

Thythorn Field Community Primary School

Bideford Close, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 2QU

Inspection dates 2–3 February 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and governors are ambitious for the school. They want the pupils to do well.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They show great determination to identify and make further improvements.
- Effective use is made of partnerships to develop teacher's skills and to improve the provision for pupils at the school.
- This is a highly inclusive school. Nine pupils who are on roll at Birkett House special school are very well integrated into daily school life at Thythorn Field.
- The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers plan lessons that engage pupils' interest.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. They are reflective and thoughtful.
- Pupils' personal development is good and they display positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They move around school in a sensible and orderly way.
- Outcomes for pupils are good. Pupils are making good progress from their starting points. In lessons they work with purpose.
- In the early years, children are making good progress from their starting points. This is because teachers are focusing closely on their early reading, writing and number skills.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. Parents agree that their children are safe and well cared for.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- School leaders do not track the progress of all pupils systematically enough. Hence, they miss some who could be making more progress.
- Teachers do not always intervene quickly enough if some pupils find the work too easy. This means that their progress slows.
- The coordination of work with pupils with special educational needs or disability is not fully developed. Some interventions are not being monitored sharply enough for leaders to know how effective they are.
- The outdoor provision for the Reception class is underdeveloped. It is not used well to promote children's learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers intervene quickly if some pupils find the work too easy to provide them with work that is more challenging.
- Develop the leadership of the school further by ensuring that:
 - leaders check thoroughly how well pupils are progressing so that interventions or additional challenge are provided quickly enough and help more pupils to make rapid progress.
 - the co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs or disability is carried out to full effect.
- Develop the outdoor area that is used by the reception class so that it can be used purposefully to further children's learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has created a highly inclusive culture where everyone is cared for at Thythorn Field. The staff work well together as a team and they all want the best for the pupils in their care.
- Senior leaders monitor teaching and learning well through observing lessons and looking at pupils' books regularly. They have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The management of staff performance is effective. Teachers and support staff have regular reviews of their performance with the headteacher. She provides them with appropriate professional development opportunities and checks the progress they are making against the targets she has set for them.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of subjects for pupils to study. They are brought to life through experiences such as a trip to Bosworth Battlefield when pupils were learning about King Richard III. There are regular visitors to school, including a group to teach pupils about African drumming which enhanced pupils' learning during a topic called 'Amazing Africa'.
- The eye-catching displays around the school showcase the high-quality artwork that pupils have produced, including seaside scenes, The Tudors and Viking boats.
- Fundamental British values are promoted well. The behaviour management system, 'Magic 123', is clearly understood by pupils. Pupils say that it helps them to understand why rules are important and must be followed to keep everyone safe. Pupils vote for their classmates to be members of the School Council. In Years 4 and 5, the Class Councils have been instrumental in organising events such as a reading afternoon for parents and grandparents to attend.
- The pupil premium funding is well used to make sure disadvantaged pupils make good progress. The headteacher has joined a group formed by the local authority to look at best practice in using this fund to ensure that pupils gain the most benefit. This is typical of the headteacher's outward-looking approach to school improvement.
- The additional government funding for primary school sport is well used. Opportunities for pupils to participate in sports and events, such as badminton and a swimming gala, have been created for the first time. Sports coaches have been employed through the grant and this has helped teachers improve their skills in teaching this subject. Cheerleading, multisports and street dance clubs are popular with pupils.
- The headteacher has created a culture where everyone is listened to. Pupils say that they enjoy school and that they feel safe. They trust the adults to look after them.
- The coordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs or disability is at an early stage of development. This is because the coordinator was recently appointed. She has begun the process of keeping a close track on the progress these pupils make in order to be sure the provision they receive is absolutely right for them. There is more to do to establish the best practice and this is readily acknowledged by leaders and governors.
- Plans are in place for the school to accommodate Year 6 pupils from September 2016 for the first time. School leaders and governors have actively sought out advice and support from local schools to make sure that they are well prepared for when this happens.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body has recently reconstituted. Governors have a broad range of skills and experience. This means they are able to both challenge and support leaders to be able to bring about improvements to the school.
 - The governors are very ambitious for the school. They have formed several committees that meet regularly to check closely on specific aspects of the school's performance, including one that focuses only on pupil premium and primary sport funding. They all report to the full governing body. Minutes of meetings show that governors ask challenging questions.
 - Governors visit the school to see it in action for themselves. They have recently put plans in place to formalise these visits further in order to hold leaders to account even more robustly.
 - Governors make sure that arrangements for managing staff performance are rigorously carried out.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff receive appropriate training and they know what to do to raise a concern if they have to. Leaders have been effective in creating a culture where pupils know that they have someone to talk to if they are worried or upset, secure in the knowledge that an adult will help them.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching across the school is good. Teachers have established clear routines and high expectations. Pupils respond immediately to instructions given by the teacher. They move from one activity to another without fuss so no time is wasted during the school day.
- Pupils get off to a brisk start every morning because teachers provide purposeful activities, such as handwriting or spelling, for them to complete as they come into school. This sets the tone for the day of learning ahead.
- Teachers explain to pupils what they are learning and why it is important. For example, pupils who were completing a comprehension exercise knew that it would help them with their reading, while others who were drawing dots on a page in columns and rows knew that it would help them understand multiplication.
- Teaching assistants provide skilful support to pupils across the school. They support pupils effectively by offering clear explanations to make sure pupils understand what they are doing and make good progress. They work alongside pupils who need additional support during whole-class sessions to make sure all pupils can join in with the learning.
- Teachers create opportunities for pupils to improve their writing. They demonstrate clearly how this can be done. Pupils are encouraged to use dictionaries. Some pupils were seen editing their work in pairs to include specific features such as metaphors and similes. For other pupils, capital letters and full stops were the order of the day. Consequently, the standard of pupils' writing is improving over time.
- Reading is taught well. There is a strong focus on promoting a love of reading throughout the school. Recently introduced reading logs are well kept, with parents and pupils contributing to them. Older pupils' reading logs show that several pupils have already read 25 books this year. They are rightly proud of this achievement. Pupils use the school library at lunchtime to choose books they would like to read.
- Pupils use their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) well when they are reading. This is because it is systematically taught to them.
- Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to solve problems in mathematics and for them to use their reasoning skills. In one class, younger pupils were solving number sequence problems. An additional challenge had been set for the pupils to create a number problem for the teacher to solve. One pupil excitedly told the inspector, 'I can't wait to do this! Mine's going to have the number 500 in it!'
- Teachers typically plan work of different levels to match the ability of pupils. However, they do not always notice when a task is too easy for some pupils in order to provide additional challenge quickly. This means that some pupils do not make as much progress as they could.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Most pupils sustain concentration well in this open plan building, demonstrating an interest in their learning.
- Pupils take their responsibilities around school as library monitors or in setting up the hall for lunch and assembly seriously. They carry out these duties with care.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They listen well in class and show perseverance when completing a task that is challenging for them. For example, pupils were observed solving problems in mathematics that required them to draw upon skills they had previously learned, such as calculating percentages and considering patterns in numbers. Pupils cooperated well together in pairs and in small groups to complete this task, willingly helping each other along the way.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a real strength of the school. Pupils enjoy learning about different cultures. They are able to talk knowledgeably about different places of worship. If pupils choose to do so, they have the opportunity to learn to play musical instruments and participate in sporting activities.
- Pupils enjoy finding out about inspirational people, such as the astronaut Tim Peake. During the inspection, pupils learned about the scientist Alexander Fleming's accidental discovery of penicillin in a thought-provoking assembly which focused on things that might seem like a failure working out well in the end.

