

Inspection of Thundersley Primary School

Hart Road, Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex SS7 3PT

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 May 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Outstanding |
| Personal development | Outstanding |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Good |

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are safe and incredibly happy at Thundersley Primary school. Bullying is rare. Staff deal with it quickly and never tolerate it. The school motto 'be the best you can be' is the golden thread that flows through everything pupils experience at school. Pupils behave exceptionally well around school and in lessons. The experiences leaders provide them are rich, varied and carefully thought through.

Pupils work incredibly hard during their lessons. They are committed to their learning. They strive to do their best across all areas of the curriculum, so they reach the high expectations all staff have of them. Pupils relish the opportunities leaders carefully plan for them to develop their resilience. They embrace setbacks and see losing in sporting competitions as an opportunity to get even better. Staff support pupils to become inquisitive, thoughtful and reflective.

Pupils love the range of clubs on offer to them. These clubs help pupils to develop existing talents such as acting through the drama club. The clubs also provide pupils with opportunities to encounter things they may not otherwise get the chance to, such as learning to play chess or a new language at the French or Latin clubs.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that clearly sets out what pupils will learn from early years to the end of key stage 2. They have carefully ordered the content of this curriculum so that pupils build on what they already know. Leaders have trained staff to teach the curriculum well. Teachers and teaching assistants have the subject knowledge they need to do this effectively. For example, during lessons, teachers skilfully revisit important knowledge pupils have learned. This helps pupils to secure their understanding of the curriculum.

Leaders have ensured that pupils access a high-quality reading curriculum. In Reception, children are proficient at blending sounds together to help them read new words. They apply this knowledge to help them spell these new words accurately. Leaders quickly identify any pupil who is finding reading hard. Staff then give these pupils the support they need. The books that pupils read help them to apply their knowledge of sounds into their reading. However, some pupils do not have the chance to practise their fluency once they have sounded out new words. On occasion, some staff do not explain new vocabulary with precision. As a result, some pupils do not read as fluently, or secure an understanding of new vocabulary, as well as they could.

Leaders support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to learn well. Training and continuous support ensure that staff understand and use appropriate strategies and approaches to support pupils' needs. Adults carefully support pupils with SEND to access the same curriculum as their peers. Pupils with SEND achieve well.

As soon as children start in Reception, they develop independence and quickly settle. Staff teach children how to manage their feelings and emotions at a young age. Children respond well to this. Leaders have embedded clear routines and expectations across the school. Pupils of all ages show high levels of self-control. At lunchtime, pupils play actively and kindly together. Disagreements are rare. Should disagreements happen, the pupil anti-bullying ambassadors are skilled at helping pupils to resolve them.

Leaders meticulously plan varied opportunities for all pupils. Pupils contribute their views about this wider offer. The school council is proud of the improvements pupils have made to the school. The personal, social, health and economic curriculum supports pupils' wider development well. Pupils learn about and understand what healthy relationships are. They have a firm understanding of a range of faiths and beliefs. Pupils understand what it means to be respectful. They are clear about the importance of 'understanding someone who is different to you and treating them how you want to be treated'.

Governors and trustees monitor the work of the school well. They have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and what leaders are striving to improve. They ensure that leaders support staff to manage their workload and well-being. Leaders proactively engage the parental community. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff have the knowledge and understanding they need to identify any pupil who may be at risk of harm. They understand what the possible safeguarding risks in the local area are. Staff raise concerns quickly and consistently using the agreed procedures. Leaders act on these concerns. They use this information to provide support, including, where appropriate, seeking help from other professionals. Leaders also provide high-quality support for families through the school learning mentor and family support worker. The curriculum teaches pupils how to keep safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their fluency and secure their understanding of new language as securely as they should. Leaders must ensure they provide staff with the support and guidance they need to teach the planned curriculum as they intend, so that these pupils have better opportunities to read with fluency and secure their understanding of new language.

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

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| Unique reference number | 141626 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 10255075 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 457 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | David Norris |
| Headteacher | Emma Dawson |
| Website | www.thundersleyprimary.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 4 October 2017 |

Information about this school

- The headteacher is also the chief executive officer of the Robus Multi Academy Trust.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school care for pupils.
- There is a nursery on the school site which is run by an external provider.
- The school does not currently use any alternative 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, physical education and design technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at

samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to pupils read with a familiar member of staff.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised safeguarding policies, the school's record of background checks of adults at the school, and a sample of child protection files. Inspectors also spoke with governors, trustees, the designated safeguarding lead and two deputy designated safeguarding leads, the safeguarding governor and staff about safeguarding practices at the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, staff, governors, trustees and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, bullying records, attendance records, pupil records, minutes of governing body meetings, school improvement monitoring reports, school development plans and school policies.
- There were 145 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, which were considered alongside written correspondence received. Inspectors spoke with parents as they arrived at school.
- There were 124 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils. Inspectors also spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to gather their views.
- There were 68 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff. Inspectors met with staff throughout the inspection to gather their views.

Inspection team

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|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Michael Williams, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Suzanne Thrower | Ofsted Inspector |
| Aimee Bray | Ofsted Inspector |

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