

Thoresby Primary School

Thoresby Street, Kingston-upon-Hull HU5 3RG

Inspection dates

14–15 June 2016

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 drives continuous improvement in all areas of the school's work with highly effective and calm precision. The complex and ever-changing nature of pupils' differing needs, combined with the challenge of recruiting high-quality teachers, has inspired innovative solutions ensuring outstanding outcomes for all pupils.
- Leaders, governors and the Hull Collaborative Academy Trust (HCAT) provide high-quality challenge and support for teachers at the earliest stages of their careers and for those who are more experienced. This results in outstanding teaching so that pupils make outstanding progress.
- Leaders have made sure the wide range of subjects studied and how they are taught are based on solid research into what works well. Pupils are immersed in projects and activities that inspire them to think deeply and discuss persuasively. This builds up their resilience to keep trying when things are hard to understand.
- All staff go to great lengths to ensure there is minimal difference between the progress made by different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is due to precise checks on what pupils know and understand and expert use of resources to make sure gaps in learning are plugged.
- Pupils' behaviour and personal development is exceptional. Pupils learn to understand the impact their choices make on other people because all staff consistently use the same approach. Pupils learn to manage their own behaviour and are sensitive to the needs of others.
- Pupils are clear about why they feel safe in school and they know who will help them. They learn how to keep themselves safe in lots of different ways. Staff work tirelessly to protect pupils from harm and to nurture those who have experienced neglect.
- The early years provision is exceptional. Leaders have ensured a sea-change since the last inspection. Children are absorbed in learning because the provision entices and intrigues them.
- From starting points lower than in most schools, pupils reach high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. A very high proportion of pupils are on track to reach and exceed the standards expected for their ages this year.
- Thoresby School is a constant in an ever-changing community. The school is overwhelmingly supported by parents, staff and all who share in pupils' successes because it adds significant value to pupils' life experiences.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Achieve even better outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities by sharpening how leaders and teachers track individual pupils' progress in reading, writing, mathematics and their individually planned outcomes arising from their additional needs.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher's exceptional leadership is rooted in an absolute belief that all pupils can develop effective learning skills. This unerring commitment has enabled senior leaders, teachers and all other staff to ensure that pupils' rapid progress leads to outstanding achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, their personal development and a host of other subjects.
- Challenges stemming from a significant number of pupils joining and leaving the school at different times, local difficulties in recruiting teachers and a high proportion of vulnerable pupils are not seen as barriers to success. Leaders approach these challenges with spirited innovation, a passion for evidence-based research and creativity. The result is a skilful mix of solutions, balancing consistency with flexibility, leading to outstanding outcomes for all groups of pupils.
- Senior leaders follow the Hull Collaborative Academy Trust (HCAT) principles of securing excellence in teaching through a balance of challenge and support. In response to difficulties in recruiting teachers, leaders are actively involved in HCAT Teaching School's initial teacher training programme. Targeted support for teachers at all stages of their careers is extremely effective. This includes opportunities to innovate and research. Staff universally appreciate the support and opportunities they receive. Teachers at the early stages of their careers describe the support as providing 'stabilisers' while they develop their craft.
- Pupils' learning is enriched through the wide range of subjects studied. Parents, staff and pupils talk passionately about 'Kaleidoscope', an annual celebration of diversity which deepens pupils' already extensive knowledge of the world. All aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are threaded through pupils' daily experiences. They develop enquiring, thoughtful minds, spontaneously continuing debates started in class at playtime, for example about the value of funding space exploration. Pupils develop as citizens of the world, as well as of Britain, ready to think about solutions to problems and respecting the rights and values of other people.
- Leaders and governors are fully aware of, and meet, all their duties under equality legislation. They are deeply committed to pupils' rights to an education that will improve their lives. The resulting activities to ensure disadvantaged pupils, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make progress that is as good as, if not better than, other pupils are successful.
- Parents speak highly of this school. This includes parents newly arrived in the country and parents of pupils who have been admitted to the school following difficulties in other schools.
- As well as active leadership within HCAT, the headteacher and other staff have provided hugely beneficial support to another school outside the trust, having a significant impact on that school's journey to good.
- The school is a founding member of HCAT and since 2013 has continued to give and receive support from the growing number of schools within the trust. Uniquely, all staff talk enthusiastically of the benefits they and the pupils gain from being part of HCAT. Challenge to leaders from the school improvement arm of HCAT contributes to the continued drive for doing even better.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have a deep commitment to the school. They make decisions based on their detailed knowledge of the school, the community it serves and the wide range of issues the pupils face.
 - Governors challenge the headteacher to ensure proposed changes have the desired impact through robust performance management. Teachers are rewarded for exceptional work and are clear about leaders' high expectations of all staff.
 - Governors make thorough checks on the information provided by leaders. This supports their effective planning for the use of additional resources, for example the pupil premium and primary PE and sports grant.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders, governors and all staff have an unwavering commitment to ensure pupils are safe. Leaders ensure all necessary checks are made and recorded when staff are recruited. Training is up to date and the knowledge gained used to support pupils, including when there are concerns about radicalisation or female genital mutilation. Work with other agencies is timely and robust. Leaders do not shy away from challenging other services if they think more should be done to support a pupil.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Pupils' enthusiasm for learning and the rapid progress they make is a direct result of the outstanding teaching they experience.
- Accurate, finely tuned assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do in relation to what is expected for their ages are used to inform planning and teaching. Teachers and other staff are skilled at spotting when pupils are struggling or when they have 'got it'. They go on to provide the support pupils need to grasp the concept being taught or give extra challenges to deepen pupils' understanding.
- Across different subjects and all year groups, effective teaching is characterised by teachers' extensive subject knowledge, including fluency in Spanish and strong science knowledge. All staff use skilled questioning to check whether pupils have fully understood and to provoke pupils' thinking. This deepens pupils' understanding and enables them to use and apply what they know in different ways.
