

Inspection of a good school: Thriplow Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Thriplow, Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 7RH

Inspection date: 28 April 2022

Outcome

Thriplow Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Thriplow are polite and friendly and show respect for each other. They are enthusiastic to talk about their learning. They are very proud of their school.

Pupils enjoy learning. This starts in early years, where children show curiosity and learn cooperatively together. As pupils move through the school, they grow in confidence and respond well to the expectations of their teachers. Pupils of all ages show a passion for and love of reading.

The new behaviour policy is well understood by pupils. Bullying and unkind behaviour do not often happen. Pupils feel secure in their surroundings as adults sort things out.

Pupils benefit from wider opportunities within the school grounds and beyond. These range from Phil, the resident pheasant, in the wild space, to performing at the community daffodil festival and at the O2 arena in London. The oldest pupils in the school all have a whole-school responsibility that they take very seriously. Pupils have been well prepared for secondary school socially, emotionally and academically.

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

Leaders have designed a knowledge-rich, well-sequenced curriculum. They have thought carefully about the content of the curriculum to ensure that it is engaging and linked to pupils' prior learning at all stages.

Teachers deliver the curriculum well. Staff have secure subject knowledge, and this ensures that teaching engages pupils. The focus on explaining new vocabulary is a particular strength of the curriculum's design and delivery. Pupils are able to use new vocabulary and knowledge to explain their learning and make effective comparisons. Teachers make sure that there are regular opportunities to recap previously learned knowledge. Pupils are rightly proud of the level of their understanding.

In a small number of subjects, the reviewed curriculum is at a much earlier stage of implementation. Leaders have plans to provide additional subject-specific training for staff to achieve the same high expectations across all areas of the curriculum.

Children in early years are happy, settled and engaged. The environment covers all areas of the curriculum and is well organised. The delivery in the direct teaching session is having an impact, but there are occasions when there are not enough opportunities for children to further practise and embed knowledge and skills taught in these sessions. Teachers' planning is not giving children the same range of opportunities for rehearsal and retrieval as elsewhere in the school.

The reading curriculum is a strength in the school. Expectations are high for all pupils. On children's entry to the school, reading is a focus because leaders know that it is important so that pupils can achieve throughout the curriculum. Where a few pupils need to catch up, skilled adults give support with fluency and understanding meaning. Books are well suited to pupils' various stages of reading development. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are able to access the same high-quality reading books as their peers. Staff expertly recap and extend pupils' learning by using carefully chosen questions. Consistent strategies are used to teach pupils to read fluently.

The provision for pupils with SEND is well led. Pupils with SEND have been correctly identified, and individualised support is in place to ensure that they can access learning at their various starting points. Leaders and teachers work together to ensure that the curriculum is ambitious, broad and balanced for all pupils.

Leaders have developed a new behaviour policy, which is having a positive impact. Pupils and staff are clear about the expectations and understand the consequences of poor behaviour. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere while pupils are learning in class. Similarly, pupils play harmoniously in the outdoor spaces. Older pupils enjoy taking responsibility and being positive role models for the younger pupils.

The Christian ethos of the school is central to the wider development of pupils at Thriplow. Pupils embrace the opportunities to learn from experiences outside school. For example, charity ambassadors plan community events. Pupils also participate in competitive sporting events, performance poetry recitals and rural traditions such as maypole dancing.

The governing body and trustees complement each other and work well together to hold leaders to account. The improvement priorities that leaders have focused on have been monitored effectively to ensure that the quality of education has improved since the previous inspection. Trust leaders have supported school leaders with necessary changes and are committed to embedding these further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff know the risks to pupils in the local community. Leaders are vigilant in recording and following up actions in response to any concerns regarding pupils' safety.

Staff have regular updates to ensure that they know any changes to policies and procedures. They are confident to report incidents.

Pupils can post concerns in a worry box or speak to a trusted adult in school. Pupils are aware of online risks and can talk confidently about what they have learned in personal, social and health education lessons to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in early years is well planned and sequenced. However, there is variation in the quality of its implementation. Staff do not always provide enough ambitious opportunities for children to practise and embed skills and knowledge they have been taught. This means that children are not as well prepared for key stage 1 as they should be. Leaders must ensure that staff receive training and support so that children are given more opportunities to know more and remember more.
- Much of the curriculum is being delivered well and it is ensuring that pupils achieve well. However, in a few areas of the curriculum, this work is at an earlier stage of implementation and staff still need to receive the planned subject-specific training. Leaders must continue their plans to ensure that the curriculum in these subjects is taught to the same standards as the rest of the curriculum.

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 a section 5 inspection immediately.

This was the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Thriplow Church of England Primary School, to be good in September 2013.

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

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| Unique reference number | 145246 |
| Local authority | Cambridgeshire |
| Inspection number | 10227553 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 120 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Mike Younger |
| Headteacher | Victoria Penty |
| Website | www.thriplow.cambs.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The school has a Christian character. The religious aspects of the school's provision were last inspected in July 2019 under section 48 of the Education Act 2005
- The school has been part of the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust since December 2017.
- The school operates an after-school club for pupils who attend the school.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and other leaders, staff, pupils and the chair of governors. They also held meetings with the chief executive officer, education director and school improvement director from the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and art and design. 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. In early reading, this took the form of listening to pupils reading to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about geography and music.
- As part of the evaluation of the school's safeguarding processes, inspectors reviewed the single central record, met with the designated safeguarding leads, reviewed safeguarding files, looked at behaviour and attendance records, and spoke to pupils and staff.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation form and improvement plan, school policies, and minutes from trustee and governing body meetings.
- Inspectors reviewed the 56 responses that were submitted by parents and carers to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and also considered 56 free-text responses from parents. Inspectors also considered 16 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire, and 86 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Isabel Davis, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Sim

Ofsted Inspector

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