

Thomas A Becket Junior School

Glebeside Avenue, Worthing, West Sussex BN14 7PR

Inspection dates

4–5 December 2018

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leadership is effective. Leaders have successfully tackled variations in pupils' outcomes. Current pupils are making consistently good progress in a range of subjects.
- Governance is strong. The governing body knows what the school does well and what could be even better. Governors monitor leaders' actions well and hold them to account effectively.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Additional specialist teaching, particularly in music and physical education, is highly effective.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. A wide range of activities within both the school and the community ensure that pupils are ready for life in modern Britain.
- An extensive range of extra-curricular clubs and activities enriches pupils' learning. Pupils highly value these opportunities and participate eagerly.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to structure learning well and help pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy learning, listen attentively in class and work cooperatively with their peers. They model the school's values to a high standard.
- Pupils write for a wide range of purposes using rich vocabulary. However, standards of grammar, punctuation and spelling are not consistently high.
- Most disadvantaged pupils are making good progress from their starting points. The additional funding for these pupils is used effectively. However, leaders are aware that more needs to be done to improve the outcomes of the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders use a wide range of systems to monitor pupil progress. Some of these systems are not used robustly enough to quickly identify when progress slows.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further refine systems for monitoring pupil progress so that leaders have the clarity needed to address occasional dips in performance rapidly and effectively.
- Ensure that aspirations for the most able disadvantaged pupils are sufficiently high to accelerate their progress still further.
- Improve standards of writing by developing consistently high expectations of pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling across the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, with strong support from the assistant headteachers, leads the school well. Together, they have the highest aspirations for all and strive tirelessly to improve pupils' outcomes. Leaders have benefited from effective support from a national leader of education. This has helped them to become outward looking, learning from other schools while maintaining the existing strengths of the school.
- Expectations about the 'TAB' (Thomas A Becket) way are clear and understood, both by staff and pupils. This results in consistency across the school. Staff and pupils know what to expect. As a result, everyone is united in striving for the shared aspirations set out in the school vision. Morale is high. All the staff who responded to the Ofsted survey said they were proud to work at the school. Staff demonstrate a clear commitment to improving their practice, and leaders provide good-quality professional development.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Capable curriculum leaders use their skills and knowledge to plan learning that engages pupils and sparks their interest. Leaders enrich learning successfully, for instance by providing a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and educational visits. For example, during the inspection a group of Year 6 pupils dressed as Victorians excitedly set off for an experience day at a local manor house.
- Additional sports funding is used particularly well by leaders to inspire pupils to participate in physical activities. Pupils show great enthusiasm when taking part in tournaments, and relish competing on behalf of Thomas A Becket. Leaders' commitment to providing a wealth of enjoyable sporting activities ensures that pupils develop positive attitudes to physical activity.
- Leaders' work in developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is highly effective. Pupils are respectful and tolerant and demonstrate a keenness to be supportive and kind to each other. Leaders place clear emphasis on promoting the school's values, both in school and in the community. The curriculum has been well planned to provide rich opportunities to learn about different cultures and a range of religions.
- Leadership for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. Learning for this group of pupils is carefully planned and incorporates the views of parents, teachers and other professionals from within the school and beyond. The special educational needs coordinator ensures that these pupils receive the right support so that they can make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders show determination to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve successfully. A recent review of the use of the additional pupil premium grant funding has helped them to evaluate carefully the effectiveness of extra help to improve outcomes. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in a range of subjects because of the support they receive in a wide range of curriculum areas. Nevertheless, leaders rightly aspire to raising the progress of the most able disadvantaged pupils further so that more attain at the higher standards.

