

Inspection of a good school: Theydon Bois Primary School

Orchard Drive, Theydon Bois, Epping, Essex CM16 7DH

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 October 2022

Outcome

Theydon Bois Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Theydon Bois Primary pupils value the environment they learn and play in. Pupils say they benefit from access to special facilities, such as their woodland areas and swimming pool. This attitude of appreciation extends to how pupils feel about the staff and pupils in their school.

Pupils are encouraged to work together with partners and in teams. They care about each other. This results in behaviour that is calm and respectful, and playtimes that are happy and enjoyable. Incidents of poor conduct, including bullying, are highly unusual. Pupils know that adults look after them and quickly sort out any problems that arise.

The ambitious curriculum that pupils access supports them to learn knowledge that is broad and interesting. In addition, learning experiences for pupils extend well beyond the academic. Pupils gain relevant skills from the wide range of engaging opportunities available. These include caring for the school's racing pigeons, attending clubs and meeting expert visitors. For example, pupils in key stage 2 learned about techniques used in the Stone Age from a visiting 'caveman'.

Pupils are taught how to stay healthy, both physically and mentally. They say the opportunity to use their abilities in outdoor areas helps them connect with nature and practise mindfulness.

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

Leaders have constructed a curriculum with high expectations for the knowledge that pupils gain over time. Subject leaders have designed this knowledge to grow in small steps from the moment pupils start school. Leaders' plans typically provide specific detail about what needs to be taught and remembered. This is supporting pupils to achieve well and be prepared for their next stage of education. However, leaders are improving some curriculum plans and a small number are not clear enough. So, although pupils do gain a

broad understanding, teachers do not consistently focus on the key content pupils need for future learning.

The routines teachers use for assessment are effective. This means that pupils are helped to practise using what they know. Where their recall is not as strong, teachers adapt their lessons to make time for additional practice. Pupils say this helps them feel more confident. Achievement for all pupils, including those with additional barriers in their learning, is a priority for staff. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Precise support plans for pupils with SEND explain the resources that they need, and these are delivered. As a result, pupils with SEND are successful.

Reading and the teaching of phonics have a high profile in the school. The converted bus library is a popular feature of the school. Pupils are excited about visiting it regularly to choose books to take home and read. Older pupils also use the space to practise reading aloud, ready to tell stories to their younger peers. Children in Reception are quickly introduced to the important sounds that they need to start reading. In all phonics lessons, pupils have regular opportunities to rehearse and apply their knowledge. This is seen especially in targeted reading and writing tasks. Pupils are also provided with books and online texts that align closely with the sounds they are able to read. These activities are helping even the youngest pupils become accurate and confident readers.

Leaders have considered key qualities and skills that they want pupils to master. These include developing pupils' social and personal skills. From the early years, in all activities, pupils grow the patience to listen and the self-confidence to speak. By the time they leave school, all pupils have had the chance to invest these skills in a leadership role. These roles include responsibilities such as ambassadors, councillors and 'good-practice' seekers. The routines to select candidates for these roles are carefully planned. This provides all pupils with a secure understanding of cooperation and democracy. The roles build character and resilience. Pupils reflect maturely on disappointments when things do not work out. This is balanced with feelings of success when they achieve positive outcomes. Successes include the school council reducing the impact of lunch packaging on the environment.

Since academisation, the governing body has worked with the trust to bring about improvements in the school. However, there is some minor variation in the effectiveness of governance, for example in the way those responsible for governance monitor and question key policies and practices. This can limit the impact of some aspects of provision. Governors know their strengths and are keen to develop their expertise where required. Parents praise the work of adults in the school, who they say provide an engaging and nurturing education for their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders maintain a safe environment for pupils. Staff have had relevant training to ensure that they know how to spot if a child is at risk. They log any concerns they have about

children, and leaders swiftly follow these up. There is a high expectation that all staff are vigilant and take any concern, however small, seriously.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn knowledge that will keep them safe now and in the future. Leaders arrange additional opportunities to raise the profile of important issues, such as online safety and cyber-bullying. They also share this information with parents to help with pupils' safety outside of school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The thinking in a few areas of the curriculum is being developed and considered. The plans in these subjects are not sufficiently clear for all teachers to know what knowledge matters most. Leaders should ensure that plans detail the most important progressive knowledge that pupils need to be most successful. This will ensure that pupils are fluent to recall all the key concepts in every subject, in preparation for their future learning.
- Those with responsibility for governance have not ensured that the checking of leaders' actions is consistently effective. This means that some practices in the school are not as impactful as possible. Governors, including trustees, need to ensure that they access training that will support them to hold leaders to account for all agreed policies as well as important development priorities, such as curriculum changes.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Theydon Bois Primary School, to be good in January 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.

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	145999
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10240377
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	317
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Revd. Lee Baston
Headteacher	Andre Rall
Website	https://www.theydon.efspt.org/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school academised in July 2018 and joined the Epping Forest Schools Partnership Trust.
- One pupil in the school accesses a registered alternative provision.

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 has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher to discuss leadership of the school, including provision for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector met with three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. A meeting was also held with the chief executive officer of the trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in three subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum documentation, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector met with designated safeguarding leaders, the office manager and other staff to discuss arrangements for safeguarding.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents during the inspection, including curriculum plans, school development plans, safeguarding and behaviour records.
- The inspector also spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons to understand what it is like to be a pupil in their school. The behaviour of pupils was observed across the school site.
- The inspector considered 93 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and 93 free-text comments. The inspector also considered 32 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Kristian Hewitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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