

# Inspection of a good school: Thorpe Lea Primary School

Huntingfield Way, Thorpe Lea, Egham, Surrey TW20 8DY

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Inspection dates:

5 and 6 October 2021

## Outcome

Thorpe Lea Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Thorpe Lea School is a vibrant, nurturing and happy school where everyone is valued and supported. Respectful relationships with adults ensure pupils develop their confidence and positive attitudes to learning. Leaders set high expectations because they want the best for all pupils. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school.

Pupils know that their teachers want them to achieve well, and they work hard in lessons. Displays of pupils' work celebrate their learning across the curriculum. Pupils know that keeping active is very important. Throughout the year, one pupil in each class can wear a step counter watch for a week to calculate how far they have walked. In assemblies, pupils enjoy celebrating how physically active their friends have been each week.

Pupils' behaviour is good. They conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and caring towards each other. Outside, pupils play enthusiastically together. They enjoy the wide range of exciting activities on offer, including table tennis and the trim trail. Pupils feel safe and they do not worry about bullying. If they have any concerns, they know that it will be dealt with quickly by an adult.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that supports the needs of all pupils. Detailed curriculum plans in English, mathematics, science and physical education identify key learning that pupils need to know and remember. In other subjects, such as geography, history and art, planning is not as precise and new subject leaders are in the early stages of refining it. They are improving subject plans so that they identify more clearly how learning will build on pupils' prior knowledge each year. Leaders recognise that some staff need additional training to ensure that their subject knowledge supports their teaching more effectively. Governors are strengthening their understanding of the curriculum in history and the other foundation subjects in order to more effectively challenge continued

improvements in these areas. By deepening their understanding of the foundation subjects, they plan to more precisely evaluate the overall quality of the full curriculum.

Leaders ensure that the teaching across the school engages and motivates the pupils well. For example, carefully selected activities used in Reception stimulated the children to enthusiastically sort and classify different shapes in the outdoor area. The work set for the pupils is challenging and matches their needs. Leaders ensure that teachers deliver lessons that enable pupils to follow the planned curriculum. Teachers always check pupils' understanding to ensure that the work set best meets their needs. Should any pupils struggle to understand aspects of their learning, staff offer effective additional support to help them catch up.

Leaders quickly identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers adjust the curriculum so that pupils receive the correct learning. Pupils with social and emotional needs are supported effectively.

Leaders prioritise reading across the school. The teaching of phonics begins as soon as children enter early years, and skilled staff support pupils' reading skills well as they progress through the school. Pupils have books that match their reading level so that they can become fluent readers. They use their phonics knowledge with great determination to sound out unfamiliar words. Pupils quickly become fluent readers and enjoy reading many high-quality texts and listening to stories, especially those read by staff. Leaders provide every opportunity for pupils to develop a love for reading. Parent workshops support parents to help their child, for example through reading bedtime stories. When it is their birthday, pupils can buy a book from school and enjoy sharing it in assembly.

Children move around the school calmly so that lessons start on time. In the classes visited, pupils were on task and showed strong attitudes to achieving well. Pupils say that their learning is rarely affected by poor behaviour or low-level disruption.

Leaders promote pupils' wider personal development well. Pupils enjoy attending many clubs, including yoga, eco-warriors, football and art club. They have worked with authors and theatre companies who visit the school. Pupils learn about different cultures and faiths. Pupils enjoy extra responsibilities, including being school councillors and anti-bullying ambassadors.

The headteacher provides strong leadership, supported ably by the deputy headteacher and senior leaders. Senior leaders are considerate of staff well-being and workload. Governors know the school well and recognise the strengths and areas for development. They challenge and support the senior leadership team well. Staff morale is high. Staff are proud to work at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Staff receive suitable training and understand that it is everyone's responsibility to keep children safe. Leaders quickly

identify pupils who need help and support. When required, the appropriate external agencies are contacted to best support the needs of individual pupils.

Governors check that the school keeps detailed records on the suitability of staff to work in school. The school has well-trained safeguarding leads who support staff and give advice when necessary. Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.

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

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

- In some foundation subjects, such as geography, history and art, leaders' plans do not identify the knowledge and skills that pupils need to know in sufficient detail. Across these subjects it is not always clear what teachers want pupils to know in each year group or how this knowledge builds on their prior learning. Leaders need to ensure that in these subjects, the curriculum plans identify precisely what pupils should learn and remember across all year groups.
- Governors' understanding of the quality of the curriculum in the foundation subjects is not as secure as it is in English and mathematics. Therefore, they do not fully understand the overall quality of education across the full curriculum that pupils receive. Governors require training and information about the impact of the school's work across all subjects so they can offer appropriate support and challenge to leaders.

## **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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 the school and 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>	125072
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200270
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	231
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Caroline Wright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pete Bailey
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thorpe-lea.surrey.sch.uk">www.thorpe-lea.surrey.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	20 and 21 October 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Thorpe Lea School is smaller than the average size primary school.
- The school has a breakfast club operating on the site, which is managed by the school.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During this inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. He spoke with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority on the telephone.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For the deep dives, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Responses to Ofsted’s Parent View questionnaire and free-text comments were considered by the inspector. He also considered the responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire for staff and pupils.
- The inspector also examined curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements in the school, the inspector spoke to members of staff and pupils. He met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the school’s policies and procedures. During these meetings, records were scrutinised, including those relating to the safer recruitment of staff. Case files were sampled to explore how the school identifies and supports pupils at risk of harm. The inspector also spoke with a range of pupils and staff to evaluate the school’s safeguarding culture.

### **Inspection team**

Darren Aisthorpe, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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