

Thurnby, St Luke's Church of England Primary School

Main Street, Thurnby, Leicester, LE7 9PN

Inspection dates 27–28 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress through the school and typically attain standards which are above average in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers are keen to improve their skills and work closely together to ensure that lessons interest and inspire their pupils.
- Children in Reception develop skills quickly because of good teaching, and they are well prepared for Key Stage 1.
- The clear vision and determined actions of the headteacher, her senior team and the governing body have ensured that teaching and pupils' achievement have improved.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are proud of their school and their work and are keen to share what they have learned.
- The school does a good job of keeping its pupils safe. There is very little bullying and pupils are taught how to recognise risk and keep themselves and others safe.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in mathematics for all groups is not as strong as it is in reading and writing.
- Marking and guidance in mathematics are not as helpful to pupils in knowing how to improve their work as they are in English.
- Teachers do not always check carefully enough that pupils are making the progress they should in lessons. In a few lessons, work is too hard or too easy for some pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes and saw 14 lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight teachers. Three of the lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. Shorter visits were also made to other lessons.
- The inspection team studied a range of evidence including the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness and plans to improve, reports commissioned by external consultants, records from meetings held by the governing body and policies about keeping children safe.
- The inspection team also examined the work in pupils' books and on display around the school, and a range of data about their progress.
- Pupils from Year 1, Year 2 and Year 5 read to inspectors.
- Discussions were held with pupils, teachers, the headteacher, senior leaders and a group of governors. The lead inspector also spoke by telephone with a local authority adviser.
- Inspectors took account of the 45 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views expressed by parents and carers who spoke with them at the start of the school day. One written response was also received.
- The inspectors considered the views expressed in questionnaires returned by 27 members of staff.

Inspection team

Joanne Sanchez-Thompson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jacqueline Pentlow	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Pupils leave the school at the end of Year 5 and most transfer to the local high school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly average. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is also average and very few are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and children of service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been several staffing changes, including new leaders for mathematics and for special educational needs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to consistently outstanding in order to raise pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - teachers make effective use of their knowledge about what pupils know and understand when planning and providing work in lessons
 - teachers and teaching assistants always check on pupils' progress during lessons to make sure they are learning well
 - pupils' progress in mathematics is as rapid as their progress in reading and writing
 - the quality of marking seen in pupils' English work is extended to mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Almost all pupils make good progress from their various starting points and some make outstanding progress. Their eagerness to learn makes an important contribution to this.
- Most pupils begin school with skills that are typically in line with expectations for their age but some children have reading, writing and mathematics skills that are lower than usual. Good teaching in the Reception class enables children to make good progress in all areas of learning so that by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, their attainment is just above the national average.
- Good progress continues into Key Stage 1. Results in the phonics (the sounds that letters make) screening check in Year 1 rose in 2013 and were well above the national average. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 show that pupils' attainment in reading and writing is well above the standard most children achieve nationally and it is almost as high in mathematics. School tracking data and work in books show that the good progress has continued for the current Year 2.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make good progress, with boys and girls achieving as well as each other. Pupils in Year 5 are on track to leave school at the end of the year with attainment that exceeds that expected for their age, as they did in 2013.
- Pupils' literacy skills are well developed, as evidenced in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were completely engaged in their writing in response to viewing a video clip. They shared ideas, learning from each other as they improved their work.
- More-able pupils make good progress throughout the school. They do particularly well in reading, as teachers plan and provide them with challenging work that extends their knowledge and understanding. As a result, they achieve well.
- Recent progress in mathematics has not been as consistent across Key Stage 2 as in reading and writing. This has been recognised by school leaders, and pupils are now having more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in solving 'real-life' problems, such as in a Year 4 lesson where pupils worked out the combinations of items they could place on a shelf before it collapsed.
- The small proportions of pupils who are disabled and who have special educational needs or those pupils known to be eligible for funding through the pupil premium mean that reference to their attainment would potentially identify individuals. However, both groups of pupils make similar progress to that of their classmates.
- This is because the school carefully tracks the learning of disabled pupils and those for whom it receives the pupil premium and offers them challenge, help and support at an early stage. The impact of the spending and support is being carefully checked to ensure that it is making the difference needed, especially in mathematics. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language benefit from a similarly thorough approach and are achieving well.
- Pupils make good progress in developing reading skills. They read fluently and have good skills in using phonics to read any unfamiliar words. Older pupils enjoy reading and talk confidently

about their favourite authors and books.

