

Inspection of a good school: Isle of Ely Primary School

School Road, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB6 2FG

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 March 2023

Outcome

Isle of Ely Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Isle of Ely Primary School like their school, happily abiding by the three simple rules: ready, respectful, safe.

Pupils show they are ready to learn, listening attentively to their teachers and working hard in class. They remember much of what they learn. Younger pupils proudly show off their counting skills, while older pupils talk enthusiastically about periods in time and the different religions they study. Having a broad understanding of the world means pupils are respectful of difference.

Pupils typically behave kindly in school. Lunchtimes are a hive of activity where staff arrange fun play and sporting activities. Pupils can explore in the garden or compete in team games. Pupils like how staff spot them demonstrating the school values. This can lead to them achieving house points or receiving the coveted headteacher award.

Regular assemblies and lessons ensure pupils understand what bullying is. This means they can report it when it occurs. Pupils know that leaders and staff carefully investigate allegations of bullying. This ensures that pupils receive appropriate support to put a stop to it. Having adults they trust helps to keep pupils safe at the school.

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

Reading is at the centre of the school's curriculum. Leaders ensure that staff have the training and resources to teach phonics to good effect. Teachers check that pupils are learning the sounds they need to know in order to better their reading. Teachers use careful assessments to make sure that pupils receive books containing words they can read. Pupils willingly spend their lunchtimes in the library, losing themselves in

storybooks. They also thoroughly enjoy teachers reading aloud to them in an expressive voice to bring stories to life. All this ensures that pupils develop a love of reading.

Leaders oversee that subject leaders and teachers have suitable expertise and enthusiasm. Leaders give careful thought to what pupils learn, setting out the specifics of the curriculum clearly. This supports teachers in helping pupils make connections to prior learning to strengthen their knowledge. For example, Year 6 pupils make links between the suffragette movement and the expectations of women in Germany during World War II. Children in Nursery have a strong understanding of number. Staff plan activities carefully so that children can regularly practise recognising numbers and counting. This prepares them well for the Reception Year and beyond.

Where assessment works best, teachers observe how well pupils are learning and adapt their teaching to help pupils who are struggling. They also question pupils skilfully, checking for pupils' understanding and prompting to help them correct misconceptions. As a result, pupils learn content securely.

A few teachers do not demonstrate such strong practice. They do not notice when their explanations confuse pupils. This leads to pupils making mistakes or misunderstanding the work they need to complete. When this is the case, pupils do not learn as well as they should.

Leaders overhauled their system for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Now there are clear, efficient systems in place. Specific, measurable targets help teachers to recognise the progress pupils make. Teachers skilfully deploy additional adults, who actively support pupils' learning. They reiterate the teacher's instructions or use extra resources to support pupils to learn.

Leaders introduced a simple approach to the school rules. Therefore, staff and pupils understand the behavioural expectations. Pupils particularly enjoy the assemblies that teach them about the school values. They learn how to model these values in their everyday behaviour. Consequently, pupils mostly behave well. When pupils need help to improve their behaviour, leaders and staff use the school's behaviour system effectively. Pupils are positive about how 'talk time' helps them to reflect on how to improve their behaviour.

Staff cater suitably for pupils' wider development. Pupils and their parents particularly appreciate the range of extra-curricular clubs. For example, the large school choir enjoy their weekly practise, as well as opportunities to sing at local and national events. Pupils strive to help others, taking on roles and responsibilities to help effect change. For instance, the house captains oversee fundraising events to support charities.

Because leaders manage change well, staff are well supported with their workload. Staff appreciate the additional time set aside to complete tasks, such as pupils' school reports.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors, oversee safeguarding with drive and determination. Doing so ensures that record-keeping, including pre-employment checks on staff and volunteers, is thorough.

Staff are suitably well trained. Frequent quizzes help to assure them that they know how to spot and report pupils at risk of harm. Staff are confident with how leaders follow up concerns. Leaders investigate concerns appropriately, liaising with external agencies when needed. This ensures suitable support for vulnerable pupils and their families.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. When they have concerns, they feel confident to report these, in person or in writing, to ensure they get help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not present subject matter clearly or check pupils' understanding rigorously. As a result, some pupils do not learn and achieve as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that all teachers deliver the school's curriculum well.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2017.

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	140483
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10255199
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	452
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Vic Daniels
Headteacher	Bryony Surtees
Website	www.isleofelyprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	20 and 21 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Isle of Ely Primary School is part of The Active Learning Trust Limited, a multi-academy trust.
- There is before- and after-school childcare for pupils attending the school. For pupils in the early years and key stage 1, it is run by school staff and managed by school leaders. For pupils in key stage 2, it is run by a separately registered and inspected childcare provider. The same separately registered and inspected childcare provider also provides childcare during the school holidays for pupils of all ages who attend the school.
- Leaders do not currently make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 held meetings with leaders, including the chief executive officer, primary director, chair of the local governing body, headteacher, deputy headteachers and special educational needs and disabilities coordinator.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To further inspect the curriculum, the inspector reviewed curriculum documentation for art and design and religious education.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and a deputy DSL to review records. The inspector also met with the school business manager and an administrative assistant to scrutinise the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. To further evaluate safeguarding, the inspector spoke to the chair of the local governing body, staff and pupils.
- The inspector reviewed a range of other school documentation and policies, including the school development plan and self-evaluation form.
- The inspector gathered pupils' views by observing and speaking to pupils. The inspector also took account of the 304 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- The inspector gathered parents' views by reviewing the 119 responses and 57 free-text responses submitted to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector gathered the views of staff by speaking to several of them and reviewing the 39 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Daniel Short, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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