

Thomas A Becket First School

Pelham Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN13 1JB

Inspection dates 02–03 July 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress in all year groups. Standards by the end of Year 2 have been significantly above the national average for the last three years.
- Children have a good start to their education in the early years provision. The majority reach a good level of development and so are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Teachers make learning interesting because they know their pupils well. They mark work with useful comments that clearly show pupils how they can improve.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils develop good attitudes to their learning, they are kind to each other and play well together at break and lunch times. The school keeps pupils safe and ensures that they learn how to keep themselves safe.
- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. She is well supported by a strong team including governors, and as a result the quality of teaching and achievement have remained good.
- The curriculum is successful in developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The forest school gives pupils an exceptional awareness of the natural environment.
- British values are promoted well and pupils have a good understanding of life in modern Britain.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. They praise the way that teachers understand their children and how effectively their child is helped to make good progress.
- Governors provide a good level of support and challenge to the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils to enable them to make outstanding progress.
- Pupils do not have enough chance to explore a large range of reading opportunities across the curriculum.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 23 lessons and part lessons. Many were observed jointly with senior leaders. In addition, the inspectors heard pupils reading in Year 2 and Year 3.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils and school staff. There was a discussion with the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and five other members. A meeting was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 85 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Other sources of parental views that were considered included several letters sent in by parents and discussions with parents at the end of the day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and analysed a large range of documents and policies, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress and documents checking the quality of teaching and learning. They also examined records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The views of staff were analysed through the 52 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Bowes, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Alison Botarelli	Additional Inspector
Peter Thrussell	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is considerably larger than the average-sized primary school. There are 20 classes in total, five in each year group from Reception to Year 3.
- The early years provision consists of full-time Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through pupil premium funding is lower than the national average. Pupil premium money is additional funding provided by the government for disadvantaged pupils. These are pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or children looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below that found nationally.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs on the school roll is below the national average.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportions of pupils making outstanding progress by ensuring that teachers always have the highest expectations of their abilities.
- Develop more reading opportunities across the curriculum by giving pupils a greater range of texts to explore.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has already made clear her strong commitment to moving the school to excellence. Standards, already high, have increased even further. All staff share her vision for the future direction of the school. There is strong leadership of teaching and effective management of behaviour.
- Leaders at all levels visit classrooms regularly and check the progress of pupils by looking in their books. Regular meetings with teachers check how well they are ensuring the effective progress of all pupils. Leadership has a very clear awareness of where teaching is outstanding and where further support may be needed. Immediate action is taken to address any teacher underperformance. Staff have access to high quality training to help them improve their skills and as a result staff morale is high.
- Middle leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas still left to develop. They fulfil their roles effectively and together with senior leaders carefully analyse pupils' achievement. Subject leaders are conscientious and make sure that all teachers understand the requirements placed on them regarding the new expectations associated with the national changes to the curriculum. Middle leaders effectively support those who are new to teaching.
- The additional funding, called the pupil premium, is used well. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is carefully tracked and they are given effective help when needed. Consequently, any gaps in attainment are closing rapidly.
- The school effectively promotes equality of opportunity through its values. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Moral development is strong. In lessons pupils are asked to consider values such as freedom, courage and honesty. The school is a 'Rights Respecting School' and pupils are aware of both their rights and responsibilities, including the responsibility to try their best. The school promotes British values carefully; pupils are aware of the concept of democracy and have had the opportunity to question the local mayor about local politics. Respect and tolerance for different cultures is effectively promoted.
- The range of subjects the school teaches captures pupils' imaginations and effectively develops their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school is implementing the new National Curriculum requirements through well-planned links between subjects.
- Pupils' understanding of the natural environment is enhanced through activities such as the eco-team and beach school. The school runs an exceptional on-site forest school. Flowers, fruit and vegetables are grown in small plots of land around the school and the fruit and vegetables are then cooked and eaten by pupils. Corridors in the school are full of imaginative displays using the materials pupils have gathered. Pots of sweet peas and other grown flowers enhance all areas. All pupils said how much they adored the exciting activities provided by forest school. Experiences such as den building and pond dipping help to develop pupils' confidence and social skills.
- The school fosters good relations with many institutions; these include pre-schools, nurseries and the middle school.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet statutory requirements. The school does all it can to ensure the protection of pupils.
- The local authority has provided effective 'light touch' support to this good school, including verifying the accuracy of the school's data.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. Without exception all who were spoken to at the end of the day praised the school. They like the effective communication and clear information about their child's progress. Many were very complimentary about the new 'hands on' headteacher. Parents stressed how good the school is at dealing with pupils who have emotional, behavioural and special educational needs.
- Primary physical education and sports funding is used well and promotes the activity levels of all pupils. Initiatives, such as the sports partnership, have allowed pupils to experience a range of different sports. Pupils are successful in sport and have won the cross county challenge against other schools in Worthing. Funding has been spent on experienced coaches teaching class teachers a range of additional skills, particularly in gymnastics and games. Money has also been used to upgrade equipment such as the tennis equipment for Year 3. The 'Fit for Life' week enabled pupils to experience different sports and pupils were very complimentary about the visit by a motivational dance teacher. Pupils learn about the value of healthy eating and nutritionists have visited the school to explain about the dangers of eating too much of certain types of food. The impact, as seen in pupils' books, is that pupils now know which foods are better for them to eat.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a range of different expertise. This helps governors to be effective and enables them to hold the school to account across different aspects of school life including the

achievement of pupils, staff performance and the school's finances.

