

# Thornton Primary School

Main Street, Thornton, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 1AH

## Inspection dates

6–7 December 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The school has made rapid improvement since the previous inspection. Leaders and governors have successfully addressed the actions that were identified. They have a very secure understanding of the strengths of the school and aspects to further improve.
- The executive headteacher and the head of school share an ambitious and strategic approach and are determined in their drive to continue to improve the school further.
- The staff team work well together and are committed to making the school even better.
- Outcomes for pupils are improving rapidly. Pupils at key stages 1 and 2 achieve better results than pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning helps ensure that current pupils are making good progress in all subjects.
- Teaching is effective overall with some excellent practice. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to make learning fun and engaging for the pupils.
- Children make a good start to their school lives in the early years provision. They benefit from a caring environment and a wide variety of interesting and enjoyable activities.
- There is a broad and balanced curriculum which all pupils enjoy. This is enhanced by a variety of extra-curricular activities.
- Children who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are nurtured well and make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils are confident and happy in school. They take on many additional responsibilities with enthusiasm, which help prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- Staff know and care for their pupils very well and relationships are strong. Pupils feel safe and they are kept safe.
- Parents speak very positively about the school and recognise the many improvements made in recent years.
- Pupils generally behave well and show respect for adults and each other.
- In the most effective learning seen, there is clear evidence of the highest expectations for pupils to deepen their own learning and build resilience to keep striving to complete their best work. This is not yet consistent across the school.
- Although improving noticeably, a gap remains between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and the progress and attainment of others nationally.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - all staff have the highest expectations of what all pupils can achieve by firmly embedding a culture of challenge, so that pupils develop their resilience to challenge themselves and deepen their learning and sense of enquiry further
  - teachers share and learn from the most effective practice seen in the school and within the multi-academy trust.
- Improve outcomes further by enabling more of the disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able, to achieve similar progress and attainment to other pupils nationally.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The executive headteacher and the head of school have both been appointed since the previous inspection. They work very effectively as a team and have made rapid and considerable improvements to the school in a fairly short period of time.
- Senior leaders show much ambition for the school and are committed to sustaining all of the improvements made. They have established impressive systems for planning further school improvements and have produced accurate evaluations of the school. They monitor teaching and learning very regularly and effectively, which is helping to secure improvements.
- Parents speak very positively about the impact made by the changes of leadership. One parent summed this up by saying, 'the changes made have been amazing', while another parent said, 'the school has had a complete turnaround'.
- Senior leaders are ably supported by the middle leadership team members, who are regularly involved in the monitoring of teaching and learning. The team includes a very knowledgeable special educational needs coordinator, who has developed an effective system to ensure that there are timely interventions to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well by all staff. Leaders plan a range of opportunities for pupils to learn about faiths, cultures and traditions.
- Pupils show a good understanding of fundamental British values. These are referred to regularly in assemblies and teaching opportunities, and linked with the school's vision. This helps prepare pupils well for becoming positive citizens in modern Britain.
- The school has a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils' books and displays around the school show the wide variety of subject areas covered. Much learning is taught through a topic-based approach, such as The Mighty Mayans and Rotten Romans recently. This enables pupils to link their skills and learning across the curriculum. During the inspection, one class took a very active and energetic approach to learning about the human body's circulatory system in a science lesson. Pupils spoke of this with enthusiasm and an impressive level of knowledge.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium is being spent effectively. The funding is partly focused on employing specialists to work with pupils and to support staff to acquire additional skills to enhance their own teaching of PE. Pupils speak positively about the sports activities experienced and show a commitment to developing their skills in different physical activities.
- Leaders and governors use the relatively small allocation of pupil premium effectively, and subsidise this with additional funds to ensure that meaningful support for disadvantaged pupils can be provided. As a result, the progress of disadvantaged pupils has improved, although leaders acknowledge that there is additional work necessary to ensure that gaps in achievement are further reduced.
- While some minor inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and learning,

leaders are attending to these effectively and with systematic support and challenge. Leaders recognise the need to ensure that staff learn from each other and from the best practice evident in the school and across the multi-academy trust.

