

# Inspection of a good school: Thompson Primary School

School Road, Thompson, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 1PY

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Inspection date:

2 December 2021

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

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

At this school, pupils are very happy, safe and enthusiastic about learning. They say that they love their school. They treat each other and adults with much respect. Teachers are kind. They care about their pupils. Parents are very pleased with the education the school provides.

Leaders have very high expectations about pupils' behaviour and their well-being. Pupils behave very well. The school has a reward system which motivates children to do their very best. Instances of less positive behaviour are rare. Pupils say that bullying hardly ever happens. When it does, teachers deal with it quickly.

There is a rich family ethos in the school. Teachers communicate well with parents. Pupils play well and work hard. They appreciate the many clubs and trips that take place. They have opportunities to lead. Leaders listen to their views.

Pupils learn to read well. The teaching of mathematics is also planned well. As a result, pupils build knowledge over time. In some other subjects, teachers do not plan learning as well. It is not always clear what pupils are learning and how this links to what they have learned before.

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

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading across the school. Children are taught to read from their first week in the Reception Year. They can recognise and say sounds quickly. They are also beginning to read words and short sentences.

The teaching of reading is well planned. Teachers teach reading in the same way so that pupils learn well over time. Teachers make sure pupils remember sounds well and use

them to help read difficult new words. By Year 3, pupils can read with increasing fluency. They apply secure strategies to help them to read unfamiliar words. They can retell stories in their own words. Reading books are matched to pupils' reading levels. This helps pupils to read more fluently. Pupils in key stage 2 are taught how to understand more complex texts. This helps them to learn more advanced vocabulary. Teachers support those pupils who have fallen behind to catch up quickly. All pupils say that they enjoy reading.

Teachers' planning ensures that all pupils learn mathematics well. Teachers adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers make sure that pupils practise what they have already learned. This helps pupils to remember more. In mathematics, pupils' learning builds well on what they already know and can do.

The clarity of curriculum planning is not the same across all subjects. It is not always clear what it is the pupils are learning. Pupils find it harder to remember important knowledge. Leaders say that they know this. They are keen to help teachers improve what they know about other subjects. This will help them to plan better.

Pupils listen and behave well. Very positive values are taught as soon as children begin school. As a result, Reception-age pupils are kind and respectful and they encourage each other. The school offers a range of popular clubs and activities. Pupils also learn outside the school. They had recently visited a zoo, for example. Pupils find out about other religions and about people who are different from them. All pupils have the right to vote for their own school council representative. Pupils understand democracy and they enjoy opportunities to lead. School council representatives advise school leaders on how pupils should be rewarded for good work and behaviour. They also help to run charity events.

Leaders understand what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve. They know that some teachers need support to help them improve their subject knowledge. Governors know the school well. They understand the rationale for decisions that leaders make. They are fully aware of how the school ensures the safety of all pupils. Teachers feel very supported by leaders. They understand that leaders have clear reasons for asking for additional work. They also acknowledge that leaders have helped them to reduce their workload.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that teacher subject knowledge and curriculum planning may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff fully understand how to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Teachers report any concerns. These are investigated by leaders and dealt with quickly. Leaders will seek support from safeguarding partners when needed. The school teaches pupils about how to keep safe in and out of school. Pupils know about the potential risks of the internet.

Leaders carry out checks on all new staff. This ensures that recruitment is safe.

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

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

- In some subjects, teachers do not have the necessary subject knowledge. As a result, they do not carefully identify which knowledge they want the pupils to learn. Leaders must provide teachers with training to develop their subject knowledge.
- In some subjects, planning does not ensure that learning is well sequenced. As a result, what pupils learn does not build on what they have learned before. Teachers need support to plan so that pupils learn more effectively over time.
- Previously learned knowledge is not always regularly revisited in some subjects. Pupils therefore do not have the opportunity to practise what they have already learned. This does not help them to remember over time. Planning needs to ensure that prior knowledge is revisited and practised to help pupils remember more.

## **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, Thompson Primary School, to be good in January 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 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>	144147
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200457
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Non-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>	96
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Co-operative Education East Trust
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Julie Fletcher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lisa Heath
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://thompson.cee.coop">https://thompson.cee.coop</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average. However, the proportion of pupils with an education, care and health plan is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is below average.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met the headteacher, senior leaders, support staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the Trust.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. These included discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, meetings with staff and pupils, and scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record and met with the designated safeguarding leader.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, staff and parents. There were 13 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 28 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors considered 26 free-text responses from parents.

### **Inspection team**

Adam Cooke, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Wendy Varney

Her Majesty's Inspector

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