- Teachers' understanding of the sequence of learning different skills, particularly in mathematics and writing, supports pupils' rapid progress. In writing, pupils are encouraged to review their own work and confidently accept other pupils' and the teacher's comments. Pupils then improve their writing and show pride in the final piece. The most able pupils flourish in response to this approach.
- In previous years, the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling was less strong. This has been significantly improved this year. Teachers apply the same high expectations of pupils in writing across all subjects. Pupils were amused to think that anything but their best would be accepted when asked if writing in topic work was easy.
- Pupils develop a love of, and skill in, reading from early years work on talking about everyday sounds to accurately taught phonics (letters and the sounds they make). The use of phonics skills combined with other approaches is contributing to pupils' improving spelling skills.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are taught, for the most part, alongside other pupils because pinpoint accurate assessment allows teachers to plan for all pupils' progress. Teaching assistants provide a beneficial balance between direct help and more distance supervision to allow the pupils to develop their independence skills.
- The significant number of pupils who arrive during the school year, either from other schools or because they are newly arrived in the country and are learning English as an additional language, receive exceptional teaching. Each pupil is accurately assessed on arrival and teachers quickly grasp the gaps in their knowledge and understanding. They go on to plan activities that address the gaps and misconceptions successfully.
- Project-based homework, alongside basic skills practice, is used to stimulate the pupils' love of learning. Leaders are careful to ensure disadvantaged pupils do not miss out and provide after-school clubs with a wealth of resources for pupils to enjoy the same extra independent research opportunities that other pupils enjoy.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Restorative practice is used consistently throughout the school starting in Nursery. The focus on calm discussions leads pupils to understand how their choices affect other people and to accept responsibility for their actions. One pupil's words sum up the views of everyone: 'circles always works'.
- The diversity of new pupils' backgrounds is celebrated through the 'community board' showing pupils' photographs next to their country of birth on a world map. Pupils accept roles as buddies to those who are newly arrived and keep an eye out for each other in the playground. All pupils learn how to manage their feelings and emotions quickly. This means they all enjoy a level of independence from adults which further enhances their personal development.
- The well-trained and knowledgeable business manager leads on health and safety developments across HCAT as well as at Thoresby. Risks are managed effectively so pupils experience a range of challenging activities safely. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a variety of different situations including online. Underpinning all personal safety training is the resilience and confidence the school instils in pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Attendance has improved from a good level at the time of the previous inspection to a level above that achieved in most schools, and has continued to improve even further this year. The number of pupils who are frequently absent is very small and their families receive a high level of support to improve their commitment to getting their children to school.
- Leaders make sure they keep a close eye on pupils who arrive late and, as a result of their actions, the number of late arrivals continues to fall. Targeted support has led to no disadvantaged pupils arriving late, so they get the maximum benefit from their time at school.
- During lessons pupils demonstrate a high level of enthusiasm for learning. Very rarely do they lose focus on either the teachers' explanations or their work. The youngest pupils are so engaged in their purposeful play they do not lift their heads when visitors arrive.
- When moving around school and during social times, pupils are lively and need occasional reminders to slow down as their enthusiasm for the next activity overtakes them. However, they are kind, courteous and thoughtful young people whose behaviour is a credit to them and the school. During a wet play time pupils chose from a wide range of activities, some choosing to carry on working. Minimal staff supervision was required as pupils behaved so well.
- Pupils say there are some incidents of bullying and some 'falling out' or disputes about football. But, they are very clear that 'circles work'. Pupils are extremely confident that either they or the staff will sort out any problems as they crop up.
- Parents are almost universal in their confidence that behaviour in the school is outstanding and that leaders and other staff quickly address any concerns. A very small number of parents indicated that bullying was not addressed but their view was completely outweighed by other parents, pupils and inspection evidence.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- In 2015, the proportion of pupils making more than expected progress over key stage 2 was higher than in most other schools. In addition, a significant number of disadvantaged pupils made more than expected progress when compared to other pupils in other schools. This means that despite their low starting points more pupils achieved the standard expected for their ages than in most other schools. This very positive picture has been developing over the last four years. A slight dip in 2014 was linked to the particular circumstances of pupils who joined the school in the latter stages of key stage 2. A check of pupils' workbooks, together with the school's detailed assessment information, indicates a sustained and rapid trajectory of improvement in standards.
- The standards reached over time by the end of key stage 1 were not as strong but did represent rapid progress from pupils' low starting points. Children's progress in early years has been improving year-on-year for the last three years, reflecting significant improvement in provision for the youngest pupils.
- The proportion of pupils who achieve the Year 1 check of phonics has risen year-on-year to reach the national average. This represents significant progress from pupils' starting points.
- Leaders' information, confirmed by the work in pupils' books, shows high proportions of pupils are on track to reach the standards expected for their age. In Year 6, the proportion of pupils working at a greater depth than expected is also high. Year-on-year, more pupils are catching up to, and exceeding, the expected standard.
- The precise tracking of individuals means that any pupils who fall behind are given the support they need. As a result, the gaps between disadvantaged and other pupils, boys and girls, pupils for whom English is an additional language and English speakers only, are closing quickly. This year, most disadvantaged pupils have made more progress in spelling than other pupils. The most able disadvantaged pupils thrive because of excellent teaching and a good proportion work at a greater depth than expected.
- The significant number of pupils who arrive at the school mid-year and mid key stage, including those new to speaking English and new to education, are exceptionally well supported and so make rapid progress. Teachers ensure any gaps in pupils' knowledge are plugged so they can move on with firm foundations to support their future learning. Teachers quickly identify the talents of newly arrived pupils and support them to achieve higher standards, even when they are new to English. Sharp assessment processes allow for newly arrived pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to have their additional needs identified and addressed.

