

# Inspection of Thelwall Infant School

Thelwall Infant School, Pelham Road, Thelwall, Warrington, Cheshire WA4 2HF

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Inspection dates: 21 and 22 March 2023

<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>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Thelwall Infant School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

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

Leaders and staff ensure that pupils feel part of the friendly school community. Pupils told inspectors that everyone is made to feel welcome, regardless of their differences. They value the strong friendships that they have with their classmates. Pupils are happy.

Leaders and staff are ambitious for all pupils to be successful. Children in the early years achieve highly, as do most pupils in key stage 1. Pupils are polite and respectful to staff and each other. Children in the early years quickly settle into school life and live up to leaders' high expectations for their behaviour. Pupils in key stage 1 behave well in lessons and during play times.

Pupils benefit from their positive relationships with staff. Pupils told inspectors that staff listen to their concerns and provide any support needed. Leaders have systems in place to identify any incidents of bullying. If bullying does occur, leaders deal with it quickly. Pupils are safe at school.

Pupils benefit from a range of trips. Children in the early years enjoyed their ride on a local bus. Year 2 pupils stayed overnight at an adventure centre. Pupils take part in a range of clubs, including football. Such experiences help to build pupils' confidence.

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

Leaders have established a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have identified the important knowledge that pupils should learn and when this should be taught.

Leaders have devised an ambitious early years curriculum. Leaders have considered what children should learn in the Nursery Year and how this is built upon in the Reception Year. As a result, by the end of the early years, most children are ready for the demands of the Year 1 curriculum.

Staff benefit from regular, appropriate training. This helps them to develop their subject knowledge so that they are well equipped to teach across the curriculum. Leaders and teachers check on what pupils know and remember. When needed, teachers provide pupils with the opportunity to revisit previous learning. In the main, teachers provide pupils with learning activities that help pupils to deepen their knowledge over time.

In a small number of subjects, leaders have recently revised the curriculums. These new curriculums are well thought out. However, as a result of the previous weaker curriculums, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. This means that these pupils do not achieve as well as they should in these subjects.

Leaders prioritise developing children's love of reading from the start of the Nursery Year. Children in the Reception Year begin the phonics programme as soon as they start school. Children quickly learn the sounds that letters represent. Staff ensure that children learn to write the letters that represent the different sounds with increasing accuracy. Children use this knowledge well in their emergent writing. Leaders ensure that pupils in key stage 1 continue to develop a deep body of knowledge in phonics. Staff carry out regular checks on pupils' understanding of phonics. There is timely extra support for those pupils who need it.

Pupils read books that are closely matched to the sounds they are learning. Pupils experience success when reading these books, which helps to develop their enjoyment of sitting down with a book. By the end of Year 2, many pupils are confident, fluent and accurate readers.

Leaders have effective systems to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers adapt how they deliver the curriculum and the learning activities for pupils with SEND. This means that pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. Consequently, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Children in the early years are exceptionally well behaved. They cooperate well together and readily follow established routines. Across the school, most pupils display positive attitudes towards learning and are attentive in lessons. This allows pupils to learn without interruption.

Pupils benefit from a strong offer of personal development opportunities. Leaders' careful planning ensures that pupils develop their understanding of fundamental British values, including democracy. Pupils learn how to keep themselves fit and well. They understand about healthy and unhealthy foods.

Members of the local governing board and trustees support and challenge leaders appropriately. They are considerate of staff's workload and well-being when making decisions about policies and procedures. Staff are positive about working at the school and value the support they receive.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are well trained to spot signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff follow clear procedures to report any concerns they have about a pupil. Leaders respond to safeguarding concerns in a timely manner. They work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families have the help and support needed.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to understand risks and how to keep themselves safe. This includes avoiding sharing personal information, keeping safe when crossing roads and using the internet safely.

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

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

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have recently revised the curriculums. As a result of the previous weak curriculums, some pupils have gaps in their subject knowledge. Leaders should ensure that these pupils learn the important knowledge that they have missed so that they can make sense of new learning.

## 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>	148488
<b>Local authority</b>	Warrington
<b>Inspection number</b>	10242265
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	147
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Clare Swann
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Rostron
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thelwallinfantschool.co.uk">www.thelwallinfantschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Thelwall Infant School converted to become an academy school in May 2021. When its predecessor school, Thelwall Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is part of the Beam Education Trust.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- The local governing board operates a breakfast club and after-school 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.

- The inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. As part of the deep dives, the inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, met with teachers and looked at children's and pupils' work. The inspectors also looked at the curriculum and pupils' work in some other curriculum subjects. The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.
- An inspector spoke with representatives of the local governing board, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector met with representatives of the trust, including the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. They reviewed a range of documentation and spoke to leaders and staff. Inspectors also spoke to pupils about whether they felt safe in school.
- 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 pupil survey.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. Inspectors also considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's staff survey.
- An inspector spoke with parents and carers. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.

## Inspection team

David Robinson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Moira Loftus

Ofsted Inspector

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