

Inspection of Icknield High School

Riddy Lane, Luton, Bedfordshire LU3 2AH

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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The headteacher of this school is John Noble. This school is part of Icknield High School academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, John Noble, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Steve Blake.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They value the opportunities the school offers to learn about themselves, their community and the wider world. Pupils have a positive approach to learning. They concentrate well in lessons. They are determined to live up to the school's high expectations. This is reflected in the high standard of their work and achievement in national assessments. The school prepares pupils well for their next steps in education, employment and training.

Pupils enjoy school. They build strong relationships with each other and staff. Pupils follow the school's well-established routines. They appreciate the 'fives' they receive in recognition of their good conduct and achievements. Bullying at school is rare. When concerns arise, staff from the 'year rooms' ensure that issues are resolved promptly.

The school has robust measures in place to ensure pupils are safe. Safeguarding has a high profile across the school. Pupils learn how to avoid the risks they face as young adults. They look out for each other and know how to find help from staff when needed. Staff are vigilant to signs of potential harm. They act swiftly when necessary. The school works well with external agencies to ensure vulnerable pupils receive the support they need.

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

In September 2022, the school introduced a new curriculum across the school. Prior to this, leaders ensured that staff had effective training to prepare them to make the necessary changes. The curriculum is well designed and informed by the latest research in education. The knowledge pupils need to remember is organised clearly to ensure that pupils understand and remember what they study. Staff deliver the curriculum effectively. They regularly check what pupils know and can do. They provide timely support when pupils forget or misunderstand something. However, in some lessons across the curriculum, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to discuss what they are studying. As a result, pupils do not get enough meaningful chances to articulate or debate what they have been taught. This can hinder the depth of understanding they acquire in these aspects of the curriculum.

The school's approach to reading is well developed. Staff encourage pupils to enjoy reading. They ensure that pupils read appropriate and challenging texts across the curriculum. Staff celebrate pupils' achievements, such as awarding the status of 'millionaire readers' to pupils who read a million words in a year. Pupils who find reading difficult receive the support they need to become capable readers and access the curriculum successfully.

The school's effective approach to supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is recognised in the local authority as worthy of sharing with other schools. Leaders work well with feeder primary schools and external specialists to identify the exact needs of the pupils with SEND. Staff use leaders'

precise guidance when planning and delivering support for pupils with SEND. Staff expertly deliver the help these pupils need to thrive. The school provides effective support for deaf pupils, which enables them to achieve well in lessons and ensures they can also succeed in enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities.

The school's value statement, 'Icknield CARES', is evident in pupils' conduct towards each other. Pupils are well behaved in lessons, when moving around the school between lessons, and during social times. Disruptive behaviour in lessons is rare. When it happens, teachers apply the school's behaviour policy consistently well, and unwelcome behaviour stops.

Pupils sensitively and enthusiastically explore the different beliefs, lifestyles and social issues found in society. They learn the importance of respecting the differences of others. Pupils willingly take positions of responsibility within the school community. These include serving as prefects or as anti-bullying ambassadors. All pupils follow the school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programme. However, due to the school's structure for GCSE options, some pupils in key stage 4 have less experience of this programme compared to some of their peers and those in younger years. Some staff are also less confident in teaching some aspects of PSHE. As a result, some pupils in key stage 4 are not gaining the depth of knowledge they need.

Pupils, including pupils with SEND, have ambitious career goals for themselves. The school works well with local employers to enable pupils from early in Year 7 to learn about the many career opportunities they could pursue.

Leaders and governors have built positive relations with parents and staff. Staff enjoy working at the school. They appreciate leaders' commitment to ensuring staff have reasonable workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff do not always give pupils enough opportunity to discuss what they are learning. This leads to pupils in some lessons not being able to practise articulating their ideas, debating issues or sharing their reasoning about aspects of their studies. This can hinder their depth of understanding. Staff must give pupils meaningful opportunities to discuss what they are learning across the curriculum.
- Some pupils in key stage 4 have variable access to the PSHE programme. As a result, these pupils are not taught elements of the PSHE programme in the detail

needed. The school must ensure that all pupils receive the full PSHE programme in the depth and detail intended to be fully prepared for adult life.

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

Unique reference number	137679
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10240239
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,457
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Steve Blake
Headteacher	John Noble
Website	www.icknield.beds.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	23 and 24 November 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a single academy trust. The school became an academy in February 2012.
- The school uses two unregistered and six registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school serves as Luton's specialist resourced provision for deaf pupils aged between 11 and 16.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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.
- Inspectors spoke with trustees, the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers, members of support staff, and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: art, computer studies, English, geography, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with subject leaders and teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum, looked at samples of pupils' work and considered planning documents in some other subjects.
- 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 observed the behaviour of pupils in lessons and during social time.
- Inspectors looked at relevant documents, considered pupils' work and held discussions with leaders, staff and pupils about the provision for pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors considered the responses of 51 staff, 178 pupils and 91 parents to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Al Mistrano, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jess Pearce	Ofsted Inspector
Caren Earp	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Lawrence	Ofsted Inspector
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