

Inspection of an outstanding school: Thorpe Hesley Primary School

Upper Wortley Road, Thorpe Hesley, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S61 2PL

Inspection dates:

1 and 2 November 2023

Outcome

Thorpe Hesley Primary School continues to be an outstanding school.

The headteacher of this school is Sarah Hewitt. This school is part of New Collaborative Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Richard Fletcher, and overseen by a board of trustees. Diane Heritage is the chair of the board.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are extremely happy at Thorpe Hesley Primary School. They are passionate about learning. Pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school. They shine in the many leadership roles available to them. For example, pupils are mature and diligent school council members, prefects, reading buddies and mentors.

The school has very high expectations of pupils' conduct and achievement. Pupils respond positively to these expectations. They achieve highly and behave well. Pupils' exceptional attitudes help to create a calm and purposeful environment in school.

Pupils are conscientious citizens with a keen sense of fairness. They raise funds for many worthy causes. For example, pupils organise events to raise money for charity. They recently established a bereavement fund and coordinated a baking sale to help to support a school in Gambia.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their talents and to pursue their interests. For instance, pupils enjoy multi-sports, football and basketball. Some learn to play musical instruments, including piano, saxophone and guitar.

Pupils are active in the community. They attend the local church during harvest festival, perform plays for parents and carers at Christmas and sing carols in the local village. Pupils relished performing at a recent 'music extravaganza' at the trust's high school.

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

The school has created a well-organised and highly ambitious curriculum that inspires and engages pupils. From the start of the early years, children develop secure knowledge and skills in different areas of learning. Their language, communication and mathematics skills are particularly well developed.

The school works closely with other schools and colleges in the trust, and further afield, to enhance staff expertise and enrich the curriculum. This helps teachers to deliver the curriculum exceptionally well in all subjects. Teachers routinely check how well pupils are learning. This means that teachers know where pupils' knowledge and understanding is secure. When necessary, additional support is available to help pupils to keep up with their peers.

Reading is central to everything that the school does. Pupils have access to an extensive range of books. They enjoy the work of classic and modern children's authors and are keen poetry readers. Staff create a sense of excitement about reading and bring books to life. Children in the early years take delight in listening to stories and nursery rhymes. During the inspection, they were mesmerised by stories read to them by adults dressed up as witches.

Starting from the early years, highly skilled staff deliver the school's phonics and early reading programmes consistently well. Pupils in key stage 1 become fluent and confident readers. Those who find reading difficult benefit from the support of knowledgeable staff. This helps these pupils to strengthen their reading knowledge.

Staff have considerable expertise in identifying the additional needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly and accurately. Staff work closely with parents and many external professionals to make certain that pupils with SEND get the help that they need promptly. Staff constantly explore different ways to modify their delivery of the curriculum to enable pupils with SEND to access the same learning as their peers.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are exceptionally thoughtful and well mannered. Across the school, pupils maintain high levels of focus in lessons. They follow instructions closely and work together conscientiously.

The school's work to enhance pupils' wider development is extensive. Pupils regularly participate in a wide range of clubs such as choir, library, recorder and mindfulness. They relish visits to museums and the theatre and to local landmarks.

Pupils understand what makes a safe and appropriate personal relationship. They respect the differences between people, including ethnicity, disability and gender. Pupils learn about the fundamental British values. They are aware of the major world religions. Pupils enjoy engaging in theme days, where they explore the foods and traditions of various cultures.

The school provides parents with many opportunities to engage with their child's education. For example, parents participate in mental health awareness events, coffee mornings and mathematics and phonics workshops.

Staff have the freedom, and the expertise, to design and develop different curriculums. They have a voice in deciding the priorities of the school. Staff appreciate that leaders are mindful of their well-being and workload when introducing new initiatives.

Governors and trustees are well informed. They know precisely what the school is aiming to achieve. Governors and trustees work closely with the school to ensure that academic standards and pupils' personal development remain strong.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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, of the same name, to be outstanding in July 2017.

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	147739
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10297497
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	546
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Diane Heritage
Headteacher	Sarah Hewitt
Website	www.thorpehesleyprimary.rotherham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Thorpe Hesley Primary School converted to become an academy school as part of the Creative Children's Academy Trust in September 2020. In January 2023, the school joined the New Collaborative Learning Trust. When Thorpe Hesley Primary School was last inspected by Ofsted in July 2017, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The headteacher of school was appointed in January 2023.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteachers and other members of the senior leadership team. He also held meetings with other staff, including those responsible for SEND, attendance and pupils' behaviour, welfare and personal development.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body. He also met with the chief executive officer of the trust and other trust members. The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, he discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to pupils read.
- The inspector met with pupils to discuss their learning in some other subjects. He spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector met with parents and reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He took account of responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- 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.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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