

Thurlstone Primary School

Royd Moor Road, Thurlstone, Sheffield S36 9RD

Inspection dates

24–25 November 2015

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher is passionate about education, driven to improve standards at Thurlstone and very committed to the school and community. As a result of her excellent leadership, standards at the school have rapidly improved at every key stage.
- Senior and middle leaders, including the leader of early years, are leading, very skilfully, their areas of responsibility so that pupils are receiving a vibrant and exciting curriculum. Leaders acknowledge that the quality of outdoor learning in the early years could be improved even further.
- Teaching is never less than good and much is outstanding. Consequently, pupils of all ages are making rapid progress from their starting points and attaining levels well above national expectations.
- By Year 6, pupils' achievements are impressive in reading and mathematics, but particularly impressive in writing due to high-quality teaching.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of the effectiveness of the school and provide rigorous challenge and support for the headteacher. They express ambition for every child to succeed and to make their school the best it can be.
- The work of staff to involve parents in their child's education is highly effective and helps children in the early years particularly to get off to a good start.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is exceptional. Pupils really enjoy school and this is reflected in their excellent attendance and very positive attitudes to learning.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly successful and is a strong feature of the school. Relationships between pupils and staff are very strong. This is a very caring school that caters for the needs of all pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop provision for outdoor learning in the early years.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and, as a result, leads a highly effective and cohesive team driven to provide the best education for pupils at the school. Leaders' and governors' accurate view of school performance has helped them to concentrate the efforts of all staff on actions leading to rapid progress of pupils. The school is a caring, inclusive establishment at the heart of the community.
 - Leaders check rigorously the quality of teaching and hold teachers to account for the progress of all pupils. Leaders, teachers and governors share the role of measuring impact. Regular 'Enquiry Walks' undertaken by staff to evaluate, in detail, specific aspects of the school's work are an excellent example of how staff work together to judge what works and what does not, making changes as a result.
 - Middle leaders are highly effective and enthusiastic in developing teaching and learning in different subject areas. They are supported to reflect on their roles through regular training and opportunities to meet with staff from other schools.
 - The headteacher ensures frequent opportunities for staff to compare the work of pupils to ensure accurate assessment and to plan next steps in learning for pupils. She has created a reflective and supportive professional climate, where staff discuss and debate their approaches to teaching frequently. Staff really appreciate the chance to develop under the watchful eye of the headteacher. The headteacher supports another school, sharing expertise on leadership and aspects of the school's performance.
 - Staff work extremely hard to ensure pupils experience a varied and rich curriculum. Pupils take part in a wide range of activities and experiences linked to the arts, to enterprise and to understanding diversity. Poetry competitions, participation in the Young Voices choir, visits to museums and galleries, growing food on the allotment, or feeding the school's chickens, for example, all contribute to the huge range of planned opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence and knowledge. Pupils take part in many sports and older pupils attend an outdoor residential centre to experience more challenging adventurous activities. Pupils have visited places of worship, attended a performance by an African choir, reflected on different faiths in lessons and assemblies and taken part in Diwali and Hindu 'feasts'. These experiences have helped pupils to develop positive attitudes and high levels of tolerance and respect for others.
 - Leaders' work to promote pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain is very successful. Pupils are encouraged to discuss the 'value of the month' with their parents. Pupils are frequently encouraged to think about spiritual, moral and social values through displays in school, during assemblies and in lessons. In one lesson observed, older pupils were considering sensitively the impact of the Paris shootings on the lives of people who live there.
- **The governance of the school**
- Governors have an accurate view of how pupils' attainment compares to other pupils nationally. They seek external views of how well the school is doing and use this information to check rigorously on the work of school leaders. Governors are present regularly in school and visit classrooms to support their evaluation.
 - Governors ensure teachers' effectiveness is clearly linked to pay and progression. They make sure that challenging targets are set for the headteacher and that all actions taken will impact well on pupils' learning.
 - Governors track the impact of pupil premium funding and the achievement of pupils eligible for support through this funding. Governors check that the primary school sport funding is used effectively to increase access to sports and specialist coaching in school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding at the school is underpinned by risk assessments, procedures, and policy. All staff have been trained and as a result understand fully their safeguarding duties. Governors and the headteacher have been trained in safe recruitment practices.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Teachers display strong subject knowledge, questioning pupils very effectively to promote pupils' deeper understanding. Teachers take considerable care to devise resources to ensure that pupils are tackling work

that is appropriate to their ability. This attention to detail is resulting in pupils of all ages working productively and making good and often rapid progress in lessons.

