strong support systems for pupils who may experience difficulty.
- The school has a very strong curriculum founded on personal, social, health and economic education. Pupils gain an understanding of how to share ideas and work cooperatively. Pupils work together successfully to fundraise for organisations such as Great Ormond Street Hospital.
- Pupils recognise that the school keeps them safe. The school has a strong focus on e-safety. Pupils told an inspector that they knew what to do if they were contacted by a stranger online. The leadership team has also run e-safety sessions for parents advising of the importance of filters on computers to keep their children safe.
- Pupils develop a strong understanding of the importance of free speech and democracy through election to the 'champions of change' pupil council. These elections are regular to enable as many pupils as possible to participate. Pupils told an inspector how proud they were of the responsibility to represent the views of their classmates. Children in Reception relished the opportunity to vote to name their fish 'Pizza'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct around the school and within the classroom is good. Most pupils listen attentively to teacher instructions and move well between activities. A few pupils occasionally need reminding through sanctions to remain on task.
- Classrooms are very stimulating learning environments. Pupils respond well to the positive behaviour system and are eager to gain a 'golden ticket' reward.
- The school's expectations of good manners are consistently reinforced. For example, pupils are aware of the importance to be kind to others.
- Due to a range of strategies such as tracking and improved communications with parents, attendance is now in line with national standards and is no longer an area of concern.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils have well-developed reading skills and pupils' current progress is good. In Year

1, the proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in phonics has consistently been above the national average. Most pupils are on track to attain at least age-related expectations for reading at the end of Year 2.

- Pupils' books demonstrate pupils' pride in their work and an appropriate level of challenge. However, pupils' writing does not improve as quickly as their reading and mathematics in Years 1 and 2.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress across the curriculum. The pupil premium funding has demonstrable impact.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress across the curriculum. They receive tailored support that enables them to be fully included in the same activities as others during lessons. The impact is positive.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make good progress but do not currently make rapid progress across the curriculum. For example, pupils told me that they did not always have enough support to extend their skills in writing.
- Pupils make good progress in their social and emotional development. They are keen to learn. Pupils' attitudes are measured regularly by leaders and the results are evaluated alongside pupils' academic progress to identify any barriers to learning.
- Pupils develop good scientific skills such as observation and calculation. Pupils apply their reading, writing and mathematics skills effectively in their science activities. For example, pupils were observed estimating what might happen to an egg left in vinegar for a few days.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years setting is well-led and teaching is good. Where issues are identified, leadership has acted swiftly to resolve them.
- Safeguarding is effective. Children are kept safe and know how to keep themselves safe both within the classroom and in the outside area.
- Teachers plan very effective lessons that draw on a range of activities to develop children's skills, knowledge and understanding. The development of children's language and communication skills is strong. The creation of imaginative worlds such as space stations is successful in stimulating children's communications skills.
- Children maintain their concentration and complete activities well. They collaborate well with each other. For example, children were observed working together to make a space rocket. They assigned roles to each other and accepted the guidance of the 'boss' to ensure the successful completion of the rocket.
- The transition between the Nursery and the Reception is well structured. Enjoying the same area of the school, staff ensure that children's learning in Nursery leads into the curriculum at Reception.
- Children, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their starting points. The proportion of children who make a good level of development is above the national average. The

school is assiduous in moderating all assessments both within school and with other schools to ensure accuracy.

- Children enjoy reading, writing and mathematics. They choose challenging activities to develop their skills. Children's writing skills, however, are not as well developed as their reading and mathematics skills.
- Children develop their fine motor skills well to be able to use pens and pencils. However, staff do not consistently provide effective guidance for children to improve their writing.

School details

Unique reference number	140483
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10026120

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Marion Lloyd
Headteacher	Bryony Surtees
Telephone number	01353 612818
Website	www.isleofelyprimary.org
Email address	admin@isleofelyprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is smaller than the average primary school. It opened in 2014 as a part of the Active Learning Trust. The school is currently not a full primary school. It is growing incrementally year-by-year, currently composed of Nursery through to Year 2.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is below average.
- The majority of pupils are White British.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms, some with the executive headteacher and head of school, to observe learning and to talk to pupils about their work.
- Inspectors met formally with the executive headteacher, head of school and other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator and the leader of early years.
- Meetings were held with five governors, 13 pupils, the champions of change council, the Active Learning Trust's school improvement leaders and parents.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed reading with a range of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work across the curriculum and across all year groups to determine the accuracy of assessment and the sustainability of pupils' progress.
- The lead inspector checked the school's documentation regarding the school's approach and systems for safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and the quality of teaching. She also considered the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plans.
- Inspectors took into consideration 97 parent responses to Parent View and 49 free-text responses, and 14 staff responses.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paul Copping

Ofsted Inspector

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