- Many governors visit the school regularly and often visit lessons and talk to pupils. As a result they are well aware of the quality of teaching. They are very knowledgeable about the need for staff to have clear performance targets. Governors also know the procedures to follow should they need to address any teacher underperformance.
- Governors are well trained in understanding the school's data regarding how different groups of pupils are achieving.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite and play well together. The numerous gardens around the school are respected and nothing is destroyed or damaged.
- Pupils enjoy sharing their views and opinions. When discussing each other's work they are quick to point out the positive as well as giving areas to improve.
- In the majority of lessons pupils listen attentively to the teacher, they follow instructions carefully and most are keen to learn. Behaviour is not outstanding because occasionally in some lessons pupils are off task.
- Those pupils who belong to the Thomas A Becket School Council are very interested in finding out the views of others. They have recently conducted a questionnaire to find out what would make the school a better place for pupils.
- Evidence shows that behaviour over time is usually good and there are very few incidents of exclusions.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying that relates to the internet and social media.
- The school is very effective in ensuring that pupils develop their self-confidence. During the Year 3 residential trip concern was expressed about a tunnelling activity. However, with the help from teachers, who were helpful throughout, all successfully completed the activity and were delighted with the achievement.
- Attendance continues to be above the national average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- All pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they felt safe at school. Parents are pleased with the way that the school ensures that their children are kept safe.
- The school works hard to ensure that those in Year 3, who are to move to the middle school, are well supported. There are ample opportunities for pupils to discuss any concerns or worries with staff.
- Parents were keen to praise the support offered to those pupils who are more vulnerable and who may have emotional or social difficulties.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe from harm both within and outside of school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching has had a positive impact on the learning of all groups of pupils. Although there are a few variations within the 20 classes, overall pupils make good progress. They do not make outstanding progress because some teachers do not always have the highest expectations of pupils' overall abilities.
- Staff establish a calm and orderly learning environment, which contributes to pupils' good progress. There are effective relationships evident throughout the school and staff know pupils well.
- In many classes teachers fire an enthusiasm for learning. For example, pupils were enthralled about what would happen to the butterfly eggs that were in class. In other year groups pupils reported delight when they saw chicks hatching from eggs.
- Teachers enthuse pupils to develop a love of writing, particularly writing for a purpose. For example, when pupils were learning about persuasive writing they were given the task of writing about why a tourist should come to Worthing. Their work will be displayed in the local tourist information board.
- Pupils often read at home and in school and teachers encourage pupils to have a love of reading. However, teachers do not always provide enough chances for pupils to explore a range reading opportunities across the curriculum.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy mathematics. Teachers give pupils plenty of opportunities to investigate numbers

and carry out practical activities. Pupils often apply their number skills to solve real-life problems.

- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution. They enhance pupils' learning by working with small groups or individual pupils.
- Pupils' work is carefully and accurately marked. Pupils are given encouraging comments and helpful next steps to enable them to make good progress.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils in all year groups make good progress. Attainment for the last three years has been significantly above average by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Unpublished data for 2015 indicate a positive trend of improvements with 98% of pupils reaching Level 2 in reading and writing and all pupils reaching Level 2 in mathematics.
- Those who are most able make good progress in all year groups; this is because the school provides carefully for their needs. As a result a higher proportion than found nationally reach the higher Level 3 at the end of Year 2. Unpublished data for 2015 indicates that this positive trend of improvements is continuing.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well. The school makes good use of the additional funding, called pupil premium, to provide one-to-one tuition and small group work from specially trained staff. The attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school are small in every year group. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is good. In some classes they make better progress than others, for example in Year 1 in mathematics and in Year 2 in reading.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in all subjects. They sometimes make better progress than other pupils, for example in Year 3 in reading and writing. In all year groups these pupils are well supported by teachers and learning support assistants who ensure that work is carefully planned to meet their individual needs. Parents reported that they were very pleased with the way that their children were supported; they praised the amount of information that they had on their child's progress.
- The school's results in the 2014 Year 1 national phonic (the sounds that letters make) check, although improved from 2013, were just below the national average. However, current pupils in Year 1 demonstrate stronger phonic skills and the school predicts standards to improve this year.
- Pupils in Year 3 make good progress in all subjects. They are well prepared for middle school.
- Those who speak English as an additional language sometimes make exceptional progress, particularly in Year 2. This is because they are given well-targeted support as soon as they join the school.

The early years provision

is good

- The early years provision is led and managed effectively. Leadership has ensured that there is a strong staff team who work very well together to make sure that learning is fun and motivating. Staff ensure that children's 'Learning Journeys' are a clear reflection of the progress that they make throughout their time in Reception. Leadership has an accurate view of the strengths and areas still to develop.
- Most children have skills typical for their age when they join the early years, although they are a little below what is typical for their age in reading. They make good progress, particularly in reading, and the majority of pupils achieve a good level of development by the time they leave Reception. They are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Teaching is good. Activities, both indoors and outdoors, are purposeful and ensure that children have plenty of opportunities to develop their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that children have a range of opportunities to develop their speaking skills, for example through role play. Social development is well promoted. Children enjoyed practising the words for the song that they were to perform in assembly.
- Children in Reception enjoy the activities associated with the outdoors, especially the forest school, and make interesting creations out of natural materials. Teachers ensure that children develop a love of the natural world through interesting projects, such as how bees make honey.
- Parents report that they are pleased the school provides so well for their children's needs. Many were keen to point out that although they had initial concerns about the fact the school was so large, these were unfounded. They said that communication is very good and they can talk to their child's teacher regularly. All parents stressed that their child felt very safe at school and that their children are taught

how to look after themselves and understand risk. They said that children behave well and play carefully together. During the inspection children were seen to take turns and share equipment fairly.

- Children enjoy a range of visitors and visits, such as to a local farm where they learnt about lambs and piglets.

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	125954
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	449675

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	602
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Winstone
Headteacher	Amanda Dingwall
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2009
Telephone number	01903 235386
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