

# Inspection of Thurleigh Primary School

High Street, Thurleigh, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK44 2DB

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Inspection dates: 22 and 23 September 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Good

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

Thurleigh Primary is a welcoming and inclusive community. Pupils are keen to share that 'everyone is different, and everyone is welcome'. They feel safe at the school and that adults are kind and look after them well.

Pupils demonstrate positive behaviours. They maintain strong relationships with each other and the adults that work at the school. Pupils feel that incidents of bullying are rare. If it does happen, staff resolve it quickly.

Pupils are positive about their learning. They enjoy opportunities in the curriculum to visit interesting places or meet visitors to the school. However, they do not learn as much as they should. This includes children in the early years.

Pupils are extremely positive about the clubs and activities on offer. They helped to design the programme of activities. This includes, for example, forest school, additional trips, such as those to a local air museum, and a wide range of clubs, including cooking and first aid.

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

Subject leaders' plans do not identify the important knowledge that pupils should learn over time. This means teachers do not know what they need to teach and when, in order to ensure pupils build up the knowledge leaders want them to have. It makes it difficult for leaders and teachers to check whether pupils have learned what they need to know.

Teachers do not have a clear idea of what pupils have learned before. This means that teaching too often does not build on this knowledge. In the early years, not enough attention has been given to how children develop their knowledge over time to ensure they are ready for their next steps.

The teaching of early reading is not as effective as it should be. In Years 2 and 3, books are not well matched to sounds that pupils are taught. This makes it harder for those pupils who struggle to read to become confident readers.

Other aspects of the teaching of reading are more effective. In the early years, children develop strong phonics knowledge, and this is built upon in Years 1 and 2. For the youngest pupils, books match accurately to the sounds that they know. High-quality whole-class texts underpin what pupils learn. Teachers read regularly to pupils and leaders encourage pupils to read often. As a result, pupils enjoy reading. They were keen to tell inspectors about the books they have read.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support. The special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) has a secure knowledge of pupils' needs. She shares this knowledge with teachers and

other adults. They use this to help children with SEND in their classes. This enables pupils with SEND to keep up with their peers.

Access to some external services, such as speech and language therapy, have been delayed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has increased waiting times for these services. Leaders have mitigated against this through staff training and working with other schools to build support networks.

Leaders have designed high-quality provision for pupils' personal development. This includes opportunities in lessons and out of lessons. A wide range of pupils make use of these opportunities and are extremely positive about them. Pupils are given chances to make meaningful decisions about life in school. They also work together to improve the school environment, such as through making recent improvements to the school field.

Teachers make learning interesting. Pupils enjoy their lessons. They talk positively about the 'stunning starts', 'marvellous middles' and 'fantastic finishes' that feature in them. This helps pupils to listen and behave well. Pupils show positive attitudes around the school. They are polite and work well together in their lessons. Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. With the help of pupils, they have developed school-wide values which underpin good behaviour at the school.

The leadership team have worked effectively to create a positive, nurturing community at the school. Staff feel well supported, including those at the earliest stages of their careers. Parents are positive about the school and leaders' actions. However, leaders have not given enough attention or urgency to the quality of education pupils receive. This is having a negative impact on what pupils learn over time.

Governors have not sufficiently focused on how well leaders have secured effective education. They are not provided with information that is useful for them to know how well pupils learn the intended curriculum. This limits how they challenge and support leaders in this area.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are knowledgeable about the risks to children at the school and know what to do if they have concerns about pupils or adults. Leaders have ensured that staff are well trained and know their safeguarding responsibilities. Safeguarding records show concerns are acted on quickly and clear actions are taken.

Pupils are well informed about how to stay safe. They are taught how to stay safe online, including when playing video games or using social media. They have learned about positive relationships and know what to do if they are worried about themselves or others.

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

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

- The important knowledge that pupils are expected to learn is not clear in leaders' plans for the curriculum. This makes it difficult for leaders and teachers to know what pupils should know and by when. Leaders should ensure that the subject content pupils are to learn is clearly identified.
- In the early years, leaders have not planned for all of the knowledge children should learn in Reception Year. This means children are not fully prepared for the start of Year 1. Leaders should ensure that plans show this knowledge.
- Governors do not always have the information they need about the quality of the curriculum and how it is taught. This prevents them from supporting and challenging leaders effectively in this area. Governors should ensure leaders provide them with the information they need.

## 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>	109486
<b>Local authority</b>	Bedford
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199622
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	87
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Cathy Piotrowski
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kathy Augustine
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thurleighprimary.uk">www.thurleighprimary.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 February 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Kymbrook and Thurleigh Federation with Kymbrook Primary School.
- Some leaders, including the interim headteacher and interim assistant headteacher, are new to their roles.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has expanded to become a primary school, admitting pupils into key stage 2.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the interim headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. They met with the SENDCo, subject leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors 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. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders, pupils, staff and governors about the school and its arrangements for safeguarding pupils. Inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record of vetting and recruitment checks, as well as the procedures and checks for employing staff.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted surveys completed by parents, pupils and staff. This included 14 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, which included 14 free-text responses submitted during the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Marc White, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jacqueline Bell-Cook

Ofsted Inspector

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