

# Inspection of a good school: Rawmarsh Thorogate Junior and Infant School

Thorogate, Rawmarsh, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S62 7HS

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Inspection dates:

13–14 November 2019

## **Outcome**

Rawmarsh Thorogate Junior and Infant School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

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

Most of the pupils who I met told me that this is a happy school where pupils get on well. They are eager to learn. They enjoy their lessons, particularly reading and mathematics. There are sports clubs and activities at lunchtime that most pupils take part in. The school has won awards for this and for how it encourages pupils to take an active route to school. The school has good computing facilities which pupils can use on days when it is too wet to go outside to play.

Pupils I spoke to understand the school's discipline system. They are positive about the reward system. However, a minority of pupils, particularly in the older years, do not behave as well as they should. Some pupils are concerned about bullying, which they do not believe the school deals with well. A few parents share this concern about the control of bullying and the behaviour of some pupils. Some parents also feel that school leaders could respond faster to concerns they raise. Most parents who filled in the online survey or whom I met are positive about the school. Three quarters of parents in the survey would recommend the school. Some parents went out of their way to tell me how pleased they are about the education and support that their children receive.

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

The school wants all its pupils to do well. Outcomes in mathematics have improved considerably. The school has invested in a range of resources to support pupils in mathematics. I observed pupils doing work that was carefully planned. Pupils are encouraged to talk about how they solve problems. Older pupils are confident about their times tables. Children in the Reception Year learn their numbers up to 20. They are taught to add and subtract using the same methods they will use in key stage 1.

The school places a high priority on reading. Pupils learn their letter sounds from the start of Reception. Parents can help their children, as books are sent home that allow early

readers to practise what they know. There is a great deal of help provided in school for any pupil who is finding reading more difficult. This focused approach has seen outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check improve over the last three years. Reading outcomes at key stage 2 have also improved. I saw some very strong work inspired by 'The Iron Man' in Year 4 and by 'Abomination' by Robert Swindells in Year 6. The pupils I met could all identify favourite books they had read. They spoke about books with enthusiasm. Pupils are read to every day and this helps them build their vocabulary.

In other subjects, the picture is more mixed. I looked particularly at history. Pupils could not tell me very much about the history they had learned. Little historical knowledge had been covered this term. If pupils could remember an event, they had little idea of when it had taken place. The plan to improve the teaching of history is not well developed. In some other subjects, the school has clear plans for how it delivers its curriculum, such as PE and science. But in subjects like art, design and technology and music, these plans have yet to be developed. The governors have not checked the quality of the curriculum closely enough or held leaders to account for curriculum planning.

Expectations for writing in subjects taught through topics are too low. Over time, this means that standards in writing are below where they should be.

Leaders make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Teachers know the pupils well and, working with leaders, make plans to support these pupils' learning. The support of external agencies is well used when it will benefit pupils. Leaders think carefully about what each child will learn and how they can make progress. They make sure that they have extra time when they need to practise crucial knowledge. This is balanced with time to work alongside their classmates. This benefits pupils' learning and builds their self-esteem.

Staff believe that the school is managed well. They feel that their views are listened to and that leaders consider their workload. However, the weaknesses in the plans to develop the curriculum indicates that governance needs to be improved.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The headteacher, who takes the lead in this area, is knowledgeable about safeguarding. They have built a culture where safeguarding is a priority for all staff. Staff know the pupils very well. Record keeping is thorough and there are good procedures in place to ensure that pupils are safe. All the proper checks are made on those working or volunteering at the school. Staff receive appropriate training and clear records are kept of this. This training makes them vigilant to the risks pupils may face. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to stay safe on the internet. Governors understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and hold leaders to account.

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

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

- In foundation subjects like history pupils are not retaining the knowledge they have learned so that they can use it for later study. The school has started to do some work on this, for instance by developing knowledge organisers, but this is not yet having an impact. Training is required for teachers to teach foundation subjects better. Leaders need to accelerate their plans to review how foundation subjects are taught. They need to ensure that all aspects of the national curriculum are covered and that pupils retain the knowledge that they have been taught.
- The school recognises that pupils are not writing well enough. Leaders need to ensure that the quality of pupils' writing improves.
- Governors did not show that they understand how to monitor the quality of education beyond the core subjects of English and mathematics. Governors have commissioned a review of governance and have plans to implement its recommendations. They have recruited new governors to add to their capacity. This has not yet had an impact so that, for instance, a check of the school's website showed that the school is not publishing all the things that it is required to do. Governors need to ensure that they see through their plans to improve governance so that the strategic leadership of the school improves in order to secure a high-quality education for pupils in all subjects.
- Some pupils and parents express concerns about behaviour and the control of bullying. Leaders need to ensure that all incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. They also need to ensure that parents and pupils and parents are reassured that action will always be taken.

## 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 Rawmarsh Thorogate Junior and Infant School to be good on 9–10 March 2016.

## 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>	106910
<b>Local authority</b>	Rotherham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110799
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	207
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Christopher Hepworth
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Barnett
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thorogateschool.co.uk">www.thorogateschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9–10 March 2016

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is average.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is average.

## Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, all senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff. I also met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, and two members of the trust team. I took account of 14 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- I observed pupils' behaviour both in lessons, at breaktime, lunchtime and at a breakfast club. I gathered pupils' views from both formal and informal discussions and from the 26 responses to the Ofsted's pupil survey.
- I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and safeguarding documentation. I also evaluated information about pupils' behaviour and attendance at clubs.

- I met with 10 parents and considered two letters from parents. I also looked at the 33 responses to Ofsted's parents' questionnaire, Parent View.
- I looked in depth at the following subjects: reading, mathematics and history. In doing so, I visited all classes in the school and reviewed pupils' work. I spoke to pupils about their work and listened to them read. I also met with teachers.

### **Inspection team**

Andrew Cummings, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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