

Inspection of Thornhill Primary School

Byron Road, Thornhill, Southampton, Hampshire SO19 6FH

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Thornhill Primary School are keen to share their thoughts and feelings. They recognise the work that adults do to keep them safe. They talk enthusiastically about the character of 'Minion', who represents them being happy and safe.

There is a real focus on broadening pupils' horizons through planned events, assemblies and trips. Pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities and enjoy visiting the forest school and learning about nature. They speak positively about their experiences. Pupils understand the importance of treating people fairly and are rightly confident that everyone is welcome at their school.

Pupils know that they can talk to an adult if they have any concerns. They recognise that there have been improvements in behaviour during the current school year. In class, however, behaviour is not always as good as it could be. At times, pupils are off task and distract others. Some pupils worry about this.

Pupils are not achieving as well as they could across the school. The new curriculum is recently introduced, and pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge. They are not always supported well to remember the most important information. This includes when learning to read.

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

There is a strong determination from the trust and senior leaders to make sure that all pupils receive the best possible education. However, this vision is not yet realised throughout the school. New leaders have provided much-needed stability for the school following a period of turbulence. The trust has appointed a strong leadership team, which is focused and driven to ensure that all pupils achieve their very best. Weaknesses are now being addressed. Parents and pupils recognise that things are getting better.

Leaders have rightly focused on addressing behaviour to ensure that all pupils are safe and happy in school. They model what they expect of pupils and staff. Positive relationships are being built throughout the school. Pupils are developing greater resilience. The routines for behaviour develop in the early years. However, despite new procedures, there is variability in how well the behaviour policy is implemented. Some staff do this superbly and ensure that pupils embody the school values. Others do not apply the rules consistently enough. When the behaviour of some pupils falls short of expectations, it is not always challenged. This means that pupils' learning is sometimes disturbed by others. Pupils do not routinely demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning.

The emphasis on creating a culture based on a love of reading is evident. Pupils are enthusiastic about reading and keen to talk about the books they read. However, too many pupils are not learning to read quickly enough across the school. Phonics is

not taught consistently well. There is variability in staff subject knowledge. Older pupils enjoy taking quizzes linked to what they read, but teachers do not always help them to understand key concepts. The support given to pupils who are finding learning to read difficult does not always help them to catch up.

The new leadership team has designed a well-sequenced curriculum, which identifies the key content pupils must know. There is inconsistency, however, between subjects in how well the curriculum in early years links to the learning in Year 1. Teachers across the school do not always know how to design tasks that support pupils to learn the most important information. Due to historic weaknesses in the curriculum, pupils have gaps in their knowledge. These are not always picked up or addressed by adults, although some staff are more confident to check pupils' understanding.

Leaders' expectations of how the curriculum will be taught are not embedded throughout the school. In some areas, the agreed approach is used well by teachers. Pupils recognise when this is the case and know that these strategies help them to learn. New systems help staff to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, adults do not always understand how to adapt learning so that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum. Some pupils with SEND benefit from the school's nurture provision, which helps them to gain resilience and independence while learning. They are proud to talk about what they have achieved here.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. There has been a sharp focus on developing personal, social and health education across the school. Leaders recognise the importance of ensuring that pupils are equipped for life beyond the school gates. Older pupils understand the concept of equality and do not feel that anyone is treated differently. An understanding of tolerance and cultural awareness builds through the curriculum. Leaders understand that some pupils do not have the same experiences as others out of school, so they ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to attend clubs and trips.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a very strong culture based on the concept of 'it can happen here'. Leaders are fully aware of the risks that pupils may be exposed to. As a result, there is a focus on equipping pupils with the skills they need to keep themselves safe. The safeguarding team is robust in its approach and takes appropriate action to keep pupils safe. Staff understand what they need to be alert to and raise concerns if they notice anything.

Pupils understand risks and dangers. They are taught how to stay safe in a variety of ways. They recall the key messages from their assemblies and discuss why these are important.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is variability in how well phonics is taught. Inconsistencies mean that pupils are not learning to read as quickly as they could. Leaders need to continue to develop staff's subject knowledge of phonics.
- Staff do not consistently use the agreed pedagogical approaches during lessons, including opportunities to check how well pupils have remembered key content. As a result, gaps and misconceptions in pupils' learning are not identified and remedied. Leaders need to ensure that all staff understand the expectations around pedagogical approaches and use these to support pupils' learning.
- Across the school, including in early years, the curriculum is not being consistently well implemented. Teachers do not always design tasks that enable pupils to follow the intended curriculum. Leaders must ensure that staff understand how pupils' learning should build in each subject.
- Staff do not necessarily know how best to adapt learning for pupils with SEND. This means these pupils are not supported well enough to access the curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that all staff understand how to tailor teaching to meet the needs of all learners.
- The behaviour policy is not implemented well by all staff. This means that pupils' behaviour is not always addressed appropriately. Leaders need to embed expectations and ensure that all staff use the agreed shared approach.

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	145222
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	10240630
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	378
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alice Wrighton
Headteacher	Lucy Carroll
Website	www.thornhillsch.net
Date of previous inspection	2 and 3 November 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher commenced her role in September 2022. The assistant headteacher and special educational needs and disabilities coordinator both joined the school this academic year.
- The school is part of the Hamwic Education Trust.
- The school uses one registered provider of alternative provision.
- There is an on-site breakfast club.
- The school has a nurture 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 met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. They also met with staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and one trustee. Inspectors also spoke with a representative from Southampton local authority.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, design technology 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.
- Inspectors also reviewed writing across different subjects.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors also talked to a range of staff and pupils informally.
- The inspection team considered the responses to the confidential staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 37 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the additional 32 free-text responses. An inspector talked with some parents on the first morning of the inspection.
- The inspection team met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally during social times and in lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school development plan and pupil premium funding plan.

Inspection team

Sara Staggs, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Martin Smith	His Majesty's Inspector
Daniel Botting	His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023