- Pupils do not always receive a suitable level of challenge to make the best possible outcomes. This has been identified by senior leaders and they are working to embed high expectations consistently in all lessons and in individual pupil interventions.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have played a positive and significant part in the improvements evident since the previous inspection report.
- Members of the governing body demonstrate an effective balance between the support and challenge they offer to the school. They visit classes regularly and have established strong links with teachers who lead specific subjects or other areas of responsibility.
- Governors receive detailed information from senior leaders about the use of pupil premium and physical education and sport premium funding. They have secure knowledge of the difference this additional funding is making to pupils' learning and progress.
- Governors appreciate the support and guidance offered by the multi-academy trust. They value the shared opportunities for training and staff development offered, which have enhanced their knowledge and skills, and those of school staff.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school maintains thorough and robust safeguarding documentation. The single central record is compliant. Leaders keep precise records which show effective and timely work with external agencies.
- Staff clearly understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. They receive regular training and timely updates of safeguarding practices. There is an effective system to report any concern, however slight, to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- The culture of safeguarding in the school is very evident. Pupils are safe and say that they feel safe. Parents show confidence that the school cares well for their children. Learning about how to keep safe is intrinsic for pupils across their school lives. For example, pupils speak confidently about internet safety and the anti-bullying activities that are undertaken regularly.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- The passion for quality learning shared by the executive headteacher and the head of school have secured significant improvements to teaching and learning since the previous inspection. Leaders monitor lessons closely and are very positive role models for other staff.
- The school's assessment system is well established and effective. The school regularly analyses and evaluates the progress of specific groups of pupils of all ages. This helps

ensure that all pupils receive timely and appropriate support to make further progress.

- The teaching staff work closely with their partner school colleagues, and other schools across the multi-academy trust. They value these opportunities to discuss age-specific challenges and compare planning and strategies with teachers of similar age pupils.
- The teaching of reading is effective. Teachers and other adults show secure and consistent phonics knowledge, which enables pupils to progress well. Pupils enjoy opportunities to discuss books with their peers through daily 'Reciprocal Reading' activities, which are helping to extend their comprehension skills.
- Writing is taught across the school through a variety of interesting topics. Teachers take many opportunities to include the key skills of English within the teaching and learning in other subjects.
- The teaching and learning in mathematics are effective. Pupils are able to develop their reasoning skills, with focused questioning and discussion. For example, in one challenging mathematics lesson, pupils were encouraged to speak about the processes used in their problem solving. Similarly, in another effective lesson, there was emphasis on using the class golden word, 'because', which helped pupils to explain their thought processes when solving mathematical problems.
- Pupils' books show a good range of curriculum areas, with consistent presentation and feedback. There is evidence that the pupils respond to feedback and act on the next steps given. This means that pupils' work shows good progress since the start of the year.
- Disadvantaged pupils, and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, receive regular individualised support. Their interventions are recorded in 'passports to learning', which show a variety of work having been undertaken with adult support. There is a good level of progress evident in the passports.
- In the most effective lessons, class teachers clearly have high expectations of all pupils, with challenges planned for all abilities.
- Where learning is less effective, there are some inconsistencies in the expectations of staff and the levels of challenge they offer to pupils. This means that some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not always make the best progress that they are capable of, or deepen their understanding and sense of enquiry sufficiently.
- In some books, it is evident that pupils have not developed their skills and resilience sufficiently in writing. They are given limited opportunities to write at length.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are happy and confident. They show much pride in their school and older pupils recognise the considerable improvements that have taken place in recent years. They have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school.
- All staff know the pupils very well and relationships across the school are strong. Pupils say that staff listen to them and take note of their views.

- Pupils are encouraged to take responsibilities around the school. They speak warmly of the 'job centre', which includes a variety of roles and responsibilities that pupils of all ages can apply for, and undertake if selected. The inspector also met the school ambassadors, who show creditable maturity and proudly explained their role in showing visitors around the school and leading the weekly celebration assemblies.
- Pupils appreciate the 'worry box' which they can use to share any concerns. They confirm that any issues or worries are quickly resolved by school staff.
- Pupils understand the importance of staying healthy. They know that it is important to eat a healthy diet and to stay active. They say that they enjoy taking part in physical education and enjoy the sports clubs and other opportunities that are offered.
- Parents who spoke to the inspector and responded to Parent View, as well as the school's own regular questionnaires, are very positive about the support that their children receive. They are confident that their children are happy and safe at school.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils generally behave well in and out of lessons. They speak confidently about the school's 'golden charter' of behavioural expectations. This is displayed prominently around the school and is referred to during lessons and at other times.
- All school staff consistently apply the school's behaviour policy. As a result, pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils move around the school sensibly and the atmosphere in school is calm and friendly.
- Pupils' attendance levels are similar to those seen nationally.
- There are few persistent absences. When necessary, leaders focus effectively on offering individualised support to pupils and their parents to help improve attendance.
- Senior leaders keep detailed records of any behaviour-related incidents. These are dealt with promptly and effectively, with a whole-staff team approach. There is strong pastoral support for pupils and their parents, which helps individuals to reflect on their actions and to make better choices.
- Pupils are very clear about the balance between rewards and consequences in the school. They recognise that sometimes their learning can be interrupted by low-level behavioural instances in some lessons.
- There have been a minority of more serious behavioural issues. Leaders have taken such instances very seriously and have acted promptly and in accordance with the school's behaviour policy.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

