

Inspection of Thornton Heath Nursery School

51 Pridham Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR7 8RS

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 October 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Children settle quickly and play happily in this nursery school. Many of them especially love the nursery's magical garden. They have exciting opportunities to run, climb, and cultivate the vegetable patch using real gardening tools. Children grow in confidence and learn to manage risks sensibly as a result of taking part in these challenging activities. When children need a little extra help to feel safe and secure, staff care for them with warmth and sensitivity.

Staff have high expectations. They work skilfully to help children succeed in tricky tasks. For example, children carefully fill and empty containers in the water tray. They enjoy making their own bread, which they eat together. Staff introduce children to high-quality picture books, songs and rhymes. Children love to repeat these stories in their play.

Children understand the clear routines of the day, listening out for the church bells, which also signal that it is snack time in the morning. Staff help them to manage sharing and taking turns. Any minor incidents of poor behaviour are quickly dealt with in a calm, low-key manner. As a result, children are learning to play cooperatively and to listen to the adults and to each other.

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

The school has thought carefully about ensuring that children get a strong start to their early learning and development. For example, communication and language are a priority. Staff spend time in back-and-forth conversation with children. They introduce children to new words while they play, and through sharing books and singing songs with them. Children love the beautiful poetry baskets and books about their favourite things, like dinosaurs.

Children thoroughly enjoy the wide range of activities on offer, both inside and outdoors. Staff are skilled at keeping children engaged. The youngest children persist for extended periods of time in their play with pretend kitchen equipment and playdough. Older children build on these skills, using their extra strength and dexterity to knead the dough for the bread that they make. If children are briefly disengaged, staff encourage them and help them to join in.

Staff make careful adaptations, so that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can take part in the same learning as the other children. For example, staff use printed symbols to show children what is happening next. They teach all the children simple sign language to use as they speak. Children with SEND benefit from carefully planned small-group teaching to improve their communication skills. As a result, children with SEND learn to communicate and play with their peers.

It is sometimes unclear what children should learn from the activities on offer. For example, the equipment can distract children from the intended learning about

counting and numbers. The children are focused and interested, but on occasion they are not building secure foundations in their early learning. As a result, they are not as well prepared for their future learning as they could be.

The school aims to broaden children's understanding of the world through its ambitious curriculum. This includes learning basic woodwork skills and breadmaking. Children also learn about how they and their families can contribute to the wider community. For example, the school collects food to donate to a local foodbank as part of its harvest festival celebration. The donation includes vegetables the children themselves have grown.

Children learn about how to care for each other and their environment. For example, a younger child was playing with water and spilled some on the floor. An older child sensibly brought over a yellow cone with a warning on it to show everyone that the floor was slippery. Adults share books which help children learn the importance of treating everyone with respect. The nursery school is a kind and caring community. Children are awestruck by the sound of the large drum, taking turns to beat it loudly and softly as part of their learning about music.

Staff are proud of their work. They appreciate the support the school gives them. They recently received thorough training on how to help children develop their attention, communication and language skills. However, training and guidance have been less rigorous in other areas of the early years curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some instances, the school's curriculum thinking lacks precision. As a result, some activities do not help children to build secure early learning. The school should ensure that staff continue to develop their expertise in early education so that the activities they plan put the school's curriculum into action.

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	131723
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10240958
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	91
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Scott Lynch
Headteacher	Jenette Indarsingh
Website	www.thns.org
Date of previous inspection	17 July 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a maintained nursery school. It is run on behalf of the local authority by the Pegasus Academy Trust.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school provides its own before-school childcare.

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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the two executive headteachers who oversee the work of the school and members of staff. They also spoke with a

representative of the local authority, and met with a range of governors, including the chair of governors.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these areas of learning: communication and language, mathematics, physical development, and expressive arts and design. For each of these areas of learning, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons and spoke with staff and children.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other areas of learning.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record of pre-employment checks; took account of the views of leaders, staff and children; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.
- The views of children, parents and staff were gathered through discussions and responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Julian Grenier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Wright

His Majesty's Inspector

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