- Teachers plan sequences of lessons that offer pupils the opportunity to practise new skills in several different ways, encouraging greater mastery. This is a particular strength of teaching in mathematics. Tasks are set which challenge pupils and develop their ability to work independently.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is highly effective in helping pupils to make a rapid start in reading and writing. Additional adults provide disabled pupils and those with special educational needs with additional lessons in phonics or reading and this is supporting them to make at least good progress.
- All pupils are encouraged to read a novel in addition to their school reading book, and pupils enjoy 'ERIC' (everyone reading in class) sessions. Teachers have recently reviewed the teaching of reading and have made adjustments so that even more pupils can develop increasingly advanced reading skills. As a result of these adjustments, pupils read widely and often and by the end of Year 6 their comprehension skills are very well developed.
- Teachers' planning and teaching of writing lessons is highly effective. Teachers are creating successfully a writing culture beginning in early years where there are many reasons to write. In one lesson observed, pupils were studying poetic devices, performing well-chosen poems successfully, prior to writing their own. All pupils are proud of their 'writing journal' in which they are encouraged to write freely without formal input from teachers. As pupils move through school they are supported to express and explore their ideas before writing creatively. Consequently, pupils write frequently and to a high standard.
- Pupils are acting on their teacher's advice to make improvements to their work. Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about the marking policy and really want to achieve an A1, the highest accolade for presentation and effort.
- Additional adults work extremely well in tandem with the teacher to support pupils in learning and have the same high expectations of what pupils will achieve. They challenge sympathetically and question pupils, ensuring they do not fall behind.
- Pupils receive regular homework to support their learning effectively in reading, spelling and mathematics. In addition, pupils choose more creative homework tasks from a half-termly grid. Pupils embrace the chance to show their learning in a variety of ways and examples of homework are displayed with great pride in school. A very small number of parents feel that pupils receive too much homework but the view of the inspector and of pupils themselves is that the homework they do helps to consolidate pupils' learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are confident learners and display excellent attitudes. Teachers' work to encourage pupils' resilience in learning is very effective and pupils show high levels of independence in tackling their school work.
- Leaders' work to help pupils understand when the impact of their actions has been very successful. Pupils exhibit high levels of sensitivity towards others and understand the importance of being kind. Pupils have regular opportunities to reflect and write comments to be displayed on the 'Tree of Wonder' for example, recording the qualities they would see in a good friend.
- Leaders promote healthy living very effectively. For example, pupils are encouraged to run twelve laps of the playground, 'the daily mile', every day. Staff have observed an increase in the fitness and alertness of pupils as a result of this regular activity. Pupils are taught about e-safety, road safety, 'bikeability' (cycle safety) and drug abuse. As a result, pupils report that they know how to keep safe in school and in their community.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Teachers are highly effective in promoting good behaviour so that incidences of poor behaviour are rare. Pupils show high levels of self-discipline and understand why they must not disrupt the learning of others. Pupils understand the importance of school and all say that they love coming to school. Pupils of all ages show respect for others, listening well to the views of their peers in lessons.

- No time is wasted in lessons because pupils are very responsive to the direction of their teachers and encouraged to maximize the time spent learning.
- Pupils express huge pride in being a pupil at Thurlstone and say they have lots of friends. Parents express great confidence in the way staff deal with fall-outs or misbehaviour and pupils say that although they may occasionally fall out, it is soon forgotten. Bullying is extremely rare and as a result this is a happy school where pupils of all ages play well together.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Current pupils make at least expected progress and a large proportion make more than expected progress across all year groups in reading, writing and mathematics. The most-able pupils achieve very well. Pupils' work in other areas of the curriculum shows that often pupils are working above the standards expected for their age. This means that pupils are exceptionally well prepared to move on to the next stage of their education.
- From their starting points, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make very good progress across school. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is in line with their peers in school and above other pupils nationally.
- Children enter Reception with knowledge and skills typically expected for their age. Excellent progress is made in the Reception class and children enter Year 1 with skills above those expected for their age. The vast majority of pupils, well above the proportion seen nationally, reached the expected standard in the Year 1 check on phonics.
- In 2015, around half the Year 6 pupils attained higher than the expected standard in mathematics and writing. This cohort, a quarter of whom had special educational needs, achieved impressive outcomes as a result of consistently strong teaching over time.
- Pupils excel in writing with the most able pupils making exceptional progress. Pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar is also much stronger than typically found at the end of Key Stage 2.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- This is a setting that is highly responsive to children's needs. The leader of early years has a very clear view of the strengths of the provision. She uses regular observations and accurate assessment to make daily changes to the tasks that children will do, so that all children make rapid progress. Quality provision indoors helps children to develop independence. Issues with the building make continuous access to outdoor provision difficult to supervise, restricting opportunities to learn outdoors. Leaders and governors have plans to improve outdoor facilities for the early years in summer 2016.
- Teaching in the early years is leading to outstanding progress. Staff have excellent subject knowledge and are excited by their work. Teachers and teaching assistants question children sensitively to promote deeper understanding. Adults work effectively with small groups or individual children to ensure that children learn and develop as rapidly as possible.
- Teachers plan well for the needs of disadvantaged children and as a result disadvantaged children progress at the same rate as other children. A higher than average proportion of children leave Reception ready for the learning in Year 1.
- Children are highly motivated and display good levels of concentration. They behave well and enjoy playing alongside others.
- Staff are careful to minimise risks to children and appropriate risk assessments and care policies are in place.
- Teachers' work to involve parents in their child's education is highly effective. Parents are given an individual log-in for an online portal, so at any time they can see their child's learning and development information as well as read how they can further support their child at home.

School details

Unique reference number	106588
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10001195

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	136
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Sarah Field
Headteacher	Charlotte Gibbins
Telephone number	01226 762018
Website	http://www.thurlstoneprimary.co.uk/
Email address	c.gibbons1@barnsley.org
Date of previous inspection	14–15 September 2010

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average primary school with slightly more girls than boys on roll.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard that sets the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and members of the governing body.
- A phone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Pupils' learning was observed in all classes. Three lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- The inspector took account of 38 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View). She also talked to parents at the start of the school day.
- The views of staff were taken into account through a meeting and through 4 responses to the online staff questionnaire.
- The inspector spoke with pupils in a meeting, in lessons and around school.

Inspection team

Lesley Butcher, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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