

Inspection of a good school: Green Top

Middlebrook Lane, Thorne, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN8 5LB

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 November 2021

Outcome

Green Top continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have fully embraced the freedom they have as an academy school to design their own unique curriculum. Pupils are given independence to choose the way that they prefer to learn. Teachers respect and trust pupils to make sensible choices.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that prioritises character growth, beautiful work and academic success. Pupils know this as 'Work hard, be kind and get smart'. Character development is discussed daily. Pupils have been grouped into 'crews'. They talk together in their crew at least once a day. They discuss their learning and progress. Crews celebrate pupils' character development. They share academic and social success stories and praise each other.

If something has gone wrong, for example pupils arguing at breaktime, they talk about this in their crew. Pupils describe how this conflict made them feel and resolve their differences. This means that arguments are settled quickly. As a result, there is hardly any bullying. Pupils remind each other to be kind.

Parents and carers appreciate this nurturing environment. Numbers are rising because so many pupils want to join Green Top. One parent said she walks for 45 minutes, there and back, so that her children can come to this school.

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

Children get off to a flying start in the Nursery Year. Teachers make the most of their excellent relationships with pre-school providers. They discuss each child's individual needs with staff and parents before welcoming children into school. As a result, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) was able to provide some extra help straight away in September. This means that all three-year-olds, including those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are learning and thriving.

The SENCo is keen to re-establish the 'coffee and cake' sessions for parents that were put on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, leaders plan to retain some of the COVID-19 arrangements long-term. For example, some parents told the SENCo that they preferred online meetings to review education, health and care plans. They found this

easier than face-to-face meetings if their babies or toddlers were sleeping. In addition, they did not need to pay for transport or childcare to attend meetings at school. This example of leaders listening and responding to parents' views is typical. The effective partnership that leaders and parents have developed helps pupils to learn and behave well.

All relationships at Green Top are based on trust and respect. Teachers are fair. Pupils know the 'Green Top Code' for conduct in school. Consequently, pupils behave well in lessons.

Teachers say that they are in a crew too. Leaders give teachers the support they need to do their job well. Teachers are given extra time out of class to analyse assessments and evaluate the impact of the curriculum. This ensures that teachers notice quickly if pupils are falling behind. Staff get pupils back on track successfully.

Leaders have improved the curriculum for early reading and phonics. Reading books are matched closely to pupils' phonics knowledge. Pupils read with increasing confidence and fluency. Leaders noticed that some pupils had fallen behind with their reading during the first national lockdown. Leaders have employed extra teachers this year to make sure that pupils can practise their reading every day. This is helping pupils to catch up quickly.

In some subjects, such as mathematics, the curriculum is well planned and sequenced. Teachers use assessment skilfully to check pupils' learning. Leaders have identified that this is not working as well in some other subjects. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 cannot remember what they learned about musical notation or great composers.

Teachers plan 'learning expeditions' that include different subjects, but sometimes in insufficient depth. Leaders realise that teachers need to adjust the balance between knowledge and skills in each learning expedition to provide a greater emphasis on subject-specific knowledge.

The curriculum for pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils have a mature understanding of character development. They are proud to belong to their community. Their work is regularly celebrated in the local area. Pupils are constantly striving 'to be the best version of themselves'.

Senior executives in the multi-academy trust have planned a smooth transition between headteachers. The assistant headteacher, who will become head of school, is working closely alongside the headteacher for the next two terms. The headteacher is already training her in every aspect of the role, to ensure that she is well prepared to take over the reins in April 2022.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders check that staff are suitable to work with children. They train staff well. All staff can identify safeguarding concerns accurately. The members of the experienced team of

safeguarding leaders manage individual cases well. They work closely with other professionals to make sure that pupils are protected from harm.

All pupils and parents know that they can approach the emotional well-being leader at breakfast club before school. The emotional well-being leader recommends other services that can provide early help.

During this inspection, a professional, specialist organisation was visiting every class to discuss relationships education and build pupils' resilience to risk.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The wider curriculum offer does not match or exceed national curriculum expectations consistently. Leaders' intent for the wider curriculum includes national curriculum expectations. However, substantive and disciplinary knowledge is not taught in sufficient depth in all foundation subjects or revisited often enough. Leaders should implement their curriculum plans, ensuring that subject-specific content matches or exceeds national curriculum expectations consistently. This will ensure that pupils accumulate sufficient knowledge for future learning and employment in all subjects.
- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear that leaders have already taken action to plan next year's curriculum and to train staff in how to deliver it. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

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. 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Thorne Green Top Primary School, to be good in November 2014.

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

Unique reference number	144656
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10200612
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	462
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Poutney
Headteacher	Claira Salter
Website	www.greentopschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Green Top converted to become an academy school in September 2017. When its predecessor school, Thorne Green Top Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- This school is a member of the XP School Trust Limited multi-academy trust.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2019. She is leaving in April 2022. Leaders plan for the assistant headteacher to become head of school at Green Top then.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- Leaders have selected the Ambition Institute as the early career teacher training provider.

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 has taken that into account in her evaluation.
- The inspector met the headteacher, two assistant headteachers, the SENCo and the emotional well-being leader. The reading, mathematics and art and design subject leaders also met the inspector.
- The chief executive, the executive principal and the chair of the local governing body met the inspector in person. The multi-academy trust's performance director joined this meeting online.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and phonics, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, 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.
- Curriculum plans in a range of subjects were evaluated.
- The inspector met the early years leader and visited indoor and outdoor provision for three-year-old children in the nursery. Pupils' behaviour and safety were evaluated on arrival at school, at breakfast club, in the dining room and at breaktimes.
- Senior safeguarding leaders and the school business manager met the inspector to discuss recruitment and safeguarding records.
- The inspector checked all pupil leavers and their destinations to rule out off-rolling.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection, reviewed the 73 responses to Parent View and considered one written response sent separately to Ofsted, providing a parent's views of the school's provision for remote education.
- A group of teachers, including early career teachers, met the inspector to discuss leaders' support for their workload. The inspector also evaluated 35 staff's responses to Ofsted's survey.
- The inspector considered the 31 pupils' responses to Ofsted's survey. Informal discussions were also held with pupils at breaktimes.
- The inspector joined staff and pupils in their two-minute silence in remembrance of armistice on 11 November.

Inspection team

Tracey Ralph, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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