**Good**

- Outcomes for pupils at Thornton are improving quickly. There have been noticeable improvements to the achievement of pupils at key stages 1 and 2 since the previous inspection. In general, pupils now attain better than pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The results of the phonics screening check in Year 1 have been consistently above

those of pupils nationally in recent years. This reflects the consistent, quality teaching of early reading experienced by pupils.

- The progress of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is showing improvements in all year groups across the school. The school tracks individual pupils' progress carefully, with regular and focused interventions to ensure that pupils are progressing well.
- Current assessment information for Year 6 pupils shows that they are now working at a higher level than previously, and are making strong progress. Pupils are generally well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The progress made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is good. This is reflected by the targeted, individualised support given to these pupils to help them improve.
- Outcomes for pupils in all curriculum subjects demonstrate a similar drive for sustained improvements. This is supported by pupils using cross-curricular learning journey books, which helps to ensure that there is a consistency of standards across different subjects.
- The outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stages have shown improvements in 2017. However, gaps remain between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and those of others nationally. It is particularly apparent that disadvantaged pupils made significantly less progress in mathematics than other pupils in key stage 2, and no disadvantaged pupils attained greater depth in any subject.
- Pupils do not always achieve the best possible outcomes during lessons or series of lessons. This is because appropriate levels of challenge are not consistently applied to enable pupils to think deeply and to extend their learning and understanding.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- Children enter the school with levels of development broadly typical for their age. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the early years is consistently above that found nationally. This illustrates that children make good progress during their Reception Year and are well prepared to move into key stage 1.
- Leadership of the early years is good. The provision benefits from two knowledgeable and committed practitioners, who know the children well and plan engaging and interesting activities across the areas of learning.
- The staff take care of the children well and make sure that they are safe at all times.
- The school quickly identifies children who may have SEN and/or disabilities. These children are given prompt and effective support to help them settle well into school life.
- The support for disadvantaged children is managed well in the early years.
- A wide variety of learning opportunities are planned across the continuous provision. There are numerous opportunities for children to write independently in different contexts. For example, during the inspection, pupils were enjoying writing their own Christmas letters, addressing the envelopes and posting the letters.
- Children's learning journey books include a variety of work, and provide a clear picture

of purposeful learning and good progress. Parents can contribute to the learning journeys, which helps to quickly build strong and supportive links between school and home life for the children.

- There are daily opportunities for children to play and learn with older pupils, which helps develop their independence and cooperative skills. The children behave well and show respect for others.
- Opportunities are sometimes limited for pupils to enjoy independent, child-led activities in the outdoor area.

## School details

Unique reference number	140253
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10031157

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Brian Gratton
Headteacher	Alex Smythe
Telephone number	01530 230250
Website	<a href="http://www.thornton.leics.sch.uk">www.thornton.leics.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@thornton.leics.sch.uk">office@thornton.leics.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	29–30 April 2015

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is an academy and is a member of the Symphony Learning Trust.
- Thornton Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Children from the Reception Year to Year 2 are taught in single-age classes; pupils in Years 3 and 4, and in Years 5 and 6, are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The vast majority of children are of White British heritage. No pupils currently speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was undertaken by one inspector for two days.
- During the inspection, teaching and learning were observed in every class, and included joint observations with the executive headteacher and the head of school.
- The inspector observed the teaching of early reading skills and pupils were heard to read. The inspector talked with pupils about their school and looked at pupils' books in and out of lessons.
- The inspector held meetings with members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, the chair of the governing body and other governors.
- The inspector took into account the 24 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspector considered the 15 responses to an online survey for staff.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation summary; the school improvement plan; assessment information; leaders' reports and evaluations on the quality of teaching and learning; a wide range of pupils' work; minutes of governors' meetings; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Yvonne Watts, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

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