

# Inspection of Thornhill Primary School

Clough Bank, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S61 1TD

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Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

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

Thornhill Primary school is a school where 'everyone matters'. Pupils feel safe in school. They are kind, welcoming and polite. Staff nurture pupils and care for them well. Pupils look after one another at playtimes and lunchtimes. They behave well in lessons. Bullying is rare. Pupils know that an adult will help them if they have any worries.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. They have recently worked to improve the curriculum in some subjects to make sure that pupils achieve well. A number of pupils, many of whom speak English as an additional language, start the school at different points in the school year. Effective processes are in place to support their arrival, enabling them to settle quickly.

Pupils engage well with the local community. For example, they have led a harvest celebration for parents and take part in sporting competitions with other schools. Leaders provide a range of after-school clubs, such as singing club and the popular youth club, to enable pupils to explore their talents and interests.

Leaders encourage parents to be part of the school community. They hold regular workshops for parents to attend, to help them understand how to help their children at home.

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

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is ambitious and prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. Leaders have identified the important vocabulary that pupils need to learn to help them to understand and explain their thinking. Teachers skilfully weave these words into their teaching. In a small number of subjects, such as science or history, leaders are strengthening curriculum plans so that they consistently set out the subject-specific knowledge that pupils should learn in each year group.

Subject leaders have an accurate understanding of the strength of their subject curriculums. Teachers value the support and help that they receive from subject leaders. Teachers check pupils' prior learning and make explicit links between what pupils already know and new content. Teachers' explanations are clear. They check carefully in lessons to make sure that pupils understand new concepts. Pupils speak knowledgeably about what they have learned. For example, some older pupils recounted enthusiastically how the circulatory system worked, using appropriate scientific vocabulary to describe each part of the system.

Children make a good start to their time in school in the early years. Teachers help children learn the routines of school and how to take turns, share and make new friends. The development of communication and language is a high priority. Children learn rhymes and songs and become familiar with key books. Staff play alongside

children, using key vocabulary to help children remember and use the new words that they are learning.

Leaders are successful in encouraging a love of reading. Pupils enjoy listening to adults read to them and have a broad understanding of different books and authors. Leaders have introduced a new curriculum for the teaching of early reading. Staff get regular training to help them teach reading well. Staff check regularly to see if pupils have gaps in their phonic knowledge. However, for some pupils, teachers do not use this information to ensure that the work that they set matches pupils' stages in learning. Some pupils are taught letter sounds that they are not ready for. This hinders some pupils' progress. These pupils access catch-up support and read books that match their stage in learning. Although this helps them make some progress, they do not learn to read as quickly as they could.

Pupils who start during the school year are quickly assessed. If they need additional support, they receive this. Skilled teaching assistants provide bespoke support for these pupils to help them to settle and recover any gaps in their knowledge.

Leaders have recently improved how pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported. Teachers adapt the curriculum well for these pupils. For example, teachers provide pupils with visual prompts to structure the day or provide additional equipment to help them with learning. Teaching assistants break tasks down into smaller chunks to help pupils with SEND.

Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. They are taught about different faiths and people from different cultures. Leaders ensure that the books pupils read develop their understanding of world issues, such as migration and racism. As a result, pupils are respectful of others. Leaders are keen to provide opportunities to develop pupils' cultural capital. Regular visits and a residential stay help pupils to learn about the world around them.

The governing body understands the strengths and areas that school leaders are working on. Governors provides effective challenge to school leaders. Staff are positive about the support they receive from leaders. Staff are proud to work at the school. Teachers receive effective support at the early stages of their career.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular training to ensure they can identify if a pupil is at risk of harm. Records show that when staff raise a concern about a pupil, leaders for safeguarding act on this promptly. Leaders work with external agencies to ensure that pupils are safe.

Leaders have carefully considered how to teach pupils to be safe. Pupils demonstrate a mature understanding of grooming and cyber-bullying.

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

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

- Leaders and teachers do not use the information that they have about some pupils' phonic knowledge to ensure that subsequent work set by teachers matches pupils' stage in learning. This means that some pupils do not learn to read as quickly as they could. Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment of what pupils need to know next and match phonics teaching closely to pupils' stages in learning so that all pupils quickly learn to read with fluency and confidence.
- A small number of new curriculum plans, for example in science or history, do not set out the specific disciplinary knowledge that pupils should learn in each year group. As a result, pupils' learning does not build over time as well as it could in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that the important subject-specific knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn over time are clearly identified in all curriculum subjects.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106849
<b>Local authority</b>	Rotherham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10227204
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	311
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Gregory Shone
<b>Headteacher</b>	Karen Hill
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thornhillprimary.org.uk">www.thornhillprimary.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- There is a high level of pupil movement to and from the school.
- The school uses one alternative provision provider.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with school leaders.

- An inspector scrutinised documents relating to governance, including the minutes of meetings of the governing body. An inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited samples of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.
- Inspectors also looked at some curriculum documents and pupils' work and spoke to pupils about their work in other subjects.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents related to safeguarding and spoke to the schools' designated safeguarding leaders. They spoke to staff and pupils about their safeguarding knowledge.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and spoke to parents on the playground.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.

### **Inspection team**

Tim Scargill-Knight, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Harrington	His Majesty's Inspector
Rachael Macleod	Ofsted Inspector

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