

Iceni Academy

Gloucester Avenue, Shrub End, Colchester, Essex CO2 9AZ

Inspection dates

19–20 June 2018

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders are taking effective action to raise standards at the Iceni Academy. They are determined that all pupils do their best. As a result, pupils' achievement is improving quickly.
- Governance is strong. Governors successfully use their good knowledge about the school to hold leaders to account for the standard of education that it provides.
- The trust supports the school well. For example, it ensures that leaders are well trained. Consequently, the quality of teaching across the school is now good and continuing to improve.
- The morale of staff is high because leaders support and challenge them effectively.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most pupils enjoy learning and work well together.
- Physical education (PE) is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy keeping healthy by participating in a range of activities provided by high-quality sports coaches.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well. Pupils' behaviour has improved significantly this year. They apply themselves well to their learning and their conduct in lessons and around the school is usually good.
- The majority of parents are positive about the school. They appreciate the many improvements made by leaders this year.
- The curriculum provides a range of interesting learning activities which motivate pupils to do their best. In a minority of subjects such as history and geography, pupils make less progress because subjects are not taught often enough.
- Leaders take effective action to address weaknesses identified through checks of teaching and learning. However, priorities for improvement set out in the school's plans are not linked closely enough to monitoring activities. This slows down some aspects of school improvement.
- Although pupils' progress in reading is good, this subject is weaker across the school than in writing, mathematics and science. Pupils do not read widely and frequently. A minority of pupils who did not attain the required standard in the key stage 1 phonics screening check are not catching up quickly enough.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are doing well overall. However, progress is inconsistent. Leaders do not measure the impact of the extra help that they receive well enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to refine and improve leaders' monitoring systems so that:
 - priorities in school improvement planning include clearer, measurable targets, linked to monitoring activities to ensure that actions secure quicker improvements in raising standards
 - all leaders evaluate the impact of the wider curriculum more regularly, especially in subjects like history and geography
 - leaders check that the extra help provided for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is having a positive impact on their learning and is enabling them to make consistently strong progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in reading by ensuring that:
 - reading is promoted more widely across the school
 - the teaching of phonics improves so that pupils who did not attain the required standard in the key stage 1 phonics check catch up quickly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership and management are good. This is because leaders are focusing on raising standards at Icen Academy to ensure that all pupils achieve well. Pupils are now making stronger progress from their starting points and catching up on previous lost ground.
- All leaders have high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils. Since their appointment at the start of the school year, they have worked relentlessly to improve pupils' learning, behaviour and personal development. Standards are rising rapidly.
- Leaders carry out detailed monitoring of the standards in teaching and learning and take effective action when they identify an area of weakness. For example, as a result of actions to improve the teaching of mathematics, pupils have significantly improved their reasoning and problem-solving skills. Leaders' evaluation identifies the need to refine school improvement goals more clearly so that they are more closely linked to monitoring activities.
- Leaders are keen to ensure that pastoral provision meets the needs of every pupil. For example, they have recently appointed additional staff to lead improvements in attendance and behaviour. These appointments have already had a marked impact on pupils' welfare and behaviour. Parents are very complimentary about the additional support that their children are receiving.
- The trust provides effective support to leaders and staff. They ensure that professional development is at the heart of the school's strategy to bring about rapid improvement. Leaders are generous with their time in supporting colleagues. As a result, teaching is good and is continuing to improve.
- Staff value the professional support provided by senior leaders and the trust. Teachers new to the profession are particularly appreciative of the mentoring support that they receive, and the opportunity to share good practice with others. Consequently, staff morale is high.
- Effective use of pupil premium funding ensures that disadvantaged pupils are supported well, enabling them to make good progress from their different starting points. As a result, the progress of disadvantaged pupils rose in 2017 and was in line with that of other pupils nationally in reading and writing. In mathematics, their progress is improving rapidly.
- Leaders make effective use of additional funding to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. As a result, pupils make good progress in their personal development, behaviour and academic outcomes. Leaders identify a need to monitor more precisely the impact of interventions so that all pupils make consistently rapid progress.
- Leaders use the PE and sport premium effectively. Participation in sport has increased due to the provision of a range of activities by sports coaches. Pupils say that they are keen to go out at lunchtime and to keep healthy by being active.
- The school's curriculum gives pupils a wide range of interesting opportunities to learn.

Leaders have chosen to introduce an innovative 'creative links' approach this academic year towards provision in a wide range of subjects. The school's chosen approach has had a positive impact on pupils' personal development, through collaboration with others and the use of creativity in learning, for example. However, pupils do not make strong and sustained progress in some subjects such as history and geography, because these subjects are not taught often enough.

