

Inspection of Thomas Middlecott Academy

Edinburgh Drive, Kirton, Boston, Lincolnshire PE20 1JS

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils are happy to attend Thomas Middlecott Academy. They are confident that they are safe and know how to stay safe. They appreciate the rapid and effective changes that new leaders have brought about.

Pupils feel like they belong to a school community. The school's ethos, the 'TMA way', is now threaded through the school. It underpins most pupils' good behaviour. Pupils say that the new behaviour system has improved their conduct. They like how easy it is to understand.

Leaders are aspirational for their pupils. They have set high academic and behaviour expectations. However, some pupils do not yet learn as well as they should. This is because some teachers do not always check that pupils have a secure enough understanding of their learning.

Any bullying is dealt with swiftly. Pupils are encouraged to report their concerns. Most pupils say that there are adults in the school that they would talk to if they were worried. Some girls say that inappropriate language is not always dealt with effectively.

Leaders provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities for pupils, including sports clubs, trips to the opera and local competitions.

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

The executive headteacher, along with the senior leadership team, has forged a new culture of high expectations for staff and pupils. In conjunction with the trust, leaders have created an ambitious and challenging curriculum for all pupils. Subject leaders have identified the important content that pupils need to learn and how their future learning builds on this.

Lessons are purposeful and follow a clear structure. Teachers consistently use the 'I do, we do, you do' approach. Pupils say this helps them to learn. Sometimes, teachers do not think carefully enough about how to adapt the teaching of the curriculum for all pupils. They do not always identify gaps or misconceptions in pupils' learning. When this is the case, pupils achieve less well.

Leaders ensure that the vast majority of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support. However, teachers do not always carefully consider how they support all pupils with SEND in lessons. When this happens, some pupils do not learn as effectively as they could.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. The school understands its importance. Reading takes place daily. Texts are very challenging, and teachers make sure pupils read a wide range of literature. This challenges pupils' thinking and builds their cultural capital and understanding. Pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read

receive effective support. Leaders regularly check how well pupils are doing with their reading. As a result, pupils quickly gain the skills they need to become confident and fluent readers.

Most pupils take pride in their work. They are keen to learn and engage in lessons. Pupils' behaviour during lessons is mostly calm and orderly. However, teachers do not reliably apply the behaviour system consistently. As a result, occasionally, some pupils' learning is disrupted. A small number of pupils do not attend school as often as they should. This means that they sometimes miss important learning. However, leaders effectively and proactively engage with parents and families to support pupils to improve their attendance.

The personal development curriculum, including relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education, is sequenced well and age appropriate. Pupils receive effective careers advice, information and guidance. They learn about a range of careers. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education, employment or training. Pupils have opportunities to explore and develop skills and experiences to prepare them for their future in the wider world.

Staff speak positively about the support they receive from leaders and the trust. The vast majority say that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. Leaders, including from the trust, and governors have a clear insight into what the school does well and what needs to improve further. They have rapidly improved many areas of the school since the previous inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders understand the local community well. They identify emerging risks that pupils may face away from school. This informs the school's personal development programme so that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training. They know to pass on any concerns they may have about pupils' welfare. Safeguarding leaders respond quickly to any such concerns and provide appropriate support.

Leaders liaise proactively with a wide range of agencies to ensure that pupils promptly receive the support and guidance that they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not always check that pupils' understanding of what they have been taught is secure. They do not reliably address pupils' misconceptions and gaps in their learning. Pupils are sometimes moved on to new learning before they are ready. Leaders should ensure that all teachers check pupils' knowledge and

understanding and provide clear feedback before moving pupils' learning on.

- Some teachers do not always adapt the teaching of the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. This includes pupils with SEND. Consequently, these pupils do not progress through the curriculum as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that all teachers consider curriculum and lesson content carefully, adapting their lessons so that all pupils learn as well as they should.
- Sometimes teachers do not apply the school's behaviour policy consistently well. Therefore, occasionally, some pupils' learning is disrupted. Leaders should ensure that teachers consistently follow the school's behaviour policy so that pupils' learning is not affected.

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	141391
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10268209
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	572
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Ross
Headteacher	Kimberley Willmot
Website	www.thomasmiddlecott.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher started in July 2022.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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 carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, history, science, physical education and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of

lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.

- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other members of the senior leadership team, including the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the multi-academy trust and the local governing body.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding policies, procedures and records, including the checks made on the suitability of staff and governors. They met with leaders, governors, staff and pupils to further consider the effectiveness of safeguarding at the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school site. They also scrutinised behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors considered responses from staff and pupils to Ofsted's surveys. Inspectors reviewed responses from parents and carers to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Michael Wilson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sean Kelly	Ofsted Inspector
Javier Sanchez-Garcia	Ofsted Inspector

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