

# Inspection of Thurlton Primary School

Church Road, Thurlton, Norwich, Norfolk NR14 6RN

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Inspection dates: 12 and 13 January 2022

## **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

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

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

Thurlton Primary School is a warm, welcoming environment where pupils feel cared for and valued. Pupils are kind, polite and respectful towards staff and each other. Parents and carers say that their children are happy and safe at this school. Parents speak highly of the 'friendly, approachable staff' and the 'wonderful family feel' in the school.

Pupils enjoy learning across different subjects. However, the teaching they receive in some subjects is not as well planned as it should be. As a result, pupils do not acquire the knowledge and understanding they need across all subjects in the curriculum.

Pupils are well behaved at all times. At breaktimes, pupils from different age groups play together happily. Older pupils ensure that the younger children are happy and safe. For example, they make sure that there is a good mix of playground equipment that younger children can handle and use safely. Pupils can explain what bullying is and are confident that it does not happen. Pupils know that staff will help them if they are anxious or upset.

Pupils are proud of their school and would recommend it to others. Pupils learn how to stay healthy and enjoy opportunities to attend clubs, such as those for dance and hockey.

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

Leaders have high aspirations for pupils. Leaders have mapped out a broad and balanced curriculum. In most subjects, plans are in place that identify the building blocks of knowledge and skills pupils must learn. In the subjects where this is not yet the case, such as in computing and art, leaders can demonstrate through their current action plans that work to establish effective teaching plans is well under way. However, leaders have not checked the effectiveness of almost all of these subject plans and do not know whether their intended curriculum is being taught effectively.

Subject leaders in this small school have responsibility for many areas of the overall curriculum. Most are new to their roles. Currently, they are developing the essential skills and required subject knowledge to develop and improve the curriculum in the subjects for which they have responsibility. There has been little opportunity for subject leaders to check how well their curriculum plans are being implemented. This means that leaders cannot identify what needs to improve across the curriculum. Work has been slowed by the impact of COVID-19 and staff changes. Currently, subject leaders are not playing a part in improving the quality of education across the school.

Leaders have systems in place to assess pupils' achievements in reading, English and mathematics. However, this is not fully the case for other subjects.

The mathematics curriculum is structured in such a way that pupils have time to secure their understanding before moving on to new content. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well planned for.

Leaders have ensured that there is a structured approach to teaching phonics so that children learn to read when they start school. In most cases, reading books closely match the sounds pupils are learning. Pupils' phonic knowledge is checked regularly to make sure that they are learning well. Staff provide effective support to pupils who may be falling behind. Older pupils continue to be keen readers. They discuss their favourite authors and types of books.

Leaders' actions to improve pupils' behaviour have led to a calm, safe environment in which pupils are able to learn. Staff understand and use the behaviour policy consistently. During lessons, pupils listen to their teachers and follow instructions quickly.

Leaders provide a well-designed, high-quality personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme, which leaders have chosen to deliver through 'life skills' lessons. Pupils learn about topics such as road safety and healthy lifestyles. Pupils' personal development is a strength of this school.

In early years, children are busy and keen to learn. They interact well with each other, share and take turns. The early years curriculum sets out what children need to learn and when. This helps staff teach key vocabulary and knowledge direction, so children remember new learning quickly.

Teachers make sure that pupils with SEND receive additional help. However, leaders do not make sure that pupils with SEND have individual targets that are specific enough to ensure that they get the right support to learn successfully. This means that small steps of progress are difficult to measure and leaders cannot be sure whether pupils with SEND are achieving as well as they could.

Governors and trustees share leaders' commitment to continue to improve the school. Plans are in place in relation to monitoring the impact of the curriculum across all subjects. Consequently, school leaders are well placed to improve the quality of education.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a strong understanding of what to do when pupils are at risk. They know how to refer concerns to the appropriate authorities and have a secure understanding of all the necessary systems and processes they need in order to keep up to date in school. Staff are clear about reporting their concerns.

Leaders make sure that pupils know what to do to keep themselves safe, including when online, and how to get help. Strong relationships between pupils and staff mean that pupils get support to talk about things that worry them.

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

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

- Leaders do not routinely check how well pupils are learning the curriculum in all subjects. Therefore, they are not able to fully evaluate how well pupils are learning and achieving. Leaders need to rigorously evaluate the quality of education to ensure that pupils learn more and remember more of the intended curriculum across all subjects.
- Subject leaders are new to their roles. Currently, they do not have the subject knowledge or expertise to monitor curriculum plans and to provide further training for their colleagues where needed. Leaders need to make sure that these new subject leaders receive the training and support they need to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively.
- The individual targets for pupils with SEND are not always specific enough for the support they receive to be as effective as possible. This means that small steps of progress cannot be evidenced and built on. Leaders need to ensure that pupils' individual targets are specific and measurable, so that pupils with SEND can learn and achieve well.

## **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>	144974
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10212055
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	56
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Peter Fraser
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ali Hambley
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thurlton.org.uk">www.thurlton.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Thurlton Primary School is part of the Clarion Academy Trust. The trust delegates aspects of governance to the local governing body. The board of trustees is the accountable body.
- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has three mixed-age classes. The headteacher has a teaching commitment for three days a week.
- The school currently has a temporary class teacher in early years.

## 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 had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator and temporary leader for phonics and early years. Inspectors spoke

with subject leaders. Meetings were also held with the chief executive officer of the trust and members of the local governing board, including the chair.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and humanities. They visited lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work and met with teaching staff and pupils. Inspectors also observed pupils reading and talked to pupils about their reading habits. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work in PSHE education.
- Inspectors considered a range of school documents, including curriculum plans, policies relating to behaviour and attendance, the school's improvement plan and the school's self-evaluation document. They also considered minutes from meetings of the local governing body.
- In order to check on the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors checked the school's record of pre-appointment checks, met the school's designated safeguarding lead, spoke with staff and pupils, and checked the school's child protection records.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and school routines, both during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors considered the 33 responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including the 32 free-text responses, and letters sent to the lead inspector. Inspectors also took account of the 10 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and the 32 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Jo Nutbeam, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Russell Ayling

Ofsted Inspector

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