

# Inspection of Thorplands Primary School

Farm Field Court, Thorplands, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN3 8AQ

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Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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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 are happy at Thorplands Primary School. They enjoy coming to school and appreciate the wide range of experiences that the school offers. Leaders are aspirational about what pupils can achieve. They have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. The school is calm, and disruptions to learning are rare.

Pupils say they feel safe at this school. They say that bullying is rare, and if it does happen, teachers deal with it quickly. Pupils are polite and enjoy positive relationships with staff. Staff know pupils well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive excellent support. Parents and carers appreciate the caring environment at the school.

Leaders plan a wide range of opportunities and experiences to support pupils' wider development. These include learning about cooking and gardening, as well as music, drama and sports clubs. Pupils appreciate visits that they have been on to the theatre, museums and the Houses of Parliament. All pupils have the opportunity to go on residential trips to Derbyshire and Wales. Children in the early years go shopping and visit the local library.

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

Leaders have planned ambitious curriculums in all subjects. These plans identify the important knowledge leaders want pupils to learn. Leaders make sure that teachers know what to teach and when. They work together to improve the curriculum plans. Teachers appreciate the support they get with planning interesting lessons.

Leaders recognise that learning important vocabulary will help pupils to achieve well in all subjects. Teachers encourage pupils to discuss their ideas using the correct language. Pupils talk confidently about what they are learning. Teachers ask questions that help them recall the vocabulary they have learned. In the early years, teachers focus on language and communication to prepare children well for their next steps.

Teachers use quizzes and other learning activities to revisit topics with pupils. In mathematics and science, leaders have planned carefully how teachers will check that pupils can remember what they have learned in the past. Teachers help pupils when they have gaps in their understanding. In some subjects, leaders have not yet planned well enough how teachers should check pupils' learning over time.

In most lessons, teachers adapt plans well to meet the needs of all their pupils. They make sure that pupils build on what they already know. However, in some lessons, activities do not support pupils to make links between new knowledge and what they have learned before. Sometimes, activities do not help pupils learn the knowledge identified in the curriculum as well as they might.

Leaders know the importance of helping pupils to quickly learn to read. Teachers and other adults teach phonics consistently well. In the Reception class, children learn phonics every day. This continues for pupils in key stage 1. Teachers check pupils' progress often. They make sure that all pupils learn the knowledge that will help them improve their reading. Pupils who struggle with reading get extra help. Older pupils have opportunities to develop reading skills across the curriculum. They enjoy reading.

Leaders make sure that teachers and other adults know how to support pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND get the help they need to access lessons. They enjoy learning and achieve well.

In classrooms and around school, pupils behave well. Teachers establish clear routines to encourage good behaviour. Pupils respond well, and most show positive attitudes to learning. When there are any disruptions, teachers manage them well. Leaders provide effective support for a small number of pupils who struggle to regulate their own behaviour.

Leaders have prioritised improving pupil attendance. They reward pupils with good attendance. Pupils say that they appreciate this, and most pupils do attend school well. However, a significant minority of pupils do not attend school often enough. This includes a large number of disadvantaged pupils.

There is a well-planned curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and well. They understand diversity and say that everyone feels welcome in their school. Pupils learn about different faiths and beliefs.

Trustees know the school well. They have supported leaders well to develop the curriculum. Trustees and leaders want all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, to benefit from a wide range of experiences. Staff feel well supported by leaders. They say that leaders help them to manage their workload so that they can focus on teaching pupils well.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that all staff receive regular safeguarding training. All staff understand their role in keeping pupils safe. They know how to report concerns. Leaders deal with concerns appropriately. They work well with parents to ensure pupils are safe and well. When it is necessary, leaders work well with social services and other agencies. They keep detailed records.

Pupils know who they can speak to if they have any concerns. They say that they trust that staff will take their concerns seriously. Leaders know which pupils are more vulnerable. They support these pupils well.

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

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

- In some subjects, the lessons that teachers plan do not always reflect the ambitious content in the curriculum. Pupils do not reliably learn the knowledge that is identified in the curriculum. Sometimes, activities do not help pupils build on knowledge they have learned before. Leaders need to ensure that lesson activities help pupils to learn and remember the important knowledge over time.
- In foundation subjects, leaders have planned an ambitious curriculum but have not established well enough how they will check pupils' learning over time. Leaders do not have an accurate view of how well pupils follow the curriculum in these subjects. Leaders need to check how well pupils can remember what they have learned.
- Too many pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, do not attend school regularly enough. These pupils miss too much school, and this has a negative impact on the progress they make. Leaders need to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly.

## 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>	139424
<b>Local authority</b>	West Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10242222
<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>	227
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair</b>	Jeremy Stockdale
<b>Headteacher</b>	Samantha Mawer
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.thorplandsprimary.org.uk">https://www.thorplandsprimary.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18 and 19 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school became part of the Northampton Primary Academy Trust in 2018. When the predecessor school, Thorplands Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be a good school.

## 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 executive headteacher, the head of school, other senior leaders, subject leaders and a range of other staff. The headteacher was not in school during the inspection.

- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer and another representative of the Northampton Primary Academies Trust.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and another member of the academy improvement board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and geography. 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 looked at curriculum plans and pupils' work from some other foundation subjects.
- Inspectors looked at curriculum plans for the early years and PSHE.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online parent and staff surveys.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils and parents 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

Jason Brooks

Ofsted Inspector

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