- Leaders have introduced a wide range of monitoring and evaluating systems across the school. This has helped to improve teaching and raise outcomes for pupils. However, sometimes these systems are not used regularly enough or sufficiently well to analyse progress information. When this happens, leaders do not have all the information they need to identify and ensure that any dips are addressed swiftly.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well. They visit regularly and organise themselves efficiently to monitor the school's effectiveness. They too have benefited from effective support from the local authority and a national leader of education. This has helped them to focus their work well and to ensure that between them they have the skills they need to discharge their responsibilities. They review a range of evidence, including pupils' progress information and reports from their external school improvement partners, to monitor and challenge leaders' work effectively. Importantly, they know what is working well and what leaders must do to improve the school further.
- Governors provide good oversight of the school's financial management. For instance, they know that the additional money the school receives for sports and for the pupil premium has a positive impact on improving outcomes for pupils. Governors have high aspirations for disadvantaged pupils. They track this group of pupils carefully and have an insightful knowledge of the challenges this group faces, including, for example, issues of attendance. Wisely, governors are sharpening their analysis further to understand better the progress made by the most able disadvantaged pupils throughout the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created a strong safeguarding culture that permeates throughout the school. When recruiting new staff, all appropriate background checks are made. This information is logged accurately on the school's single central record. The school's safeguarding practices meet statutory government guidelines.
- Leaders provide appropriate training to ensure that staff know how to identify children who might be at risk and what actions to take to keep them safe. They regularly review systems to ensure that all necessary information is recorded and reviewed in a timely fashion. The newly introduced systems have strengthened this process even further, allowing staff to track behaviour closely to identify early signs of bullying, or behaviour which may signify cause for concern. Timely updates ensure that staff know of any changes or developments in child protection matters. As a result, staff are suitably knowledgeable in protecting children from harm.
- Regular checks and updates are in place to help ensure that the large school site is well maintained and secure. Staff are meticulous in ensuring that all is as it should be to help keep pupils safe.
- Pupils learn well how to keep themselves safe. For instance, they know the potential risks posed by social media and playing games online. They know to keep personal information safe and to report anything they see on the internet that makes them feel unsafe or scared.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good throughout the school. Current pupils learn well across a range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use well to structure learning effectively. Clear sequences of learning build well on pupils' skills. Meaningful links are made between lessons and subjects. This helps pupils successfully to deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers ask pupils searching questions that extend their thinking or help to identify when pupils are confused. They tackle misconceptions well so that any confusion is quickly addressed. As a result, pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- The support provided by teaching assistants is effective. Teaching assistants build positive relationships with pupils. They ensure that they, too, question pupils carefully and encourage them to express their thoughts and ideas. For example, in an effective mathematics session a teaching assistant was supporting pupils making different angles with straws. Skilful questioning helped pupils to demonstrate and develop their understanding of acute and obtuse angles.
- The teaching of mathematics provides pupils with effective challenge. For instance, in Year 6, pupils were working on algebraic equations. Pupils grappled with the increasingly complex calculations and worked diligently to complete the problems accurately. New approaches to teaching mathematics are providing good opportunities for developing pupils' computation skills. For example, in a Year 3 multiplication-skills session pupils responded with excitement and enthusiasm to the challenge of demonstrating their increasing speed and accuracy of calculation.
- The wider curriculum provides exciting opportunities for pupils to learn in a range of subjects. For instance, specialist teaching enables pupils to develop confident skills in music. In one lesson, Year 5 pupils demonstrated awareness of musical notation, before applying those skills through exploring variations on a keyboard.
- Teaching is adapted well for pupils with SEND. Detailed planning and preparations ensure that these pupils receive learning support that is appropriate to their needs and level of ability. Leaders, teachers and other adults work together to ensure that pupils with SEND achieve well across the curriculum.
- Teachers keep a careful watch on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. They ensure that disadvantaged pupils are provided with extra support where it is needed. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are making increasingly good progress as they move up the school. Nevertheless, the most able disadvantaged pupils do not always have work which is sufficiently challenging for them.
- Teaching is not yet ensuring that pupils achieve as well as they should in some aspects of writing. Pupils have good opportunities to practise their writing for a range of purposes, study good writing from high-quality texts and write at length using rich and appropriate vocabulary. The curriculum provides plentiful opportunities to apply and develop writing. However, pupils do not always take enough care with their grammar, punctuation and spelling. Not enough care is taken with spelling 'homework' for it to be useful in developing pupils' skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is an industrious and harmonious place in which to learn because pupils are polite, considerate and kind to each other. They are proud of their school and keen to embody the values represented by the 'TAB' way. Pupils told inspectors, 'We work well together.'
- The myriad of opportunities for engagement in the wider life of the school, for instance as sports or music leaders, help develop pupils' confidence and wider interests. In this way, they are well prepared to take up the opportunities offered in the next stages of their education.
- Vulnerable pupils receive additional high-quality care that supports their emotional well-being and boosts their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are secure in knowing that their voice is listened to and that extra support is available from time to time should they need it.
- Parents and carers are confident that their children are well cared for at school. One parent writing on the Ofsted survey, Parent View, expressed a view typical of many, saying, 'The school is a happy and positive place that feels safe and welcoming to all.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils and uphold the school's behaviour policy fairly and consistently. Pupils respond well to this and model good behaviour, both in class and around the school.
- Pupils enjoy learning. They listen attentively to their teachers and to their peers. They relish sharing their thoughts and ideas together in lessons. Consequently, lessons are interactive, and pupils engage keenly and with confidence.
- Pupils told inspectors that incidents of bullying are very rare, but quickly dealt with when they happen. Staff keep detailed records that help them to respond quickly and effectively on the very few occasions when it is needed. Leaders are planning some further work with parents to strengthen partnership working in this aspect.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders' successful actions have led to a rise in pupils' outcomes. In the 2018 national assessments at the end of Year 6, proportions of pupils attaining age-related expectations and the higher standards in reading and mathematics were similar to those seen nationally. Progress from their starting points was improving by comparison with previous years.
- Across the school, current pupils are achieving well in a range of subjects, including

