

# Inspection of Thomas Gray Primary School

Chestnut Grove, Bootle, Merseyside L20 4LX

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Inspection dates: 8 and 9 November 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

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

Children in the early years and pupils across Years 1 to 6 are at the heart of Thomas Gray Primary School. Leaders, staff and governors have high expectations for all pupils' behaviour and achievement. Parents and carers who shared their views with inspectors would readily recommend this school to others.

Leaders endeavour to support pupils and their families well. Pupils said that they feel cared for by staff. They are happy, polite and well behaved. Leaders deal with any incidents of bullying and name calling effectively. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Leaders and staff make sure that children and pupils benefit from an ambitious curriculum enhanced by a wide range of trips and visits. Pupils achieve well across a range of subjects. Children in the two-year-old provision get off to a good start. They settle quickly into the routines of learning. These children are well prepared for the Nursery Year.

Leaders make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs met fully. This helps pupils with SEND to take part in all that the school has to offer.

Pupils are encouraged to take on roles and responsibilities, such as applying to become the school's Prime Minister during the school's Parliament week.

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

Leaders have designed a suitably broad and well-ordered curriculum. The curriculum captures the interests of pupils and children from the early years to Year 6. Leaders and governors make sure that subject leaders and staff have the training and support that they need to carry out their roles sufficiently well. This helps leaders to design and implement the curriculum effectively. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

In the majority of subjects, leaders have thought carefully about the essential knowledge that they want pupils to learn. However, in the remaining subjects, leaders are at an earlier stage in this process. They have not identified the key knowledge that pupils must learn. Some pupils learn less well as a result.

Subject leaders and teachers benefit from specialist training to enhance their subject knowledge. This helps teachers to deliver the curriculum well and in the order that leaders intend. Teachers use assessment strategies effectively to check pupils' understanding. They quickly identify and remedy gaps in pupils' learning. In most subjects, pupils, including those with SEND, remember their learning well. They deepen their knowledge and understanding as they progress through the school.

In the early years, expert staff support two-year-old children well. These young children make a positive start to their school life and are well prepared for the transition to the Reception Year. However, some of the activities and resources that teachers select for children in the Reception class do not meet the aims of the curriculum. This means that some children do not learn as well as they should.

Leaders have created a positive reading culture. All staff have been trained to teach the phonics curriculum well. Leaders make sure that learning to read is a priority as soon as the children enter the pre-school. Leaders and staff place a sharp focus on developing children's communication and language skills. Children have many opportunities to share books and sing rhymes with adults.

Books are well matched to the sounds that children and pupils have learned. If pupils fall behind in reading, skilled staff support them to catch up quickly. Older pupils are confident readers. They enjoy the wide range of texts available to them.

Leaders are quick to identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Staff understand how to adjust their delivery of the curriculum so that pupils with SEND benefit from the same ambitious curriculum and learning opportunities as their peers. This helps pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Children in the early years behave well. They are well mannered. Even the youngest children follow routines well. They have a good understanding of right and wrong. By the end of the Reception Year, most children have secured the personal, social and emotional skills necessary to succeed in Year 1. Across the school, pupils learn without disruption.

Leaders are relentless in their efforts to improve pupils' attendance. Pupils' rates of attendance are rapidly improving. For example, pupils said that they enjoy 'grab a bagel bag' on Fridays as it makes them want to come to school. Leaders' successful work with parents is supporting these improvements.

Leaders ensure that children's and pupils' personal development is a priority. Pupils take part in a range of visits, including trips to the theatre and cinema. Pupils learn about respect and tolerance. They are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

Governors hold leaders to account effectively. They know the school and the community that it serves well. Governors are mindful of leaders' and staff's well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that all staff are well trained to spot any signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Leaders have put in place clear procedures for staff to follow if they have any concerns about a pupil's welfare. Leaders follow up any concerns rigorously. Their detailed records help leaders to identify any pupils that may need

help. Where appropriate, leaders involve other agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get the timely support that they need.

Leaders understand the school's context well. They ensure that pupils learn about local risks and any potential wider dangers. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when they are working and playing online.

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

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

- Leaders' work to refine the curriculum is ongoing in some subjects. Subject leaders have not defined the essential knowledge that pupils must know and remember in these subjects. Pupils do not build up their knowledge equally well across the curriculum as a result. Leaders should ensure that their work to revise curriculums is finalised and that these subject curriculums are implemented fully.
- In the Reception Year, some of the activities that teachers choose do not support the aims of the curriculum. This prevents children from building on their prior knowledge. Leaders should ensure that teachers select appropriate resources and activities so that children in the early years can learn the intended curriculum well.

## **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>	134785
<b>Local authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241200
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	251
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Pam Taylor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachael Rimmer
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thomasgrayprimary.co.uk">www.thomasgrayprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 and 28 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision for pupils.

## 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 that the school received since the COVID-19 began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.
- An inspector spoke with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. An inspector also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. They looked at a range of documentation and spoke to leaders and staff. Inspectors also spoke to pupils about whether they feel safe in school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils. An inspector listened to pupils read with a familiar adult. An inspector also spoke with leaders and pupils about the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times. They spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. Inspectors also considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. Inspectors also considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.

### **Inspection team**

Kelly Butler, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jackie Stillings	His Majesty's Inspector
Pamela Potter	Ofsted Inspector

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