

Inspection of an outstanding school: Childer Thornton Primary School

New School Lane, Childer Thornton, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire CH66 1QY

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 May 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding 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?

All pupils, regardless of their race, gender or culture, are warmly welcomed at Childer Thornton Primary School. Staff, leaders, governors and trustees are united in their aim to provide the best possible education for all pupils, including children in the early years. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are given the right type of support so that they can take part in all that the school has to offer.

The positive relationship between staff and pupils makes the school a happy place to learn. Pupils feel safe. They know that adults will listen to them if they have any worries or concerns.

Teachers expect pupils to work hard and try their best in lessons. Overall, most pupils achieve well across a variety of subjects. However, leaders have only introduced some subject curriculums more recently. As a result, teachers may lack the confidence and expertise that they need to deliver some aspects of these subjects consistently well.

Pupils are forming firm friendships. They are well supervised as they play happily together in the well-resourced outdoor play area. Pupils behave well. If bullying occurs, adults deal with it swiftly.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of experiences beyond the academic curriculum, such as an exciting range of trips and clubs. They contribute to decision-making in the school through their roles as 'no outsider ambassadors' and road safety officers.

Most parents and carers are delighted with all aspects of the school's work.

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

The headteacher has a secure overview of what the school does well and those aspects that need further development, particularly with regard to the quality of education that the school provides.

Leaders and staff have designed an ambitious curriculum that incorporates the school's values and meets the needs of pupils. Many subjects are planned logically and ordered well. Leaders provide staff with clear guidance about the knowledge and skills that pupils should be taught and in what order. Pupils are beginning to make connections in their learning across subjects. For example, in history, pupils used their mapping skills to identify countries where the Mayan civilisation originated.

Teachers present new learning well and provide help for pupils to overcome misconceptions. However, some curriculums are relatively new. Consequently, teachers may be less confident in how to deliver some aspects of these curriculums.

Subject leaders are trained appropriately. Some monitor their areas of responsibility effectively. This helps them to check that the intended curriculum is being taught and that pupils are knowing and remembering more. However, the monitoring of some other subjects is less well developed. This is because some aspects of the monitoring of these subjects were paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, some subject leaders' oversight of how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum is not as clear.

In some subjects, there are effective systems in place to check on pupils' learning over time. However, these systems are at an early stage of development for some other subjects. As a result, leaders do not have an accurate overview of how well pupils are deepening their understanding of these subjects over time.

Leaders understand that being able to communicate and read fluently is the gateway to the curriculum and lifelong learning. Books are displayed beautifully around the school to help foster pupils' love of reading. As soon as children start in the early years, staff seize every opportunity to develop children's language skills. There is a real buzz of conversation in the early years as children learn and play.

Staff are experts in the teaching of phonics. All staff, including those in the Reception class, use the same approach to deliver the phonics curriculum. Pupils, including those with SEND, read books that are closely matched to the sounds that they know. Staff make effective use of assessment strategies to identify those pupils who fall behind with the reading curriculum. Pupils benefit from the extra support that they receive to help them catch up.

In lessons, pupils listen attentively and are keen to learn. They work well together sharing their thoughts and ideas. Children in the early years settle into routines quickly, learning how to share with their peers.

Pupils with SEND, including children in the early years, have their needs identified quickly. Through the use of additional support and resources, the curriculum is adapted so that these pupils can learn alongside their friends.

Pupils are becoming responsible citizens. For example, they recognise the importance of taking positive action to help save the planet. Pupils greatly value and appreciate difference. Pupils told the inspector: 'we should not just tolerate difference; we should celebrate it'. They recognise the importance of taking regular exercise and eating a balanced diet to promote their good health. Pupils' emotional health and well-being are promoted well by staff.

The members of the local governing body know the school well and are proud of leaders' achievements. They provide appropriate support and challenge to school leaders.

Staff are proud to work at the school and morale is high. Leaders care about staff's well-being and ensure their workload is manageable.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that geography and design and technology may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff receive regular safeguarding training. Staff know pupils and their families well. This means that they can identify when pupils are showing signs of distress and when there is a change in their demeanour. Staff understand the procedures to follow if they are concerned about a pupil's welfare.

Vulnerable families are supported well by the school and other agencies. Through the curriculum, pupils learn to keep themselves safe. For instance, they learn to recognise the signs of online grooming and know not to disclose personal information when using the internet. Pupils understand that behaviours such as peer-on-peer abuse are unacceptable.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject curriculums are in the early stages of being implemented by leaders. This means that teachers are less sure about how to deliver curriculums in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that teachers benefit from the support that they need to deliver these curriculums to the same high standard as other subjects. This will help to ensure that pupils know more and remember more.
- Leaders' systems to check on pupils' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum over time are at an early stage of development for some foundation subjects. This means that leaders do not have an accurate view of how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum within different year groups. Leaders should develop these

systems further so that they have a secure understanding of how well pupils are learning the curriculum over time.

- Due to the pandemic, subject leaders have not checked to ensure that some subjects are being delivered as intended. As a result, they do not have a secure enough understanding of the subject-specific training needs of teachers. Leaders should ensure that the monitoring arrangements for these subjects are of the same high quality as is evident in other areas of the curriculum, such as reading and mathematics. This will provide leaders with a clear understanding of the training and support that teachers need to develop to further their subject-specific knowledge and expertise.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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, Childer Thornton Primary School, to be outstanding in March 2017.

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	144529
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10212542
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	235
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Jenkins
Headteacher	Hannah Yarranton
Website	www.childerthorntonprimary.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Childer Thornton Primary School converted to become an academy in May 2018. When its predecessor school, Childer Thornton Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is part of Concordia Multi-Academy Trust. Since the school joined Concordia Multi-Academy Trust, a new headteacher and two new assistant headteachers have been appointed.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision for any pupils.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and members of staff.
- The inspector met with members of the local governing body. She also met with the chief executive officer and trustees from the multi-academy trust.

- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding. She spoke to staff about safeguarding and their workload and well-being.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around school, in class and in the outdoor play area.
- The inspector talked to parents as they brought their children to school.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and to Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff and pupils.
- The inspector conducted deep dives into early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, she discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at examples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to pupils read with a familiar adult. She also spoke with curriculum leaders in a small number of other subjects.

Inspection team

Sheila Iwaskow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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