

# Inspection of Thorns Primary School

Thorns Road, Quarry Bank, Brierley Hill, West Midlands DY5 2JY

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Inspection dates: 18 and 19 April 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>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

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

Pupils enjoy and are very proud of their school. They know what is expected of them for both behaviour and learning. They go above and beyond to behave in 'The Thorns Way'.

Pupils rise to the high expectations and challenge that leaders and teachers set for them in their learning. Pupils can remember well and talk confidently about their learning in different subjects. Their passion and enthusiasm bounces through the conversations within lessons.

Pupils happily work and play together in and out of the classroom. Older pupils take their role of helping staff and the younger pupils seriously. They are proud of their contribution to supporting each other and feel valued as individuals of worth. They enjoy the varied events the school offers. These include the theatre, swimming, bedtime stories and making music from junk items. Spending time outdoors in the woods making dens and using tools to whittle Santa pegs is a firm favourite.

Pupils follow the example of staff in treating each other with kindness and fairness. They speak of feeling safe and secure. Pupils rattle off the names of many adults who they trust to turn to for help if they need it. 'Be safe, be kind, be great' is known, understood and lived out by everyone in the school.

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

Leaders' vision of every child being safe, happy and learning because every adult is caring, happy in their work and skilled is a reality. Staff appreciate the support and care that leaders give to them. Leaders' policies ensure that there is consistency and fairness in the way that staff treat pupils, including in the management of behaviour.

Leaders have carefully, step by step, put clear routines and ways of working in place to ensure that good behaviour allows teachers to teach and pupils to learn. This is successful and clear to see threaded throughout the life of the school.

Leaders' attention to detail is visible within the curriculum too. Their careful thinking and hard work in setting out what should be taught and when is making a real and positive difference to the way all groups of pupils learn. However, there are a few spelling mistakes and letter formation errors in books that teachers do not always address well enough.

Staff receive a range of training and support that helps them to understand how the curriculum fits together and builds up over time. This starts right from the early years. Teachers use this knowledge well to help pupils secure their learning, one piece at a time. For example, in design and technology, pupils learn about a range of stitches, before choosing the one they wish to use to make a bookmark. They then practise their chosen stitch, as well as ways of sewing buttons and sequins onto material. Finally, they consider what worked well and what they would change.

Staff are quick to notice if pupils start to need extra help. Leaders act swiftly to put the right help in place. They reach out to a range of external specialists when needed. This means all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are well-supported in learning. They join in fully with school life. This is helping many pupils to work at the appropriate level for their age. For pupils who are not there yet, a range of targeted extra help is allowing them to move closer to where they should be. So, although the outcomes of all pupils from previous national tests are not strong, the work happening in school is showing an improving picture.

The youngest children in school soon adapt to 'The Thorns Way'. In Reception, staff skilfully use all areas of the learning environment well to help children to explore and develop. The success of the specific teaching, alongside supported exploration, is clear to see. Inspectors noted the positive outcomes that children are achieving. Children show a secure level of conversation, concentration and cooperation that means they are ready for Year 1.

Leaders continually promote the love of reading, while making sure that pupils learn to read with increasing confidence and fluency. This starts in Reception and continues throughout the school. Staff teach phonics well. They make sure that pupils have books that match the sounds they know. Pupils enjoy reading. They particularly enjoy their weekly time as a class in the school library. They speak of it being a time of togetherness.

Being together and being equal is important to pupils. They understand that people might have different families, follow different faiths or are good at different things. Pupils show deep respect for each other and the staff. They spoke with great pride about the warm welcome that awaits any new pupil. Parents and carers commented positively on this aspect too. Governors rightly share the pride of being a safe, happy and learning team within and for the community that the school serves.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make the right checks on staff to ensure they are safe to work with pupils. They ensure staff are well-equipped to notice and report any concerns that they may have. Staff follow the policies in place well. This means that families and pupils are cared for and help is put in place if needed.

Pupils know about keeping safe in many different situations, including fire, water and online. Older pupils show an appropriate understanding of how friendships online can change your behaviour. Pupils sign a contract to say they will use technology sensibly and safely. They understand why you practise fire evacuation and lockdown procedures.

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

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

- Teachers do not consistently address pupils' errors in spelling and handwriting. As a result, pupils repeat the same mistakes or are left with some misunderstandings. Leaders need to make sure that all teachers consistently identify and promptly address errors and misconceptions.

## 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>	103787
<b>Local authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268211
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	199
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Rebecca Dalgleish
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rebecca Jordan
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thorns.sch.life">www.thorns.sch.life</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school uses a local authority specialist provision.
- The school has nearly double the national average of pupils with SEND.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and senior leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and design and technology. 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.

- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work in other subjects, including English and science.
- The lead inspector met with four members of the governing body, including the chair. The lead inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority and the chief executive officer of Excelsior Multi-Academy Trust.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons at different times of the day and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors met with leaders about the school's safeguarding procedures. Inspectors reviewed policies and records relating to safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors spoke to pupils and staff about pupils' safety.
- The lead inspector reviewed a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and information on the school's website.
- Inspectors talked informally with pupils and staff to gather general information about school life. In addition, they took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of staff's and parents' views.

### **Inspection team**

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Martina Abbott

Ofsted Inspector

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