- The primary school sports funding has been used well to improve teachers' skills and to increase the range of sports and clubs available to pupils. They have positive attitudes to staying fit and healthy.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding because lessons are planned to interest and inspire pupils. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the book *Room on the Broom* was used to stimulate pupils' questions for a character who then 'arrived' to be interviewed. Pupils were delighted to be applying their learning in a 'real-life' way. These challenging tasks made pupils think and work hard.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, enabling them to teach writing and other basic skills well. They have high expectations and develop very good relationships with pupils that give them confidence to learn. As a result, pupils have consistently good attitudes to their learning, showing pride in the presentation of their work, and their social and moral development is promoted well.
- Teaching assistants are generally well deployed by the teachers. Teamwork is often strong and pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make rapid progress because staff offer the correct level of challenge and support.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children benefit from the support of staff who know them well. The well-resourced learning areas and the range of well-planned activities and tasks, such as measuring and selling shoes in the shoe shop, ensure that children make good progress in all areas of learning. Children make good progress in their phonics and are then able to apply this to their writing. More able children are challenged further with one child writing independently, 'I will go to the big park because it is fun.'
- Classrooms are set out well with plenty of support for learning and high quality displays of pupils' work.
- While teaching has many strengths, teachers and teaching assistants do not always check on pupils' learning during lessons and so errors and mistakes are not corrected quickly enough.
- Teachers know their pupils well and usually give them activities and challenges that are just at the right level to enable them to learn well and make good progress. Sometimes, tasks set are too hard or too easy and as a result, pupils make less progress in lessons than they should.
- Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and regularly but the impact of marking varies across the school and across subjects. It often gives useful information about what pupils have done well and good suggestions for the next steps in learning but this is not always the case, particularly in mathematics. Teachers do not always check that their suggestions are acted on so marking is not always as effective as it could be. However, the school has identified how this should be addressed and the mathematics subject leaders are already driving improvement in this area.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good in lessons and around the school. They enjoy coming to their 'friendly' school with its warm, welcoming environment. Pupils know the school rules well and can talk about the reasons for them. This understanding is reinforced through regular assemblies and through the good behaviour model shown by all staff.
- Teachers and pupils get on well, there are good routines established for working together and pupils follow instructions without fuss. Classrooms are calm and quiet and pupils are keen to try their best and learn as much as they can. They like the 'encouragement and education' they receive. No incidents of disruptive behaviour were seen during the inspection.
- Pupils are proud of their school; they look smart in their uniforms and take care to keep the school neat and tidy. This is also true of their books, which are well presented.
- In Reception, pupils settle in quickly and cooperate well, sharing resources and discussing their learning with adults and each other.
- Staff manage behaviour consistently well and deal with any incidents of inappropriate behaviour quickly and effectively using the school's well-established systems. There have been very few fixed-term exclusions.
- Sometimes on the playground, pupils are boisterous and problems can occur. The school has recognised this and has invested in additional staffing and resources to channel pupils' energies more positively.
- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is good. All pupils spoken to say they feel safe and are aware of how to stay safe, particularly when using new technologies. Developing pupils' understanding of safety has a high profile in the school.
- As a result of information provided by staff, pupils have a good awareness of different forms of bullying. They say that there is little or no bullying and are confident that if there were, a member of staff would deal with it well. School records confirm low levels of reported bullying.
- Parents and carers spoke to the inspection team at the start of the school day. They were clear that they feel their children are happy and safe at school and that behaviour is good and managed well by all staff. Staff also say that behaviour is good in the school and that pupils are safe.
- Attendance is consistently above the national average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school. There is very little persistent absence.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides a clear and ambitious vision for the school and is relentless in her pursuit of excellence for the pupils, tackling underperformance when necessary. She is ably supported by a strong senior leadership team and a developing team of other leaders, and has the full backing of all staff.
- The school knows its strengths and weaknesses very well as a result of rigorous lesson observations, checks on pupils' work and conversations with pupils and parents. The resulting well-structured development plans are used to move the school forward.

- Teachers' performance is managed well. Challenging targets are set for pupils' progress and for the development of teaching skills. Subject leaders and senior teachers have targets designed to improve their leadership skills and are effectively supported by other leaders in the school.
- The partnership with other schools in the local area is strong and the headteacher uses these well to check the work of the school and to offer training and development opportunities to staff.
- The sports funding is spent on a range of initiatives and there are clear plans to check the impact of this over time. Pupils are benefiting from improved lesson planning and new equipment. Specialist sports tutors offer additional activities and clubs before, during and at the end of the school day. Older pupils are acting as sports ambassadors and seeking the views of other pupils so they can offer activities which will be of most interest. Teachers are being supported to improve their skills so that the improved focus on sport carries on after the funding ceases.
- The good progress made by pupils shows that leaders are fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity and avoiding any discrimination. They track individuals and groups closely to check on how well they are doing. Any pupil or group at risk of falling behind receives prompt additional help to enable them to catch up.
- Although there is an emphasis on developing pupils' basic literacy and mathematical skills, all subjects taught promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Recent work on the Winter Olympics showed pupils learning about the history and geography of Russia as well as creating accompanying artwork. Pupils in Year 1 can be heard answering the register in a range of languages and the Key Stage 2 visit to four different places of worship on the first day of the inspection was described by one pupil as 'the best day ever'.
- Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning, particularly in Reception and Key Stage 1, through the school's website and events in school. During the inspection, 26 parents attended the weekly family library session where they shared books with their children. A number of parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) expressed concerns about the quality of leadership and management in the school. The inspection team could find no evidence to support these views.
- The local authority has recognised the strengths of the school and provides an appropriate level of support. The school values the views of independent, external advisers and has commissioned its own evaluations to support further improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are knowledgeable and understand how well pupils are doing across the school because they review performance data carefully, taking the reports of external advisers into consideration. They know about the quality of teaching in the school and how the management of teachers' performance is being used to improve it. They also know how increases in salary are linked to teachers' performance. Governors challenge leaders using evidence from planned visits to the school. However, they recognise that these could be more closely linked to the school's plans for improvement. The governors know how the pupil premium funding is being spent and are involved in evaluating its impact. They are also clear about how the primary school sport funding is being used. Governors ensure that the budget is well spent, and that the school's arrangements for safeguarding meet current national requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120166
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	431208

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lisa Harris
Headteacher	Jatinder Sembi
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2009
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