

Inspection of Thornton Primary School

Main Street, Thornton, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 1AH

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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?

Pupils in the school are happy and show positive attitudes to learning. Leaders have created a 'Golden Charter' and a list of 'Golden Learning Powers' to help pupils develop good learning habits. Pupils earn rewards for displaying these values. They celebrate them in a weekly assembly. Pupil ambassadors organise and run these assemblies. They do so with enthusiasm.

Pupils are safe in this school and say they feel safe. They know about different types of bullying. They say that it does not happen here. They can use worry boxes to share any concerns they do have. They are confident that teachers will deal with things well.

This small and growing school has a real family feel. Teachers and leaders know their pupils very well. They have high expectations for all. Pupils benefit from teaching that supports them individually.

Leaders show a determination that pupils will leave the school ready for their next steps in education and beyond. Pupils learn about British values and diversity. The school runs a 'jobcentre'. Pupils can apply for a variety of different roles of responsibility within school, which they enjoy.

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

Leaders have developed a curriculum that is ambitious. They have identified the knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to learn in all subjects. They have thought carefully about the order in which teachers should present new learning. This helps pupils to build their knowledge over time. The curriculum in the early years is very detailed. This helps to give all children a good start and get them ready for Year 1.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and present knowledge clearly. Pupils enjoy learning and they try hard. In mathematics lessons, pupils get time to practise what they have learned and gain confidence. Teachers encourage them to talk about their reasoning. In science lessons, teachers plan interesting activities that give pupils a chance to investigate. This helps them to deepen their understanding of scientific concepts.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have the same opportunities to take part in all lessons. Teachers and learning support assistants provide support for pupils who need extra help. Leaders understand the needs of pupils with SEND and the needs of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders meet regularly with pupils and parents. They help teachers plan to meet the needs of all pupils.

Teachers use regular quizzes to help pupils remember what they have learned. They question pupils carefully to check their understanding. Teachers routinely check pupils' books in lessons and help them to make improvements. They use regular assessments to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Leaders have prioritised writing in the school. In English lessons, teachers support pupils to develop their writing. In some foundation subjects, teachers do not give pupils opportunities to write at length. The activities that teachers choose help pupils to learn key knowledge and vocabulary but do not always help them gain a deeper understanding of those subjects.

Children in the early years begin learning to read as soon as they start school. They learn phonics every day and this continues in Year 1 and 2. Teachers are skilful and help children quickly learn to read. They provide support for parents to help their children practise at home. Teachers provide extra support to help those who fall behind to catch up quickly. Teachers read to pupils regularly and share their love of reading. This inspires pupils who are passionate about the stories they have read.

Pupils behave well in lessons. Teachers in the early years and Year 1 use clear routines that help pupils establish positive behaviours. Pupils say that lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Leaders keep a careful check on behaviour in the school. They provide support to teachers to deal with challenging behaviour if it does happen.

Leaders understand the importance of preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. They use daily assemblies to present topics that support pupils' personal development. Pupils learn to be tolerant of others and respect differences. Teachers deliver weekly lessons that cover topics like financial awareness as well as safe and healthy lifestyles. Pupils benefit from after-school enrichment activities, such as cooking, art club and sports clubs.

The governors and trustees at the school share leaders' passion for providing a good education for all pupils. They recognise the strong leadership in the school. They play a supportive role in helping leaders to continue to develop the curriculum. Staff at the school say that leaders support them well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All members of staff and governors receive regular safeguarding training. The school manages safe recruitment.

Leaders use effective systems to record and monitor any concerns they have about pupils. Teachers know how to raise concerns, and they understand the importance of raising every concern no matter how small. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, including online.

Teachers know pupils and their families well. Leaders provide support for families where they need it. Leaders work effectively with external agencies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have rightly introduced a focus on improving pupils' writing. In English lessons, teachers help pupils to improve the quality and depth of writing. In foundation subjects, pupils do not always get chances to practise their writing outside English lessons. Teachers need to ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop their writing across the curriculum.
- In some foundation subjects, learning activities are too simplistic. Teachers focus on key knowledge and vocabulary but do not always provide pupils with opportunities to deepen their knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that curriculum planning helps pupils develop a broad understanding in all 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

Unique reference number	140253
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10254837
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	126
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nigel Harrison
Headteacher	Sarah Acton
Website	www.thornton.leics.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 December 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in January 2018.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, SENCO and other curriculum leaders and teachers.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of trustees, the chief executive and another representative from the Symphony Learning Trust.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the local governing body.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and examined some samples of pupils' work for a wider range of subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the parent, staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils to hear their experiences of the school.
- The lead inspector evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks and holding discussions with leaders, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

John Spragg, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Karen Lewis

Ofsted Inspector

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