

# Inspection of Thongsley Fields Primary and Nursery School

Butts Grove Way, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE29 1PE

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Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

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

Pupils are happy and feel safe. Pupils value the warm and respectful relationships they have with other pupils and staff. Pupils say that bullying is rare. When it does happen, they are confident that adults will sort things out. Pupils are well supported by adults who know them well and are very aware of their individual needs.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They understand the school rules of 'being ready, respectful and safe'. Most pupils follow these rules well. They rise to adults' high expectations of behaviour.

Pupils enjoy a variety of clubs, including for sports, music and art. They have opportunities to contribute to school life, for example as members of the school and eco councils and as reading ambassadors. During the inspection, pupils in the choir visited the O2 arena to sing with others from across the country.

Pupils enjoy their learning. However, they have gaps in their knowledge and understanding in reading and mathematics. Pupils do not yet learn and achieve as well as they should.

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

Leaders have brought about significant improvements since the school opened. They have introduced a well-planned curriculum across all year groups. This plans pupils' learning from the early years up to Year 6.

Leaders have made the teaching of reading a priority. Phonics is taught as soon as pupils start in Reception. Pupils read books that match the sounds they are learning. Those who fall behind are identified quickly and receive extra help. However, some adults do not use the school's chosen phonics programme as well as they should. This means that not all pupils learn letter sounds well.

Leaders have raised the profile of reading across the school. Pupils enjoy a well-stocked and diverse library. There are also inviting reading areas in all classrooms. Many pupils enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors and the texts they read in class. Where some older pupils need additional reading support, the new reading curriculum is helping them to catch up. However, these pupils still have gaps in their knowledge that impact their ability to read fluently and with understanding.

Pupils' learning in mathematics is improving. However, some older pupils still lack basic skills and understanding. This is due to inconsistencies in the curriculum and quality of teaching historically. This prevents these pupils from accessing the full mathematics curriculum.

Pupils enjoy their learning across the curriculum subjects. However, leaders have not established a system to check on what pupils know and can do in these subjects.

Some subject leaders are new to their roles. They are beginning to check their subject areas. However, they do not yet have the knowledge and expertise needed to do this consistently well.

Children make a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes. This is because the curriculum in the early years is well planned and sequenced. Early years staff deliver the school's chosen phonics programme effectively. Children learn to take turns, share, concentrate and make sensible choices in their learning and play. The early years classes provide happy, purposeful and well-organised environments in which to learn.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified early and are supported appropriately. Pupils are included in lessons. Teachers adapt the planned curriculum where necessary. Skilled adults provide extra support for those pupils who need this.

The school has a coherently planned personal, social, health and economic education curriculum. This ensures that pupils learn about a range of topics in an age-appropriate way. For example, pupils learn about different kinds of families and how others may be different from them. This helps them to value the differences between others and become respectful members of the school community. The curriculum, through opportunities such as outdoor learning, helps pupils to develop an understanding of the importance of perseverance and resilience.

New teachers are grateful for the support that they receive. Other staff also feel well supported. All appreciate that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being.

Senior leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision. Trust leaders and governors carry out their statutory duties effectively. They have an accurate view of what the school does well and where it needs to further improve.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders ensure that all staff have regular and relevant training. This ensures that they know how to spot when a pupil is at risk of harm and how to report this. Staff know the different risks to pupils, including local issues. They ensure that pupils learn how to keep safe in the community and online. Pupils know that there is always an adult they can talk to if they have any worries.

Safeguarding records are detailed. They show that responses to concerns are timely and appropriate. Leaders are proactive and quick to seek external professional advice to keep pupils safe. They ensure that all relevant checks are made on new staff.

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

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

- Some staff do not deliver the school's chosen phonics programme as well as they should. For some older pupils, there are gaps in their reading that are not being addressed quickly enough. This means that some pupils cannot read as fluently as they should. Leaders should ensure that all staff who teach phonics do so consistently well with secure expertise so that all pupils make the strongest start in learning to read. They should also ensure that older pupils are well supported to catch up.
- Teachers are not always identifying and supporting effectively those pupils who do not have all the basic mathematical knowledge and understanding they need to be successful. Leaders should support teachers to identify when pupils need extra help and how to adapt their teaching so pupils can access the full mathematics curriculum, including opportunities for problem-solving and reasoning.
- In some subjects, assessment and subject leadership are not fully developed. This means that leaders do not know enough about what pupils know and can do. Leaders should continue their work to strengthen assessment and subject leadership, including monitoring. This is so that leaders have an accurate picture of what pupils know and can do in those subject areas.

## 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>	146310
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10254981
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	268
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Sue Williamson
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Jones
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thongsleyfields.org">www.thongsleyfields.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school opened as part of The Cam Academy Trust in September 2018.
- The predecessor school was under the same name and was judged to require improvement when it was last inspected.
- Nursery provision, known as Little Acorns, for children aged 3 and 4 is provided on site and managed by those responsible for governance. They also oversee a breakfast club.

## 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 this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, science and art, to evaluate the quality of education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, considered curriculum plans, visited a

sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and scrutinised samples of pupils' work. Other aspects of the curriculum were also scrutinised to give the inspector further evidence for the quality of education.

- Inspectors observed some younger pupils read to staff and talked to them about their reading. They also spoke to older pupils about reading.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour across the site. They met with groups of pupils to seek their views of the school. They also spoke to pupils informally in class, around the school and at breaktimes.
- The lead inspector met with the safeguarding team to discuss safeguarding.
- The lead inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator and scrutinised documentation for provision for pupils with SEND. She observed support for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation during the inspection, including curriculum plans, school development plans and safeguarding records.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing board, including the chair. She held a separate meeting with the chief executive officer of The Cam Academy Trust and the primary executive leader.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents. An inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors considered 16 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and nine free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the views of staff, including the 26 responses to the online staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Joan Beale, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Duncan Ramsey	Ofsted Inspector
Joe Creswick	Ofsted Inspector

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