

# Inspection of a good school: Thornaby Church of England Primary School

Baysdale Road, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees TS17 9DB

---

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 September 2023

## **Outcome**

Thornaby Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Richard Chandler. This school is part of Dales Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Damian Chubb, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Rt Revd Paul Ferguson.

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

This is a school that continues to be a cornerstone of its community. Parents and grandparents express their gratitude that the school remains as strong as it was when they attended. Generations of this community value the role that this school continues to play in their lives. Staff expect pupils to succeed here and support them to do so. Pupils enjoy coming to school.

The Christian ethos of this school is evident through all aspects of school life. Pupils explain how the 'golden rules' mean they know how to behave and treat each other. Pupils explain that they have a responsibility to challenge any unkindness. Strong relationships between adults and pupils are clear. Some pupils explained that the best thing about their school was 'how much the grown-ups care about us'. They trust the adults in this nurturing environment.

Pupils have a strong sense of their own place in the school community. They develop self-confidence and flourish. Pupils delight in whole-school singing sessions. They volunteer to sing solos and praise their peers. Pupils are excited about the opportunities open to them, especially the residential trip in Year 6.

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

The school has designed a curriculum that is ambitious and broad. Staff know what pupils should learn and when. This knowledge is clearly mapped out in the milestones documents. The school has organised the curriculum to ensure that pupils can make links between their previous and new learning. For example, in history, pupils throughout the school use timelines to connect different periods of history together. Pupils learn to read

effectively. Phonics is well taught, and pupils who find reading more of a challenge are supported to catch up. Despite a clear focus on stories in the early years, for older pupils there is not a strong culture of reading for pleasure.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and deliver the curriculum effectively. In most classrooms, teachers use questioning carefully to check what pupils know. The school uses assessment to check for gaps in pupils' understanding. The school also uses this information to improve the curriculum, moving forwards.

The school has focused on pupils' discussion skills. They have thought carefully about what vocabulary pupils will learn. Adults insist that pupils, including the youngest children, answer in full sentences. Pupils routinely discuss their ideas with partners before sharing them. There is a clear focus on reasoning and on pupils being able to explain their thinking.

Pupils learn the curriculum well. They enjoy meeting teachers' high expectations, of both what they can do and how they should behave. Staff model these high expectations clearly, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils are included in all aspects of school life and access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Pupils with SEND are supported, where necessary, to secure their learning but also to develop their independence. However, the support plans that staff use to support these pupils are sometimes not precise enough in their focus on pupils' progress.

Children in the early years benefit from a strong provision. Adults model conversation skills and manners consistently well. Children cooperate with each other and enjoy exploring a range of well-planned activities. They are happy to explain what they are doing and why. Children listen with fascination at story time and visibly enjoy engaging with books.

Pupils treat each other with respect. At playtimes, they cooperate, and enjoy spending time with each other. They behave with maturity and create games where everyone is included. Older pupils talk with enthusiasm about being play buddies to younger children. During lessons, pupils are engaged and focused. Teachers rarely need to use the behaviour warning system. Pupils are keen to succeed.

One of the key strengths of the school is its attention to well-being and mental health. Pupils, parents and staff alike echo this. The strength of the pastoral system means that no one feels alone. Pupils feel comfortable sharing their worries or concerns with staff. They know they will be listened to.

Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe and how to treat others equally. They enjoy learning about different faiths and understand the importance of respect. Pupils learn about how to be helpful citizens in their community, for example they go out litter picking.

Staff are proud to work in this school. They work hard to support each other. They feel that leaders are approachable and will listen to their opinions. Parents agree. Parents

explain there is always someone available to help. Some parents explained how they value the support they receive from the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The school is in the process of embedding a strong culture of reading for pleasure. This means that, currently, some pupils do not get enough opportunities to read as widely and as often as they could. The school should ensure that it fosters a strong culture of reading for pleasure to increase pupils' love of reading.
- Support plans for pupils with SEND are not focused enough on steps for pupils' progress and practical for teachers to use. This makes it more difficult for staff to accurately measure the progress these pupils are making. The school should ensure that support plans for pupils with SEND are focused on incremental progress and are helpful for staff.

## **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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Thornaby-on-Tees Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, to be good in November 2018.

## **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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	147254
<b>Local authority</b>	Stockton-on-Tees
<b>Inspection number</b>	10269079
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	350
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Bishop Paul Ferguson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Chandler
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thornabyce.org.uk">www.thornabyce.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Dales Academies Trust.
- The school is due a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the deputy chief executive officer (CEO) and the CEO of the trust. The inspector met with representatives from the trust, including the chair, as well as school leaders responsible for personal development, SEND and safeguarding.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited

a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector also explored the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector observed the behaviour of pupils during lessons and at social times.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes of local governing body meetings and the school's self-evaluation and development plan.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online staff questionnaire. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Katie Spurr, lead inspector

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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023