reading, writing and mathematics. School information and the work in pupils' books demonstrates consistent progress from pupils' starting points at the beginning of the year.

- Pupils with SEND are supported effectively. As a result, they learn well and make good progress in a range of subjects.
- Pupils read well with accuracy and understanding. Their knowledge of a range of authors and text types is developed effectively both through class texts and through regular individual reading.
- Across the school, current pupils make good progress in mathematics. Work in books demonstrates that pupils work carefully and show determination to complete tasks carefully and accurately. Pupils' computational skills are developed systematically. They benefit from a wide range of meaningful opportunities to apply these skills through suitably challenging problem-solving activities.
- Pupils make good progress across the wider curriculum. Their achievements in sport, music and the creative arts are particularly impressive. Highly effective teaching ensures that pupils' physical and artistic learning is of a high standard.
- Most disadvantaged pupils are making good progress across the curriculum. They are benefiting from the opportunities and support provided to them through careful use of the additional pupil premium funding. Nonetheless, the most able disadvantaged pupils are not yet achieving well enough in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are making increasing progress in writing. Most pupils' writing across the school is good and improving. However, pupils' writing accuracy is sometimes hampered by a lack of care in applying the conventions of grammar, punctuation and spelling, both within writing specific tasks, and across the wider curriculum.

School details

Unique reference number	125955
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10053198

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	703
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Bideleux and Jane Eeva
Headteacher	John Gadd
Telephone number	01903 202 268
Website	www.thomasabecketjunior.org.uk/
Email address	office@thomasabecketjunior.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 June 2016

Information about this school

- Thomas A Becket Junior School is a much larger than average-sized junior school.
- The school converted from a middle school to a junior school in September 2015, following a local authority restructuring programme. The school gained a Year 3 cohort and lost one in Year 7.
- There are six classes in Years 3, 5 and 6 and five classes in Year 4.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is average, although the percentage of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons across the school, some accompanied by senior leaders. They also carried out short visits to lessons, and observed pupils around the school, including during play and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons and looked at pupils' books with subject leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, governors, senior leaders and other leaders. They also met with a group of staff, including the two newly qualified teachers.
- Inspectors met with a representative from the local authority and the national leader of education who has been supporting the school. They had a telephone conversation with another adviser.
- Inspectors spoke formally to two groups of pupils, and informally to many. They conducted a tour of the school with pupils and heard them read. 132 pupils completed the Ofsted survey.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, including the school self-evaluation and development plan, reports from leaders on monitoring, governors' minutes, reports from the headteacher, information on pupils' progress and attainment, and records of behaviour and attendance. Inspectors scrutinised records concerning safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views through the 223 responses to Parent View, including 31 free-text responses, as well as a letter and an email. They had informal discussions with parents. Staff views were also considered through the 42 completed staff surveys.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Doug Brawley	Ofsted Inspector
Becky Greenhalgh	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.

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