

# Inspection of The Ickniel Primary School

Lynton Way, Cambridge CB22 3EA

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Inspection dates:	20 and 21 May 2025
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Diane Mitchell. This school is part of Anglian Learning, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Jonathan Culpin, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ken Murphy.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils here experience a safe and inclusive environment. They can name a variety of trusted adults who help them when needed. Pupils speak proudly of their school values. They are caring, honest, resilient and certainly ambitious to learn. The foundations for this are built in the engaging and stimulating early years environment.

Pupils behave well. They show respect for one another and benefit from proactive support. When pupils do experience an issue, staff empathetically support them. These caring relationships help ensure that pupils remain calm and happy.

The school has high expectations for everyone. These are realised through a well-structured, broad and ambitious curriculum. Pupils achieve well in national tests and assessments. They also recall and retain knowledge securely across the wider curriculum. Pupils receive precisely targeted support from highly trained staff to become confident, fluent readers.

Pupils benefit from a rich programme of clubs, trips and leadership opportunities. These go beyond the expected. For example, they participate in a careers week. This gives pupils a rich, early understanding of different career pathways and helps raise their aspirations ahead of entering secondary education.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school, supported by the trust, has made significant improvements to its curriculum. Staff have increased their subject knowledge. For example, in physical education (PE), collaboration with PE specialist teachers and the trust's PE lead has enabled staff to confidently deliver the curriculum. This begins in the early years, where children build foundational movement skills through activities such as trim trails and structured PE lessons. Older pupils build on these skills to perform more complex movement routines using apparatus. Similarly, Spanish is taught effectively, allowing pupils to develop early confidence in language learning through engaging methods such as song.

Children in the early years develop strong foundations for future learning. Teachers help them build on this knowledge in subsequent years. Teachers use resources to help pupils understand abstract concepts, regularly checking understanding and adapting learning. As a result, pupils across the school build on their knowledge across the curriculum.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Staff tailor their approaches, using effective strategies, adaptations and additional explanations to ensure all pupils can access the curriculum. However, the school acknowledges the need to further improve communication with parents of pupils with SEND, so that their knowledge of their child's needs can be considered when determining what support the school provides.

Phonics teaching is now a major strength. With expert support, the school has implemented a consistent, well-understood approach. Well-trained staff deliver this programme very effectively. This has significantly reduced the number of pupils needing intensive support with phonics. Pupils read confidently, enjoy books and value rewards such as becoming reading millionaires. Teachers' systematic focus on supporting pupils to develop their phonics knowledge and build their comprehension skills across the school has enabled this.

Pupils' behaviour is calm and respectful. This is underpinned by a revised behaviour policy that meets pupils' social and emotional needs. The school works closely with families to do all it can to overcome attendance challenges. This includes linking families with sources of additional support, contributing to year-on-year improvements in attendance.

The school excels in developing pupils' character and resilience. A thoughtfully refined personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme supports pupils to know about staying safe and how to recover from setbacks. Mental and physical well-being are prioritised through mindfulness workshops and interventions such as play therapy. Pupils develop a strong sense of citizenship through community projects, such as contributing artwork to a local science park. Enrichment opportunities, such as residential visits, musical performances and mathematics competitions, enable pupils to develop their talents and interests fully. The participation of disadvantaged pupils is high thanks to targeted support that promotes high engagement in these activities.

The trust has played a pivotal role in the school's improvement. It has provided expertise, robust challenge and highly effective support. Support from the trust has helped the school to make improvements in teaching and curriculum design. Staff speak highly of the training, support and attention paid to their workload and well-being. The impact of this work is evident in the strong outcomes now achieved by pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Occasionally, the school does not fully include parents in reviewing the support for pupils with SEND. This means that some parents' views are not used to shape the support their child receives. Consequently, the support provided for some pupils with SEND does not take account of both school and home perspectives. The school needs to ensure that parents are fully involved in reviewing the provision that is in place for pupils with SEND, so that their views are considered and captured fully in the support that their child receives.

## 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148454
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10345538
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	191
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Ken Murphy
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Jonathan Culpin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Diane Mitchell
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://icknielprimary.org">https://icknielprimary.org</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	14 and 15 November 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The Ickniel Primary School joined Anglian Learning in April 2021 after converting to academy status as a new school.
- The headteacher took up post in January 2023.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the local academy council, including the chair and vice chair.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, senior leaders and other staff members.
- Inspectors conducted further meetings with staff regarding safeguarding, special educational needs provision, attendance and personal development.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO of the trust, the director of primary education, the deputy director of primary education and the director of inclusion.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and design and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects and spent time in early years across the inspection. This included geography, history, PSHE, languages and computing.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and at social times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys. They considered responses to the confidential online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.

## Inspection team

James Chester, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Nick Rudman

Ofsted Inspector

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