

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

Kirkhills, Thorner, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS14 3JD

Inspection dates:

1 and 2 November 2022

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to school. Some of them say that Thorner Church of England Primary School is a 'magical place'. The school motto, 'An inspirational place to learn and play, helping us make the most of every day', is an excellent description of this welcoming and happy school.

Leaders' high expectations for every pupil are rooted in the school's strong Christian ethos. Adults and pupils alike have the school's values of perseverance, courage, respect, enthusiasm and ambition at the forefront of all they do. Leaders ensure that every pupil can be their very best in their learning and play.

Kind and respectful relationships exist between staff and pupils. Pupils rise to the high expectations that adults have of them. Behaviour in lessons and during unstructured times of day is excellent. There is very little bullying or name-calling. Pupils know what bullying is and what to do if it does happen.

Physical and mental health is a high priority. Pupils look forward to outdoor learning and active play in the well-considered outdoor environment. Pupils care for others and the world around them. They are very excited to have recently achieved an award for their work to protect the environment.

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

Leaders and governors are determined to provide the best education for every pupil. They seek and share best practice with other schools in the trust. Their drive for improvement has continued throughout the pandemic.

The curriculum is broad and ambitious for every pupil. It is designed to enthuse and engage pupils. Teachers plan exciting activities to enrich learning. For example, pupils enjoy experiencing life as Second World War evacuees and the visit of a 'Roman soldier'.

Teachers provide pupils with immediate feedback and help during lessons. This helps everyone to keep up. Leaders have planned and organised the curriculum to build on what pupils already know. For example, in physical education lessons, pupils in Year 2 learn how to use their bodies to defend and attack. In Year 4, pupils develop these skills further to play netball.

Teachers encourage children to use mathematical vocabulary from the start of Reception. As a result, pupils throughout school use increasingly sophisticated language to discuss problems and explain their reasoning.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about what they know. However, they have not acquired secure knowledge across every foundation subject. This is because teachers are not sufficiently confident in delivering the curriculum in all subjects. Subject leaders are supporting teachers to develop this.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in learning and all the school has to offer. They swiftly become confident and successful learners.

Leaders ensure that reading is the key to learning in all subjects. They provide a wealth of interesting books for pupils to enjoy. Leaders plan events and activities to promote the importance and enjoyment of reading. For example, 'mystery readers' share their favourite books with pupils. The local village community joined in by holding a book character scarecrow hunt. The money raised went to buying even more books for pupils to enjoy.

Children in Reception get off to a flying start in reading. They begin to learn letter sounds as soon as they start school. In Reception and Year 1, staff quickly spot pupils who need extra help. This helps everyone to keep up. Teachers make sure that reading books match the sounds pupils know. This helps pupils to develop confidence and become enthusiastic readers.

Leaders carefully plan opportunities to develop their pupils as active citizens. Pupils are proud to take on leadership roles, such as school councillors, eco-schools leaders, play leaders and house captains. Pupils take an active role in the local community. They support the local British Legion in planning and leading the Remembrance Day service. As well as supporting the schools adopted charities, pupils often ask to help causes that have touched their hearts. These include a cancer charity and the victims of the recent floods in Pakistan.

Pupils value the opportunities they have to develop their talents and interests and try new things. Year 6 pupils explain how climbing high ropes on their residential visit has helped them to develop courage.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular training to help keep pupils safe. Staff are very clear that 'anything could happen here', they know the signs to watch out for. Leaders take swift action to follow up concerns and are tenacious in seeking the help of outside agencies when necessary.

Leaders and staff make sure that pupils have the knowledge and confidence to seek help if they need it. Outside agencies, such as the police and the fire service, help to deliver important safety information. Pupils feel safe in school. They say they can put a message in a 'my safe place' box and someone will always help straight away.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils are not able to demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding, matched to the ambitious curriculum, consistently in all of the foundation subjects. This is because some teachers are not confident in teaching the curriculum in every foundation subject. Subject leaders should continue to support colleagues in strengthening their subject knowledge and confidence.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Thorner Church of England Voluntary-Controlled Primary School, to be good in April 2015.

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	146003
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10241357
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	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dawn Scargill
Headteacher	Gemma Whawell
Website	http://thorner.schooljotter2.com/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher is new to post since the previous inspection.
- The school is a member of the Elevate Multi-Academy Trust.

Information about this inspection

- This is the first routine inspection 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 met with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the reading leader, the mathematics leader, the leaders for SEND and the physical education subject leader.
- The inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the local governing body.
- The inspector met with the school improvement officer of the trust.
- The inspector met with a group of girls and a group of boys.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and physical education. This entailed meeting with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers, looking at

curriculum plans, visiting lessons, speaking to pupils about their learning and scrutinising pupils' work.

- The arrangements for safeguarding were checked. This included checks on the single central record, staff training and safeguarding records. An inspector also talked to the designated safeguarding leader.
- The inspector discussed the school's records on attendance and behaviour with the headteacher.
- The inspector reviewed the school's self-evaluation document and plans for improvement.
- The inspector talked informally with pupils and took account of the forty-three responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- The inspector evaluated the sixty-nine responses to Ofsted's survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector met with some members of staff and took account of the twenty responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Janet Keefe, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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