- The inclusive nature of the school ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get the support and challenge needed to make rapid progress in academic areas as well as in their personal development. Progress is evident in pupils' books and parents are very positive about the provision for their children. However, leaders could do more to track the progress of these pupils, especially how much closer they get to the expectations for their age.
- Pupils are confident, resilient young people, well prepared for the next steps in education. This is because they can read and write fluently and develop mastery of mathematics, preparing them exceptionally well for new challenges. The transition of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is particularly well supported at an individual level to ensure their gains in learning are not lost.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- The highly knowledgeable and skilled early years leader, with support from other senior leaders, has taken satisfactory provision to outstanding in less than four years. The systems in place for recording and assessing children's progress are robust and accurate. Equally importantly, they are shared with children and their parents, who make valuable contributions to assessments over the year.
- The assessment information, shared through daily briefings, is used by all staff working seamlessly together to plan activities and interactions with children that will bring them on rapidly. This is particularly evident in the development of communication and language, and mathematics skills.
- Activities, both inside and outdoors, entice and intrigue children, allowing them to safely explore and extend their knowledge of how the world works. Staff nudge children's learning on by skilful well-placed questions and comments, but without stemming their enthusiasm or creativity.
- The school's approach to personal development and behaviour starts in the early years. Children are consistently and gently reminded about the choices they make and their impact on others. From the earliest stage they learn that chats in 'circles' resolve differences and celebrate achievements. Consequently, inspectors observed very young children, managing to learn how to share without direct adult support.
- Children say, and indicate through their responses to adults, that they feel safe. Parents are very positive about the provision for their children's well-being. All welfare requirements are met, including a key worker system so parents know who to talk to about their child. Leaders work intensely with parents to engage them in their children's education, with some success. Nearly half of the parents joined the 'stay and read' session during the inspection. Children were clearly enjoying sharing their emerging reading skills with their mums and dads.
- As a result of the outstanding provision, children who arrive either into the nursery class or reception class generally below the level of development typical for their age make rapid progress. Year on year, a greater proportion of children are reaching a good level of development. Children who have benefited from the provision for two years make more progress and many exceed the level of development expected. Children who are disadvantaged or who arrive from different countries with different language skills are supported well and the accurate assessment and targeted support ensures an increasing proportion make rapid progress.

