

Inspection of a good school: Tetsworth Primary School

15 High Street, Tetsworth, Thame, Oxfordshire OX9 7AB

Inspection date: 14 March 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like their small school. They enjoy many aspects of school life. This includes playing competitive sport against much larger local schools. Pupils are proud to represent Tetsworth and love the many successes they achieve.

The 'Tetsworth Way' supports pupils in knowing how to behave. Pupils show each other kindness and patience. They try their best. There is a strong sense of teamwork that permeates the whole school community. Each pupil in the school has a named adult who is there to listen. Pupils know that they will be heard, and this helps them to feel safe. Leaders deal with any incidents of bullying thoroughly.

Overall, pupils behave well in lessons, which are mostly free from low-level disruption. Those pupils who need extra help to self-regulate their emotions get carefully considered support. Leaders are wisely using external experts to support them with further strategies.

Leaders have high ambitions for this 'small school with big ideas'. However, not all pupils learn well enough. This is because of weaknesses in the curriculum. Changes are afoot. There is demonstrable capacity for the improvement work that is starting to take place. For example, pupils loved their brand-new breakfast club that started up in the week of the inspection.

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

Leaders are not as far ahead with their curriculum thinking as they want to be. This is due in part to the disruption caused by the pandemic, staff and leadership changes, and a reorganisation of the mixed-age classes. Leaders have not considered well enough how the curriculum needs to change, in many subjects, to take this new structure into

account. Pupils therefore are not learning as well as they should. Leaders also do not have enough of an oversight of how well pupils are learning. This means that staff do not always know precisely what they need to teach, and when, across the whole curriculum. In addition, leaders' monitoring of the impact of the curriculum is not yet as carefully considered as it needs to be.

Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum identifies precise learning in many subjects. They have, however, brought about some recent improvements in the quality of education. For example, the science curriculum is now well considered. Leaders have set out precisely the important content that pupils need to know and remember. They have carefully sequenced learning to make sure that the new knowledge builds on prior learning. Pupils apply their scientific knowledge to practical investigations well.

Another area of strength is early years, where children get off to a flying start. Leaders have carefully considered the subject-specific knowledge that children in Reception and Nursery need to secure. Children are engaged in purposeful activities. Staff focus on language development particularly well.

Leaders prioritise learning to read. The teaching of phonics is sound. Pupils practise with reading books that are well matched to their phonic knowledge. When pupils fall behind, they are given effective support from staff so that they catch up quickly.

Teachers do check pupils' phonics gaps well and plan suitable support. This is not always the case for other subjects. This is because teaching does not always pick up pupils' misconceptions quickly enough. Teachers also do not have consistently high expectations of the work that pupils produce. This includes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is due, in part, to the lack of leaders' clarity in what they want teachers to teach and pupils to remember in many subjects.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND well. However, many procedures to support these pupils are not securely embedded yet. Teachers do not always adapt the curriculum well enough to meet pupils' needs. This means that these pupils do not always learn as well as they should. New leaders have secure plans in place for how they intend to improve this area of the school's work.

There is a suitable personal, social, health and economic curriculum in place that teaches pupils about life beyond Tetsworth. Pupils learn about different forms of discrimination and are considerate of others. Staff encourage pupils to be aspirational for their lives beyond the school. For example, Tetsworth's recent 140th anniversary brought back many ex-pupils to inspire current pupils to 'think big' for their future.

Staff enjoy working at this friendly school but know that leaders need to make many changes. They respect the head of school greatly and appreciate the support she gives them.

Governors know the school well. They provide effective challenge and support but could do more. Currently, they do not have access to detailed enough school improvement information. This makes it hard for them to hold leaders to account effectively. Many

parents and carers recognise the recent improvements in the school. They too want to know more about leaders' plans for improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils well. Relationships are warm. As a result, staff spot any changes in pupils' behaviour or mood immediately. They know what to do if they have concerns. Leaders have ensured that staff understand the risks that some pupils may face. Staff are vigilant. Safeguarding training is up to date and regular. Governors are fully aware of their statutory duties to protect pupils. They regularly check that all safeguarding procedures are being followed well.

Leaders work well with outside agencies. Their work is timely, considered and effective. Consequently, pupils and their families get the support they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In many subjects, curriculum thinking is not well sequenced and does not set out precisely enough what pupils should learn and remember. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they should. Leaders should consider the important knowledge they want pupils to learn in all subjects over time.
- Leaders have had limited capacity to check how well the curriculum is being taught and the impact it is having on pupils' achievement. This has led to variability in how well the curriculum is implemented. Leaders should introduce effective monitoring systems to check what pupils have learned and how well they have done so. They will then be able to use this information to guide them more effectively in knowing the right curriculum adaptations to make and the right support to provide to teachers.
- Pupils with SEND do not consistently receive the support they need to learn well. They cannot always access the intended learning. Leaders must ensure that all staff have the skills and knowledge they need to support pupils with SEND to achieve as well as they should.
- Current school improvement planning is not school specific and lacks coherence and clarity for Tetsworth Primary School. The joint federation school improvement plan does not allow governors to understand fully the changes needed in this school well enough. This means that governors cannot hold leaders to account as rigorously as they wish. Leaders should ensure that governors, as well as staff and parents, fully understand how and when improvements will be achieved.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2013.

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	123031
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10242008
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rachel Caseby
Headteacher	Paul Hankey (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.tetsworth.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There has been much change in leadership at the school since the previous inspection. A new head of school joined in September 2022 following the retirement of the previous head of school.
- In September 2022, leaders reorganised the class structure from three mixed-age classes to four mixed-age classes.
- The school is a partner school in John Hampden and Tetsworth Schools Federation. The federation was formed in 2009. The schools share the same governing body.
- Leaders do not currently make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with two governors in person and met with the chair of governors online.

- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and computing. They spoke to subject leaders about the curriculum. They spoke to staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. The lead inspector heard pupils read to an adult from the school. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspectors checked the single central record, reviewed safeguarding records, and spoke to leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also discussed safeguarding with those responsible for governance and with the local authority.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation of the school and the federation school improvement plan.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, leaders and staff to discuss the wider development of pupils, behaviour, well-being and workload.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments. An inspector also spoke to parents at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the 12 responses from staff and 31 responses from pupils to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Lea Hannam, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Brinkley

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