

Inspection of Icknield Infant and Nursery School

Archers Way, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 4UN

Inspection dates: 8, 9 and 10 February 2023

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Icknield Infant and Nursery School is a calm and happy school. Children in the early years build positive relationships with staff. These relationships flourish as they move through the school. Pupils are confident to be themselves, and they trust adults to deal with their worries and to keep them safe.

From the early years, pupils enjoy coming to school as teachers make their learning fun. Pupils work hard in lessons and are proud of their achievements. Leaders have high expectations for what pupils must learn, from Nursery to Year 2. In the Nursery, children develop a positive attitude to learning, and this builds as pupils move through the school.

Pupils learn about being kind, caring and resilient through character education, and this helps them to be better learners. Pupils say that, sometimes, there can be bullying, but staff deal with this quickly and help them to resolve friendship issues.

Pupils learn how to keep safe online. They learn about road safety and about using the zebra crossing on the school grounds.

Pupils have activities in the curriculum, such as forest school, music and educational technology, which enhance their learning. However, there are limited opportunities for extra-curricular clubs for pupils to develop their talents and interests. Pupils would welcome more of these.

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

The school has been through a substantial period of change. A new senior leadership team is in place. Leaders have accurately identified the key priorities for improvement. They are bringing about positive change in the school.

Leaders have clearly set out their expectations for subject leaders, and there is consistency across the curriculum. They check on the curriculum to ensure that it is being taught as leaders intend. Pupils benefit from the well-organised curriculum, and this begins in the early years. In most subjects, teachers use assessment effectively to identify pupils' gaps in knowledge. However, this is not the case for some subjects. Teachers do not always build effectively on what pupils already know. Teachers do not adapt their planning as well as they could to take into account where pupils are less secure in their understanding.

Children in the early years learn the basic skills and knowledge they need for learning in key stage 1. Staff have received training to support children's development. Adults are skilled at asking questions and helping children to talk about what they are learning.

Leaders prioritise reading. A love of reading is very much embedded in the daily life of the school. Pupils read for pleasure and have time to read. Staff receive training

to plan and deliver the recently introduced phonics programme. They identify pupils who struggle to read and provide extra support if this is needed. This helps most pupils to catch up quickly. Pupils talk with pleasure about books they are reading. They have books that are well matched to their reading stage. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of learning.

Leaders have made improvements to the quality of education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They ensure that pupils with SEND have their needs identified accurately. From the early years, children and pupils with SEND are well supported. Leaders have worked tenaciously with external agencies to secure the correct support for pupils. Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. Where adaptations are in place, they are well matched to pupils' needs. Staff have the training they need to help pupils with SEND make strong progress with their learning. They are well trained to provide effective support for pupils who need additional support with their social and emotional needs.

Pupils display positive attitudes to learning. When in class, they follow instructions well and know class routines. In the early years, children are confident at selecting resources, and they take turns and share. They develop respect for their environment through activities such as tidy-up time. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 have classroom jobs. Pupils behave well during playtimes, and they use the equipment sensibly. Through stories, pupils learn about values such as being a good citizen to prepare them for life in modern Britain.

Leaders, including governors, have managed significant change in a short space of time. Governors hold leaders to account for the quality of education. They make regular visits to check how well pupils are learning. This is not the case for safeguarding. Pupils are kept safe, but governors have not assured themselves that leaders do all they can to keep pupils safe. They do not always have the right information to challenge leaders on safeguarding processes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have worked hard to ensure that staff are well trained to raise concerns about pupils' safety and well-being. Staff use the systems in place well. Leaders do not always act as quickly as they should when some concerns are raised. Leaders are not liaising with external agencies as much as they should. Records show pupils are being kept safe but do not reflect all the actions taken by leaders to do so.

The appropriate employment checks are completed. There were some administrative gaps in the records of these checks. These were resolved while the inspectors were on site.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Safeguarding record-keeping systems are not giving leaders the information they need to take appropriate actions quickly. Consequently, some concerns are not followed up appropriately. Leaders must ensure that there is a robust and rigorous system for checking that incidents are followed up and necessary referrals are made in the appropriate way. Leaders must ensure that they act in a timely manner and that actions are documented clearly.
- Governors have not assured themselves that leaders are acting in a timely manner to concerns raised about pupils' welfare and safety. Governors must ensure that they are carrying out the necessary safeguarding and employment checks and holding leaders to account. Governors must establish effective systems to fulfil their roles to support and challenge leaders to ensure pupils' safety is a priority.
- In some subjects, assessment processes are not fully in place, and staff are not systematically checking what pupils have learned and can remember. As a result, not all pupils achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment to check what pupils have learned and use this information to adapt the curriculum so that all pupils develop and embed a detailed knowledge in all areas of the curriculum.
- Leaders provide a limited amount of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are not currently engaging with experiences that develop their talents and interests. Leaders must ensure that they provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their interests.

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.

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	117186
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10255191
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Hannah Hagon
Headteacher	Alison Collins
Website	www.icknieldinfants.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed since the previous inspection. The inclusion coordinator (INCO) took up their post in September 2022. Many staff were not working at the school at the time of the previous inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school does not currently meet the expectation of teaching hours, and the governors have begun the process to ensure that the school meets the expectation by September 2023.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the early years leader and the INCO.
- The lead inspector met with seven governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspectors spoke to staff to discuss workload, well-being and safeguarding.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, computing and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with the subject leaders, 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 inspectors spoke with pupils about their learning, safety and behaviour.
- Documentation relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance was scrutinised by inspectors.
- The inspectors took account of the 55 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspectors took account of the 25 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspectors took account of the 25 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Nerrissa Bear, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Joe Creswick

Ofsted Inspector

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