School details

Unique reference number	139886
Local authority	City of Kingston-upon-Hull
Inspection number	10002854

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	496
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kris Dawson
Headteacher	Melissa Milner
Telephone number	01482 342972
Website	www.thoresbyprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@thoresby.hull.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 April 2012

Information about this school

- Thoresby is much larger than most primary schools. A higher than average proportion of pupils receive support through pupil premium funding. Pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- A much higher than average proportion of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. Twenty-nine different languages are spoken in the school.
- A significant proportion of pupils join the school at times other than the start of the school year. Many of these pupils have either experienced difficulties in their previous schools or are newly arrived to the country.
- The proportion of pupils who need support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than typical and the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities, or an education, health and care plan is in line with other schools.
- Children attend the Nursery class part time. A significantly larger group of children attend the Reception class full time.
- The school converted to an academy in April 2013 as a founding school of the Hull Collaborative Academy Trust. The headteacher is a director of the trust. The headteacher is also a local leader in education.
- The school has a significant number of nationally recognised awards.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons in every year group and in a range of subjects, for different amounts of time. On the first day of the inspection all the visits took place jointly with the headteacher. On the second day one of the many visits was held jointly with an assistant headteacher. Visits to the Nursery and Reception classes were joint visits with the early years leader.
- During visits to lessons, inspectors talked with pupils and looked at work in their books. Inspectors also talked with pupils at break time and held three different meetings with children from early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, members of the governing body and the chief executive officer and school improvement adviser for the Hull Collaborative Trust. A meeting was also held with the national leader of education who commissioned the headteacher to support another school in 2014/15.
- Meetings were held with middle leaders responsible for different subjects in school and teachers who are at the start of their careers. Inspectors met with teaching assistants and considered leaders' survey of staff views.
- The inspectors considered the views of 46 parents who responded to Parent View (Ofsted's online survey) and the free text responses to the same survey. Around 20 parents were spoken to as they arrived with their children at school.
- Inspectors reviewed school records and documents relating to all aspects of the school's work, including those relating to the recruitment and checks on staff employed by the school. Pupils' books and other work were also reviewed.

Inspection team

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Tracy Millard	Ofsted Inspector
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