

# Inspection of a good school: Thelwall Community Junior School

Thelwall New Road, Thelwall, Warrington, Cheshire WA4 2HX

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Inspection dates:

17–18 September 2019

## **Outcome**

Thelwall Community Junior School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are proud of their school. They feel valued and safe because there is always someone to talk to if they have any worries. Pupils enjoy playing with friends. Older pupils look after the youngest pupils when they start at the school in Year 3. Pupils play well together at playtimes. Pupils say behaviour is good and that bullying is rare. They are confident that it would be resolved quickly should it happen.

Teachers have high expectations for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils treat each other with respect. They work hard in lessons and conduct themselves well when moving around school. Pupils have positions of responsibility, for example as junior safety officers and as members of the school council. This helps to prepare them for the future.

Leaders, including governors, are ambitious for pupils to succeed. Pupils can join a wide range of clubs, including gospel singing, drama club, sports clubs and knitting club. All pupils have the opportunity to perform together on stage at the local theatre. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their part in the 'Lion King' production last academic year. Pupils are aspirational to become script writers, police officers and teachers.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have identified what they want pupils to know by the time they leave the school. The curriculum plans set out the order that this knowledge is to be taught across different subjects. However, the information that teachers gather before pupils start school in Year 3 is often limited. This means that Year 3 teachers are not always able to build on what pupils already know.

The training that teachers receive ensures that they have the skills and knowledge they need to support pupils effectively. Teachers use assessment information well to identify pupils who are struggling. They adapt their plans to provide pupils with the help they need to catch up quickly. Leaders use guidance from professionals effectively to support

pupils with SEND. However, some teachers do not have the strategies they need to ensure that pupils with SEND receive the specific help they need.

At the end of Year 6, pupils achieve as well as other pupils do nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Disruption in lessons is rare because learning is carefully planned, and teachers know how to capture pupils' attention. Pupils say that they know what they need to do to improve their work because of the clear explanations that teachers provide. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

Leaders give reading a high priority in the school. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the different types of books that they read, from stories to factual books. For example, older pupils recommended a series of books on Roman and Greek legends for me to read in my spare time. Pupils who are struggling with their reading have the help that they need to catch up quickly, especially in Year 3. The books they read match the sounds and words they are learning. Pupils read with confidence and fluency.

Pupils use their increasing vocabulary to improve the quality of their writing. Older pupils explain how their work in Year 5 has helped them to write more interesting sentence structures in Year 6. Pupils have had a collection of short stories and poetry published.

Pupils achieve well in other curriculum subjects. For example, in history, pupils in Year 4 spoke eloquently about Stone Age and Iron Age Britain. They explained the changes over time from people being hunters to becoming farmers. This knowledge helped them to work out that many people in ancient Egypt were also farmers.

Leaders enhance pupils learning through a range of activities outside of the classroom and the school building, for example a visit to Chester to experience what it was like to be a Roman in Ancient Britain. Pupils are particularly proud of the fundraising that they do for local charities. Pupils enjoy the many sporting competitions that they take part in.

Governors carry out their roles effectively. They are knowledgeable about the school. They support leaders well and hold them account to ensure that the good quality of education is maintained.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All records relating to safeguarding are well maintained. Leaders work together with other agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils get the help that they need quickly. Staff are able to spot potential signs of abuse or neglect because of the effective training they receive. Staff are vigilant and know what to do if they think a pupil may be at risk. Checks are in place to ensure that adults in school are suitable to work with pupils.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. For example, the police community support officer works with pupils so that they know how to keep themselves safe when they are using the internet.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Most teachers adapt their plans well to support pupils with SEND within the classroom. However, at times, pupils with SEND struggle to access the curriculum because teachers are not considering their needs well enough. Leaders need to ensure that they further develop teachers' knowledge of effective strategies to enable them to support the specific needs of individual pupils with SEND.
- Systems are in place to support the transition of pupils when they start school in Year 3. However, the information that teachers gather about what pupils already know is often limited. Leaders need to provide further opportunities for teachers to engage with all stakeholders, including parents and carers, to improve the quality of the information they gather as pupils enter school. This will help teachers to build effectively on what pupils already know, particularly in the foundation subjects.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Thelwall Community Junior School to be good on 10 June 2015.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111000
<b>Local authority</b>	Warrington
<b>Inspection number</b>	10087730
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	166
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Mrs Maidment
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Robinson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thelwalljuniorschool.org.uk">www.thelwalljuniorschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	01 July 2015

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized school.
- Most pupils in the school have attended the nearby infant school.

## Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, I spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, about their work and school life. I spoke with members of the governing body, the headteacher and members of staff. I reviewed a range of documentation, including documentation about attendance and safeguarding.
- I considered the 41 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 16 responses from the online survey for staff. There were also 95 responses to the pupils' survey.
- I considered some subjects in greater detail. These subjects were reading, writing and history. I held discussions with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work and talked with teachers and pupils. I also listened to pupils read.

## **Inspection team**

Amanda Stringer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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