- Nine pupils who are on roll at Birkett House special school attend Thythorn Field every day. They are included in mainstream classes when it is appropriate for them to learn alongside their peers, but are taught by staff from Birkett House at other times. This arrangement serves to increase pupils' understanding of the needs of others as the pupils work and play together very well.
- Pupils enjoy raising money for charities through events such as cake sales and wearing a Christmas jumper. They told inspectors, 'It means we can improve other people's lives. It teaches us to be kind and to look out for other people.'
- Pupils are developing an understanding of how to stay safe when they are using the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They consistently apply the school's behaviour policy, 'Magic 123'. As a result, it is well understood by all pupils. Pupils of all ages said they thought it was applied fairly.
- Pupils conduct themselves very well around school. Even the very youngest pupils line up sensibly without needing to be prompted by an adult. Pupils walk around school quietly. They are polite and respectful to each other and to adults.
- The school is a calm and orderly place in which to learn. Inspectors saw no incidents of low-level disruption. There is a harmonious atmosphere on the playground, where pupils play with equipment such as hoops, run around or walk and talk together before they make a prompt return to class ready to begin the next lesson.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare, but they are confident that if someone is unkind they can tell an adult, who will deal with it promptly.
- School leaders are rigorous in tackling poor attendance. Classes with high levels of attendance are celebrated in assembly. This raises the importance of attendance for pupils and motivates them to come to school every day. As a result, attendance is broadly in line with national averages and persistent absence has reduced significantly and is now well below national averages.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- School information shows that many pupils start school with skills and knowledge that are below that typically expected for children of their age.
- Pupils' achievement in phonics is in line with the national averages, indicating good progress from starting points.
- Pupils' books and current school assessment information show that pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics this year.
- The most-able pupils are usually well challenged in lessons. The proportion of these pupils achieving the higher levels in reading and mathematics is broadly in line with national averages and higher than national averages in writing by the end of Key Stage 1.
- Although the numbers of disadvantaged pupils in each year group is small, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 in 2015 was greater than that of other pupils nationally.
- The numbers of pupils with special educational needs or disability in each year group is also small, but most recent school information shows that they are making expected progress.
- School information shows that by the end of Year 5, most pupils have made good progress from their starting points and most pupils have reached age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.
- New systems are in place to assess and track pupils' progress. Teachers have received training so that they can use it to track the progress of pupils in their class. However, school leaders are not using these to check sharply enough the progress of each pupil on a regular basis. This means they do not know which interventions are working well or which pupils would benefit from more support. Consequently, some pupils do not make rapid progress.

