

Inspection of Isleham Church of England Primary School

Malting Lane, Isleham, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 5RZ

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 January 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this happy and welcoming school. They say, 'Everyone makes friends easily here.' Pupils enjoy positive and warm relationships with adults. This helps to create a caring environment where pupils feel safe. Pupils respond well to the school's Christian values. They are confident and get on well together.

Leaders have high expectations, ensuring that pupils do well at school. Nurturing pupils' talents and developing their interests are important. Pupils take part in a range of activities, such as learning to play the recorder or a brass instrument. Pupils have every opportunity to live the school motto 'Let your light shine'.

Pupils work hard in their lessons. They enjoy learning because teachers make it fun. They listen to what adults tell them and take pride in their work.

Pupils understand the different forms bullying can take. They say that it is rare in their school. Pupils are reflective about their behaviour. They look for ways to make things better by being kind and considerate to everyone. Parents are happy. One parent, echoing the views of others, simply said, 'Just an amazing school.'

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

Leaders and staff share a determination to provide an ambitious curriculum for pupils. There is a collegiate spirit among staff, who work together to provide an effective education for all pupils. Leaders have invested in high-quality professional development for all adults. As a result, staff are knowledgeable about how to teach and deliver the planned curriculum well.

Leaders and staff have worked together to design a suitable and ambitious curriculum. Their plans clearly set out the important knowledge and skills that pupils will learn, term by term. In a few subjects, such as history, there is still more work to do. It is not as clear what pupils will learn across topics to help them build their knowledge and understanding so they get better at the subject in the long term. Most of what children learn in the early years is well considered. However, leaders have not fully considered what children will learn in a few areas, such as understanding the world. It is not clear how children's learning builds into the wider curriculum that they will meet in Year 1.

Teachers provide pupils with clear explanations. They engage pupils' interests by presenting learning in different and interesting ways. This helps pupils to remember their learning. For example, younger pupils know and correctly use technical terms in music, such as pulse and rhythm. Older pupils understand and demonstrate the different states of matter from science work.

Staff check pupils' understanding during the lessons. Teachers ask questions and adapt their plans to address any misunderstandings. In a few subjects, such as physical education and music, the use of assessment is quite recent. This means

leaders do not have a secure grasp about how well pupils are understanding and improving in their learning.

Pupils are enthusiastic about reading. They make considered choices about the books they select to read. There are frequent opportunities in the school day to read independently. Pupils particularly enjoy the reading spaces they have helped to create in each classroom.

Children start to learn to read using phonics as soon as they start school. Staff teach phonics well. Those who find learning to read more challenging receive extra help so they can keep up. Once pupils have mastered their phonics knowledge, they quickly become fluent readers.

Leaders have robust systems for identifying pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders provide effective support to help teachers make adjustments in lessons to meet pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils access the same learning opportunities as their peers. Pupils with SEND achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils undertake different responsibilities that help them to build their understanding of community. The school council actively cares for the school environment. Junior travel ambassadors help other pupils understand about being safe near roads. Through effective mindfulness and therapy activities, pupils learn about looking after their mental health.

Governors know the school well. They are not afraid to hold leaders to account. They work closely with staff to ensure that the school's vision guides their work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make thorough checks when recruiting staff or volunteers. Records are well maintained and up to date. All staff receive regular safeguarding training. They are alert to the signs of any pupils who may be at risk of harm or abuse. Leaders ensure that pupils receive support, often at early stages, to prevent concerns from escalating.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They understand how to maintain respectful relationships with one another through the school's personal, social and health education programme.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few areas, including the early years, the key knowledge that pupils need to know and understand is not clearly designed. This means that pupils' knowledge is not secured in their long-term memory. Leaders should refine the curriculum so that the important things pupils need to know are made clearer.
- Not all subject leaders know how they check what pupils have learned. They do not know if pupils are remembering the content of the planned curriculum. Leaders should ensure that teachers know how to check that pupils remember the key knowledge across all subjects, to help build pupils' understanding.

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	110791
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10212380
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Fiona Borley
Headteacher	Sarah Skillern
Website	www.isleham.eschools.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 March 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Isleham Primary School is a Church of England faith school located in the Diocese of Ely. The religious character of the school was inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in April 2017 and was judged to be outstanding. The school has been notified that the next inspection of its religious character will take place in the 2022/2023 cycle of inspections.
- A pre-school is located in the school grounds and is managed through an external provider. This provision was not inspected during this inspection.
- The school runs a before- and after-school care club.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, music and physical education. In each subject, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, talked to pupils and teachers and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, groups of teachers and members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding records and other school planning documentation.
- Inspectors spoke to parents during the inspection and took into account 63 responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. There were also 60 free-text responses considered by inspectors.
- Inspectors reviewed 14 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 8 responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils formally and informally about their experiences of school.

Inspection team

Steve Mellors, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Christine Dick

Her Majesty's Inspector

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