- Leaders provide a range of successful opportunities to enhance the curriculum, including the use of outside speakers. For example, during the inspection, Year 6 pupils learned the difference between debit and credit cards in a financial management lesson delivered by a former investment banker.
- The rigorous personal, social and health curriculum contributes well to pupils' behaviour and personal development. Leaders ensure that through a range of strategies, such as displaying 'pupil of the week' in each classroom, all pupils feel part of the school's inclusive community.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strong feature of the school. Through assemblies and lessons, leaders ensure that pupils understand and practise British values such as tolerance and an understanding of right and wrong. Leaders ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to develop their curiosity and their interests, for example through working together on projects of their choice.
- Leaders effectively promote a sense of responsibility among pupils towards their community. For example, they have set up 'rota kids', where pupils make a pledge to forge relationships with the community through regularly visiting an old people's home.
- Leaders promote equality rigorously and effectively. For example, following anti-racism workshops commissioned by the school, pupils showed a good understanding of the consequences of racism. As one pupil said: 'We never sit back and watch. We tell an adult and they sort it out.'
- Leaders have taken effective steps to improve communication with parents, who are largely happy with the school. Many parents are complimentary about the positive changes that they have seen with regard to behaviour and learning. They welcome the improved availability of staff. Parents new to the school believe that they have made a good choice.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Governors work constructively with leaders to ensure that they receive the information that they need to monitor the quality of education provided by the school.
- Governors know the school well. They regularly visit so that they can see for themselves the impact of leaders' actions.
- Governors hold leaders to account routinely. For example, they check regularly on how well pupil premium funding is used. They know how the money is spent and challenge leaders on the impact it is having on disadvantaged pupils' achievement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Appropriate checks are carried out prior to the appointment of all those who work in the school. These checks ensure that statutory requirements are met and that all adults are suitable to work with children.
- All those who work in, and with, the school, including governors and staff who run the breakfast club, are highly committed to ensuring the highest safeguarding standards. They have a good understanding of the potential risks faced by pupils and know what to look out for.
- The designated safeguarding leads have a clear understanding of their role. They ensure that all staff have appropriate training, for example in the Prevent duty to stop radicalisation.
- Staff are familiar with procedures for recording any concerns. As one member of staff said: 'Safeguarding is everyone's concern. We are part of a bigger picture.'
- Staff are uncompromising in following up concerns over the safety and welfare of pupils. They are not afraid to challenge outside agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support that they require.
- Pupils feel safe and are confident that staff will look after them.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The relationships between pupils and staff are positive. The atmosphere in most lessons is calm and orderly.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan interesting lessons that motivate pupils, and this helps them to learn well. In writing, for example, Year 6 pupils were inspired to use their developing grammatical and punctuation skills to describe an underwater cave.
- Teachers use questioning well to probe and extend pupils' understanding. They find out what pupils know and can do, and subsequently address misconceptions and errors effectively.
- Teachers use technical vocabulary well in lessons so that pupils understand precisely how to improve their work. Teachers successfully encourage pupils to routinely use the key vocabulary for English, science and mathematics which is purposefully displayed in classrooms across the school.
- Where subjects such as art and PE are taught by specialists, pupils benefit from additional expertise. For example, high-quality art work displayed across the school reflects pupils' skill in using paper to make three-dimensional shapes.
- Teachers ensure that they give pupils the opportunity to apply their developing skills across a range of subjects. This approach is especially strong in writing, mathematics and science. For example, following a scientific investigation of sound-absorbing materials, pupils wrote to a sound engineer setting out recommendations about what will make the best ear protectors. The resulting work was of a high standard.

- Teachers have chosen to introduce a new assessment policy this year, which is already having a positive impact on the learning and progress of a majority of pupils. This system ensures that teachers routinely give pupils appropriate time to clarify and consolidate their learning, and to make up any gaps in understanding from earlier lessons. Teachers regularly hold effective ‘conferences’ with individual pupils about what they need to learn next and most pupils make strong progress, especially in English and mathematics.
- Teachers expect pupils to regularly evaluate their own work in order to establish positive self-improvement skills. As a result, many pupils, especially the most able, have become adept at self-assessment and use this regular reflection time to make purposeful improvements to their work.
- Teachers use homework well to consolidate the acquisition of key knowledge, such as spelling and recall of multiplication tables. They also set appealing half termly challenges which encourage pupils to apply skills acquired in lessons. For example, some pupils chose to use their mapping skills to locate where dinosaurs lived in the UK.
- Reading is taught well in daily lessons, where pupils develop specific skills effectively. They can read the instructions and texts that they use in lessons well. However, teachers do not promote a love of reading effectively enough across the school to encourage pupils to read widely and deeply. Nor do they teach phonics well enough to a minority of pupils who did not attain the required standard in the key stage 1 phonics check to ensure that they catch up quickly.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy learning. They value frequent opportunities to talk to their teachers about how to evaluate and improve their work. They show persistence and seriousness in doing the best that they can.
- As a result of a school focus on working collaboratively, pupils know how to listen to each other respectfully and how to ‘give and take’ when working together. Pupils develop confidence and good decision-making skills when working on joint projects.
- Pupils show a pride in their work. For example, they have willingly met the school’s raised expectations for handwriting and presentation.
- Most pupils feel safe in school and trust staff to look after them. They know who to talk to if they are worried. Inspectors judged, following a thorough investigation of site security, behaviour records, observation of behaviour and discussions with pupils, that safety is managed well in the school.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility, such as in the dining room at lunchtime. They respond well to opportunities to develop their own leadership potential through becoming effective play leaders and school council members.

