

Inspection of a good school: Ickleford Primary School

Arlesey Road, Ickleford, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 3TG

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 May 2022

Outcome

Ickleford Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend Ickleford Primary School. They love coming to school and thrive in the caring and nurturing environment. Adults want pupils to be happy and feel safe, and this is certainly the case. The playground is full of smiles, happiness and friendship.

Pupils live up to the high expectations that adults set for them. Their behaviour is exemplary. Adults teach them how to behave well and respect others as soon as they start school. This means that pupils get on well with each other and are polite and courteous. They grow and leave the school as confident and compassionate young people.

Pupils know about bullying and the different forms it can take. They are clear that it rarely happens in school. If they do have a problem, pupils know that there is always an adult they can talk to who will help them out. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of how to stay safe. Older pupils know the risks they face as they grow up, and what they can do to keep safe, especially when online.

Classrooms are calm and orderly. Lessons are rarely disrupted, which means that pupils can concentrate on their work. They have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy overcoming challenges when teachers make them think hard about their work.

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

Leaders have created a culture where values such as respect, honesty and unity shine through. Pupils are taught the right way to behave in school and when they are out in the community. The school is a warm and friendly place to be.

Leaders have designed and developed an ambitious curriculum. They have carefully selected the most important knowledge they want pupils to learn in each subject. In most subjects, pupils' new learning builds on what they already know, and they develop deep

knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils in Year 3 are competent and confident in catching a cricket ball because the skills they need have been taught and practised since Reception. In mathematics, older pupils can solve difficult problems involving fractions because they have a well-developed knowledge of this area of mathematics from previous years.

Pupils learn to read well because there is a consistent approach to teaching phonics. Children in Reception listen to many different stories and poems. Older pupils also hear adults read to them, which helps them to develop a real love of reading. If a pupil finds reading difficult, they receive the right support to help them catch up, which they do.

In a small number of subjects, leaders have only recently finalised their curriculum planning. Pupils learn well in these subjects, but do not develop the same depth of knowledge as they do in other curriculum areas.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge in the subjects they teach because they receive regular training. They present information to pupils clearly and in a way in which pupils can understand. Teachers quickly identify whether pupils are making mistakes in their learning and correct these. In mathematics, teachers present information well in a range of different ways to help any pupil who finds solving a problem too difficult. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities at times have activities adjusted to meet their needs, but still have access to the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Pupils who need extra help with their social and emotional needs receive high-quality support.

Adults know the importance of teaching pupils a wide vocabulary. This starts in the Reception class, where children learn and practise new words. Adults talk with children at every opportunity. This rich language prepares them well for their move into Year 1.

Pupils have many opportunities to take part in clubs and activities. Many of these are sporting clubs. Pupils have the chance to compete against other schools in local competitions and festivals. They also have the opportunity to attend after-school clubs such as those for choir, gardening, sewing and drama.

Governors know the school well. They know what the school does well and what needs to improve further. They are dedicated and carry out their roles with great diligence. They do not shy away from asking challenging questions to hold leaders to account, but balance this with providing support for leaders when this is needed.

Staff are proud to work at Ickleford Primary School. They are well supported by senior leaders and value the regular training they receive to help them teach the curriculum well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Adults are well trained to spot any signs of potential abuse. They know how to report concerns they have. The designated safeguarding leads are quick to provide support for

pupils if they need it and do not hesitate to contact external agencies if they need to. There is a positive culture of safeguarding in the school. All adults are vigilant.

Governors make regular checks to assure themselves that the school is a safe place for pupils to be. Checks made on new members of staff who join the school are comprehensive and accurately recorded.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum in most subjects is well developed and identifies the important knowledge and skills that pupils need to know and remember. In a small number of subjects, curriculum plans are new and have not been fully implemented. This means that pupils do not have the same detailed knowledge as they do in the rest of the curriculum. Leaders should support teachers to fully implement the curriculum, so that pupils can achieve well across all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2013.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	117401
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10211297
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	Board of governors
Chair of governing body	Miles Maxwell
Headteacher	Sue Dury
Website	www.ickleford.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a breakfast and after-school club that is run by a private provider.
- The religious character of the school was inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in May 2018 and was judged to be outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leader, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to an adult.
- The inspector evaluated the curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about several other subjects.

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and members of the governing body.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector looked at the single central record, reviewed safeguarding paperwork and systems, and spoke to leaders, teachers, support staff, governors and pupils.
- The inspector considered the 73 responses and free-text comments to Ofsted Parent View, along with the 19 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Nathan Lowe, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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