

Inspection of Thorpe Acre Infant School

Alan Moss Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 4SQ

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. Many say that they enjoy learning and playing with their friends. Pupils in all classes listen carefully and respond sensibly to their teachers. Pupils understand the school's five core values. For example, one pupil was able to explain the meaning of the value 'be determined' by saying 'never back down, never give up'.

The atmosphere around school is calm and happy. Teachers set high expectations for how they wish pupils to behave. Pupils respond well. They behave sensibly in lessons and around school. Pupils are well cared for. They say that staff are kind. Pupils know that adults in school will keep them safe.

The school's outdoor areas are exceptionally well equipped and maintained. This provides pupils with many opportunities to develop their physical and mental health and well-being. Pupils learn to respect and care for their environment. They cooperate happily to tidy away the equipment at the end of playtimes. They talk eagerly about the produce that they grow in the school's allotment.

Pupils can take on roles of responsibility such as being a member of the school council. This helps them to express their opinions and listen respectfully to the views of others.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has quickly addressed the areas that needed to improve. The pace and quality of this work demonstrate the school's ambition for all pupils to receive the best possible education. A major focus has been to revise the curriculum in all subjects. This revision is now complete. The curriculum, including in the early years, now sets out precisely what pupils should know, and be able to do, and in what order.

Teachers are now in the early stages of teaching the new curriculum. There are signs that the curriculum is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' knowledge and skills. Pupils are beginning to understand key concepts and vocabulary. For example, in a science lesson, the teacher asked pupils to recall what they knew about particles. Pupils could explain how particles react when heated. They were busy preparing to test this out by melting some wax crayons as part of their topic on 'materials'. Teachers use clear questioning and explanations to pick up and resolve any misunderstandings quickly.

Leaders are beginning to check the impact of the new curriculum, in each subject and year group. There is more work to do to embed the curriculum over time and gain a fully accurate overview. This includes in the early years. Children in the early years get off to a good start in reading and mathematics. In the other areas of learning, the revised curriculum is still being introduced.

Reading is a high priority. Staff promote a love of reading through daily story times. They support families by offering the popular 'bedtime story sacks'. There is a well-established and systematic approach to teaching early reading. Pupils begin to learn phonics as soon as they join the school. The daily sessions help pupils learn through regular practice. Pupils read from books that match the sounds they know. Pupils who are not yet fluent readers receive skilled support to develop their confidence.

The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong. Parents of pupils with SEND value the support their children receive. Staff understand these pupils' needs well. They adapt their teaching, for example by breaking down concepts into small steps. Staff also make well-planned use of the quieter 'break-out' areas to provide one-to-one or small-group sessions. This enables pupils with SEND to access the curriculum alongside their peers.

The school promotes pupils' broader personal development well. Leaders and staff have identified the important values they wish pupils to develop: to be determined, proud, caring, independent and to reach high. Pupils enjoy celebrating their achievements in the weekly 'all-star' assemblies. They learn about the importance of respect. They understand that differences are acceptable, saying, for example, 'everyone is unique' and 'we should encourage each other'. Pupils are beginning to learn about a range of faiths and cultures. This helps to prepare them as young citizens.

Governors provide effective support and challenge. They are ambitious for all pupils. Governors value the staff. They regularly consider the impact of any changes on staff workload and work-life balance. Staff speak highly of the support and training they receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The revised curriculum for science, foundation subjects and the early years is in the very early stages of implementation. There is not yet a clear view of its effectiveness. The school should ensure that checks on the implementation and impact of the curriculum lead to it enabling pupils to know and remember more as they progress through the school.

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

Unique reference number	119958
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10254770
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Lyon and Anne Bademosi
Headteacher	Jo Beaumont
Website	www.tais.leics.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	10 February 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher holds the post of executive headteacher with oversight of both Thorpe Acre Infant and Junior schools.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher and other school leaders. The lead inspector met with several members of the governing body, including the chair. The lead inspector held a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading; mathematics; and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss 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 lead inspector observed some pupils read to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum, reviewed curriculum planning and samples of pupils' work and visited lessons in some other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks and holding discussions with leaders, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Steve Tague

Ofsted Inspector

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