

Inspection of a good school: Thorn Grove Primary School

Woodstock Avenue, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 7LD

Inspection dates:

30–31 October 2019

Outcome

Thorn Grove Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The positive relationships between everyone make Thorn Grove Primary School a very happy place. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy talking about their learning. Pupils respect their teachers' efforts to make learning interesting and rewarding. Pupils know what their teachers expect of them. They work hard in their lessons and achieve well.

Pupils behave well in class and on the playground. They told me that their teachers are kind to them. They follow instructions from adults carefully. Pupils say that bullying does not happen and that they feel safe in school. They say that if any pupils misbehave, teachers are quick to sort it out. They are adamant that if they had any worries or concerns, the staff would take care of them.

Pupils relish the many opportunities they have to take on extra responsibilities. These include being a school councillor, eco-warrior and playground leader. These opportunities help pupils to develop their social and personal skills.

Leaders work hard to broaden pupils' appreciation of the world. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the after-school clubs that are on offer. These are extensive and very popular. Pupils get to go on some worthwhile trips to places of interest, such as museums and theatres.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about what pupils should learn in most subjects. They have designed the curriculum so that pupils build on what they already know. This helps pupils to have a secure knowledge and understanding of what they are learning. In most subjects, including English and history, pupils develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in a logical order. This ensures that pupils learn well over time and develop their understanding in different subjects. For example, in history, pupils use their knowledge of events such as the Great Fire of London and of different periods, such as Ancient Greece, to build their knowledge of chronology and the features of different societies.

Despite this, clear plans for the teaching of art and computing are only just being developed. This is in contrast to other subjects. In art and computing, teachers have not given enough thought to the order in which pupils should learn new content. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they do in other subjects.

Teachers do a lot to encourage a love of reading. This has helped pupils to develop a strong interest in reading for pleasure. Leaders plan for all younger pupils to learn to read well. To do this, staff are well trained in how to teach phonics. As early as Nursery, children learn different letter sounds. Leaders make careful checks on how well pupils are learning their phonics. They allow no one to fall behind.

Older pupils told me that they enjoy reading. They showed me their 'reading passports' with great pride. Teachers encourage pupils to read a wide range of books and give rewards for doing so. This helps pupils to achieve well in reading by the time they leave Year 6.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is accessible to all. They work effectively with families and external agencies to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND, including those with sensory impairments, have their needs well met in mainstream classes. As a result, pupils with SEND are fully involved in the life of the school and achieve well.

The school provides pupils with a broad range of rich learning experiences. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the many trips they have been on. They told me that there are many after-school clubs they can join. Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils take part in these activities. Pupils grow in confidence and become more independent as they move through the school. Leaders plan activities for pupils to discuss moral issues. In these discussions, pupils are reflective and show mature thinking. This helps them to develop a strong sense of right and wrong, as well as their character and social skills.

Pupils have a good understanding of different cultures and religious beliefs. This is a result of the taught curriculum and visits to different places of worship.

Children in the early years enjoy the many indoor and outdoor activities that are available to them. They concentrate for long periods. They are happy and safe. Staff use their effective training to help children develop their speaking and listening skills. Children in Nursery told me how much fun they had making different patterns with toothpaste.

Staff have high expectations of children in the early years. They encourage children to speak clearly and use correct language. Children get a firm foundation in reading and mathematics. They achieve very well in the different areas of learning. Leaders work closely with parents and carers and involve them in their children's learning. They also provide workshops to help parents to support their children. For example, parents can attend sessions on how to read to their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a strong safeguarding culture at the school. Staff receive effective training on different matters relating to safeguarding. They know the school's safeguarding procedures well. They raise concerns about pupils' safety and well-being, should they need to. Leaders work effectively with external agencies, such as children's social care. This ensures that pupils who need support receive it in a timely manner.

Records relating to the safeguarding of pupils are up to date and fit for purpose. Governors work with school leaders to ensure that safeguarding procedures are effective. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe at home, at school and when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is planned well and delivered effectively. This is particularly the case where teachers receive clear guidance on what they should teach and the order in which they should teach it. Despite these strengths, leaders are only just beginning to develop their plans for the teaching of art and computing. As a result, pupils do not learn as well in these subjects as they do in others. Leaders should therefore ensure that pupils benefit from a carefully planned and well-taught curriculum in all 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 the school to be good in May 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

Unique reference number	106079
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10087699
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Clair Alcock and Yousef Dar (co-chairs)
Headteacher	Susan Denford
Website	www.thorngroveprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 May 2015

Information about this school

- The Sensory Support Service has a base in the school from which it supports pupils who are deaf or who have a hearing impairment. This is not a specially resourced provision but the pupils who attend are on the school's roll. Pupils are placed in the school by the local authority and neighbouring local authorities. Some of the pupils have additional, and often complex, learning needs.

Information about this inspection

- During this inspection, I met with the headteacher and senior leaders.
- I held meetings with teachers, support staff and subject leaders. I met with two members of the governing body and held a meeting with a representative of the local authority.
- I visited lessons in each key stage. I spoke to pupils from each key stage and viewed examples of their work. I spoke to pupils about behaviour and expectations in the school, and observed behaviour around the school and in lessons.
- I heard pupils from Year 2 read.
- I considered 65 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and read 64 free-text comments sent by parents. I considered the 23 responses to the pupil

questionnaire and the 19 responses to the staff questionnaire. I examined records relating to safeguarding.

- As part of this inspection, I looked carefully at phonics and reading in all classes. I also focused on writing and history. During my focus on these subjects, I met with subject leaders and visited lessons. I also spoke with teachers and pupils and viewed examples of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Andrew Morley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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