

Inspection of Iceni Academy

Stoke Road, Methwold, Thetford, Norfolk IP26 4PE

Inspection dates: 10–11 March 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school attend the primary site or the secondary site, which are six miles apart. There are more improvements to make in the secondary phase so that pupils' experiences are of a better quality. Some pupils do not attend the secondary phase regularly enough, and this is limiting what they achieve. Pupils get a positive start in the primary phase, where good teaching and effective leadership ensure that pupils achieve well.

Most pupils are tolerant of each other. They appreciate those who are different from themselves. Pupils in the primary phase are adamant that, 'bullying does not happen here. No one would deliberately upset anyone.' Some secondary-aged pupils shared concerns about bullying. A small number of parents also voiced these concerns. Most pupils told us that staff resolve bullying issues.

Pupils discover new talents. Primary-phase pupils have learned how to play the steel pans. Older pupils participate in clubs and a cadet force.

Most parents and carers would recommend the school to others. A small number believe that leaders could respond better to concerns they raise. Pupils say that they feel safe in school, and inspection evidence supports this view.

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

The quality of education is not consistent across the two sites. The delivery of the curriculum is more established in the primary phase. In the primary phase, staff have strong subject knowledge, so they can explain concepts clearly. Staff teach subject content well and pupils build on what they have learned before. In lessons, pupils are focused, work hard and answer questions willingly. In the secondary phase, leaders are at different points in their journey of reviewing the curriculum. Changes to curriculum plans, including schemes of work are 'work in progress'. The aim of the curriculum review is to make sure that pupils will know more and remember more.

Younger pupils learn phonics well. Across the primary phase, teachers do a good job of teaching pupils to read. They match books carefully to pupils' needs. Pupils learn to read fluently, and enjoy reading different types of books from the well-stocked library. In the secondary phase, as pupils move through the school, there is less of a focus on pupils reading age-appropriate books on a frequent basis. This limits the vocabulary they can draw on with which to talk and write.

Reception children are happy and safe. Parents are full of praise for the way their children are helped to settle quickly. Leaders work closely with families and pre-schools before children start. This means that they identify children's needs early and provide support immediately. The early years curriculum is adapted to meet the

needs of the children. Children successfully develop knowledge and skills in preparation for Year 1.

Leaders in the primary phase and secondary phase have high expectations of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND in the primary phase achieve well because of the support they get. Those in the secondary phase do not achieve as well because teachers do not shape the curriculum enough for pupils' needs.

Leaders have identified that pupils need more help and support for their mental well-being. Since September 2019, 50 staff have been trained in mental health awareness. Many of the changes are new, and it is too soon to judge the impact of leaders' work.

Appropriate careers guidance helps to prepare pupils well for their next steps in education, employment or training. There are meaningful opportunities for pupils to encounter the world of work.

Most pupils behave well around the school and in lessons. Some pupils do not meet the high behaviour expectations that staff have for pupils in the secondary phase. Secondary-aged pupils' attendance is below the national average. Pupils with SEND, those known to be eligible for pupil premium funding and children looked after do not come to school often enough. Attendance is made worse by the high number of exclusions over time.

There is a lack of joined-up thinking between the primary and secondary phases. Newly qualified teachers are not supported well enough in the secondary provision. The trust knows that there is more to do in the secondary phase to ensure consistency throughout this all-through school. In October 2019, the trust organised a review of the provision in the school, which highlighted the issues. The trust has provided support to move the school forwards. This has not had full impact to date. Leaders are careful to ensure that their staff's well-being and workload are considered.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They carry out the appropriate checks on adults who work at, or are regular visitors to, the school. The record of these checks is carefully maintained. Staff are well trained in the latest information about safeguarding pupils. They know how to spot the signs that pupils may be at risk. Sometimes, the records kept about pupils in the secondary phase are not updated quickly enough or do not include enough detail.

Pupils have adults they can talk to if they are worried about anything. Pupils told us that they feel well supported.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders and staff do not work together well enough between the primary and secondary provisions. The provision is not seen as one school by some staff. Newly qualified teachers do not always get the support they want and need in the secondary phase. Improvement planning to address these issues needs to be sharply focused. Governors and the trust need to make sure that the school operates effectively as one and give strong challenge and support to ensure that provision in the secondary phase improves.
- In the secondary phase, it is still early days in ensuring that all key stages in all subjects are planned effectively to develop knowledge in an effective way. Leaders need to develop and implement the curriculum so that pupils learn more over time.
- Some teachers in the secondary phase are not shaping learning well enough for pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND are not remembering what they have been taught sufficiently well. Leaders need to ensure that all staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt teaching of the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils with SEND.
- Sometimes, leaders in the secondary phase do not ensure that their actions to keep children safe are recorded quickly or thoroughly enough. Safeguarding information about the pupils is not held in one place. Leaders must ensure that for any pupil for whom there is a safeguarding concern, there is a comprehensive up-to-date record.
- Absence, persistent absence and fixed-term exclusions over time are above the national average in the secondary phase. Leaders should ensure that attendance improves for all pupils in the secondary phase especially for pupils with SEND, those known to be eligible for pupil premium funding and children looked after.
- Leaders have introduced some measures to enhance pupils' awareness and understanding of mental health. The impact of the effectiveness of the changes is not yet known. Leaders should fully establish these initiatives so that they are sustainable and stand the best chance of achieving their desired effect.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	139058
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10121504
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	685
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Bernard Dickenson
Headteacher	Stephen Plume (Principal, secondary) Emma Owner (Principal, primary)
Website	www.iceniacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 July 2016

Information about this school

- Hockwold Primary School and Methwold High School formally amalgamated in September 2011 and became an all-through academy in January 2013. The school is based on two separate sites, which are six miles apart.
- The school is sponsored by Academy Transformation Trust.
- Both the primary and secondary phases are smaller than average-sized schools of these types.
- The school serves the largest rural catchment in Norfolk.
- The number of pupils with SEND and the proportion supported through an education, health and care plan, although small, are above average.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the primary school principal, the secondary school principal and other senior leaders and faculty leaders. We met with the coordinator for the provision for pupils with SEND, leaders with oversight of the pupil premium funding and the Year 7 catch-up funding, and the leader responsible for early years.
- We spoke with the chief executive officer, the regional director of the trust, and a representative of the governing body, as well as a representative of the local authority.
- We did deep dives in five subjects: reading, English, mathematics, geography and physical education. We met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' workbooks, met with pupils, and met with teachers of the lessons we visited. In addition to deep dives, we looked at provision in other subjects, visiting lessons and speaking with leaders.
- We met with groups of pupils, comprising pupils from different year groups.
- We observed the behaviour of pupils during social times.
- I met with the designated safeguarding leads to discuss safeguarding arrangements. We also spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding and looked at documentation and the school's single central register.
- We reviewed a range of documentation, including self-evaluation of the school performance, curriculum plans and information concerning pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- We took into account the 109 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 98 free-text responses. We also considered the 43 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the online pupil questionnaire.
- No judgement has been made on this occasion for the quality of the sixth-form provision. There is insufficient evidence to make the judgement because students have not yet been admitted to the sixth-form provision.

Inspection team

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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