Behaviour

- Behaviour is good.
- Historically, behaviour in the school has not been good enough. Over the last year, pupils have willingly met newly-established expectations for behaviour and value the significant improvements made. As one pupil said: 'I feel a lot safer now because teachers are stricter and people behave better.' They say that behaviour in the school has improved greatly over the last year.
- Pupils have high expectations for their own behaviour and that of others. They respond well to the school's 'zones of regulation' which enable them to recognise their own emotional state when controlling their own behaviour.
- Conduct at all times of day is good. Pupils move in an orderly fashion around the school. At breaktimes most pupils play together constructively. Inspectors observed pupils choosing from a wide range of activities such as sports, dance practice on the outdoor stage and listening to music.
- Pupils respond well to clear routines which ensure a calm start for all pupils in the morning, and an orderly exit at the end of the day.
- There is still a small minority of pupils who have particularly challenging behavioural needs. Incidents are reducing as pupils learn to manage their behaviour.
- Attendance has improved over the year for all groups of pupils and is now almost in line with the national average. There is still a small number of disadvantaged pupils whose attendance is persistently low. However, the attendance of each has significantly improved over the year as a result of the determined actions taken by leaders.
- The number of fixed-period exclusions rose this academic year as a result of raised expectations for behaviour, but improved in the summer term. Inspectors scrutinised the school's exclusion procedures, which were found to meet appropriate guidelines and confirmed that exclusion is used as an absolute last resort.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils enter the school with attainment which is below that of other pupils nationally at the end of key stage 1. As a result of the good progress of pupils currently in the school, attainment is rising and pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Pupils' progress has improved in recent years. In 2017, the progress Year 6 pupils made was in line with other pupils nationally in mathematics and above average in reading and writing.
- The work in pupils' books is of a good standard, especially in writing, mathematics and science. The majority of Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve well at the end of the school year. However, in a minority of subjects, such as history, pupils have not made sustained enough progress, because these subjects are not taught often enough.
- The progress of Year 6 pupils who speak English as an additional language was especially rapid in 2017 in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils currently in the

school continue to make consistently good progress.

- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their different starting points. This is because their progress is tracked well and pupils are given support which meets their needs effectively. In 2017, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 made progress which was almost in line with non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in English, and improving in mathematics. A good proportion of current disadvantaged pupils are making rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Most-able pupils are making largely good progress. They have willingly risen to high expectations to evaluate and improve their work routinely.
- Pupils' progress in reading is largely good. However, although they read competently, they do not demonstrate a sustained joy of reading. The progress of pupils who did not attain the required standard in the key stage 1 phonics check is still hampered by under-developed phonics skills.
- Most pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are doing well. This is particularly the case in their personal development and readiness for learning through a range of interventions. For example, some pupils are making good progress in physical coordination as a result of regular 'gym trail' sessions where they work with specialist coaches. Pupils enjoy these sessions. In class lessons, most pupils are supported well by learning support assistants, and demonstrate good gains in the development of skills and attitudes to learning. However, leaders are aware that some programmes need refining so that pupils do not spend too long away from key lessons, which can result in inconsistent progress in the development of important skills such as writing.

School details

Unique reference number	142001
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10046616

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Dave King
Head of school	Lisa Corby
Telephone number	01206 573 807
Website	www.iceniacademy.co.uk
Email address	admin@iceniacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Iceni Academy is a smaller-than-average junior school which converted to an academy in September 2015. The school is part of the Connected Learning Multi-Academy Trust, which is the main governing body with legal and strategic responsibilities for Connected Learning schools. The local governing body focuses on the day-to-day responsibilities.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- Approximately two thirds of the pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive SEN support, who have a statement of special educational needs, or an education, health and care plan, is well above the national average.
- The school operates a breakfast and after-school club, which were included in the

inspection.

- In 2017, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons and parts of lessons in all classes, jointly with the senior leaders. They scrutinised a variety of pupils' work in every class, talked to pupils about their learning during lessons and listened to pupils read.
- All inspectors observed behaviour in the playground over the two days of the inspection.
- The inspectors held meetings with the head of school, middle leaders, school office staff, teachers and pupils. They met with governors, and had a discussion with the chief executive officer and the chief learning officer of the trust.
- The 49 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were taken into account along with the five free-text messages. Additionally, inspectors spoke informally to parents at the start and end of the school day in the playground. The results of the 78 response to the pupil survey undertaken at the time of the inspection were considered, as well as the 25 responses to the staff survey.
- A wide range of documentation was evaluated by the inspectors. These included the school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement and the school's current performance information. The inspectors scrutinised the checks that the school does to ensure the suitability of adults who work with children, and leaders' records of behaviour and exclusions, child protection and safeguarding.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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