Early years provision

is good

- Most children start school with skills that are typically below those expected of children their age, particularly in reading, writing and number.
- The staff work well together as a cohesive team. They have established a welcoming environment, with clear routines so that children can settle quickly into school life.
- The teacher with responsibility for the early years communicates well with the pre-school settings of the children who are due to start school in order to gather as much information as she can about them. She forges close links with parents by offering home visits and organising events for parents to visit school before their child starts school. Useful information is written on a whiteboard near the door so that parents know what their child has been doing that day.
- The early years leader knows the children well. She collects assessment information about children's achievements. Children's learning journeys and workbooks capture what they are able to do. However, there is no formal system for all the staff in the reception class, or for parents, to contribute to assessments. This means that some children's achievements may be missed.
- The early years leadership has prioritised the development of children's early skills in reading, writing and number to help them to reach the right standards for their age. Hence, the staff team systematically develop children's skills in these areas throughout the day. Assessment information in school so far this year shows that children are making good progress from their starting points. The leader predicts that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of this year will be significantly higher than in previous years, when it has been below national average. Children were making good progress in their lessons.
- Children are able to work well together and on their own because staff provide a wide range of activities to promote children's learning. These are balanced between those that adults lead and those that children choose to do. Children were observed completing mazes to practice their pencil skills. They used their newly acquired phonics skills to write simple words or solve puzzles on the computer. Adults work with children for short bursts of time to practice reading, writing and numbers appropriate to their level of ability.
- The outdoor area for the reception class is not well used. At present it is mainly used as a play area for children. Staff do not routinely plan purposeful opportunities for children to learn outdoors.
- Children are motivated to write and practice their phonic skills by posting the words they have written into the class postbox. Each morning, the teacher celebrates their achievements with the whole class, who cheerfully applaud their peers while they put well-earned stickers on their chart.
- The teacher skilfully used a puppet, Marvin the mouse, to teach children about leaving spaces between their words and finishing a word when they are writing. Children giggled and thoroughly enjoyed the session where they helped Marvin to improve his writing.
- Phonics is well taught in the early years. Children worked in groups so that their learning was well matched to their level of ability. Some children were successfully using plastic letters to form three-letter words while others were well supported as they blended sounds together to make longer words.
- Children behave well and have good attitudes to their learning. They cooperate well together for sustained periods of time. For example, a group of four children were playing a game that involved rolling a dice to move wooden mice towards the middle of a board. The children were able to explain the game clearly to the inspector before one child handed the dice to her friend, declaring, 'It's your turn!'
- Children learn in a safe environment. Staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding and first aid. Staff were observed dismissing the children at the end of the day, one at a time, as the teacher spotted the adult who was collecting them on the playground.

School details

Unique reference number	119993
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10001187

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	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Wilson
Headteacher	Cary Ralph
Telephone number	0116 2889040
Website	www.thythornfield.org.uk
Email address	office@thythornfield.leics.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 January 2011

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is lower than average. The pupil premium funding is received for pupils who are looked after by the local authority or are entitled to free school meals.
- The school has close links with Birkett House special school, which enables nine pupils to attend Thythorn Field full time. These pupils are accompanied by staff from the special school.
- Pupils currently leave Thythorn Field at the end of Year 5. This is changing so that from September 2016, pupils will remain at the school until the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 10 lessons or parts of lessons. Five of these were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- The lead inspector visited all classrooms with the headteacher to see short periods of learning taking place.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, talked to groups of pupils about their work and observed them at playtime. They observed an assembly and part of lunchtime in the hall where pupils were eating.
- Inspectors spoke to the Chair of Governors and other governors. They also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- In addition, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors took account of 24 views of parents from the online survey, Parent View, and spoke to parents as they brought their children to school in the morning and on the telephone.
- The team took account of 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including those relating to safeguarding, minutes of governors' meetings, the school's self-evaluation and development plans, the most recent pupils' assessment information and documents relating to teachers' performance management.

Inspection team

Di Mullan, lead inspector
Frances Le Pla

Her Majesty's Inspector
Ofsted Inspector

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