

Inspection of a good school: Thornhill Primary School

Ehen Road, Thornhill, Egremont, Cumbria CA22 2SJ

Inspection date:

2 November 2023

Outcome

Thornhill Primary School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Lindsey Martin. This school is part of the Changing Lives 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, Jonathan Johnson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Davidson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They make a significant contribution to the calm environment that exists at the school. New pupils benefit from a warm welcome that helps them to settle in quickly and be happy. Pupils respond well to the high expectations that the school has of their behaviour and conduct.

Pupils also respond well to the high aspirations that the school has of their achievement. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well. Children in the early years make a positive start to their time at the school.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities that help pupils to develop their talents and interests. These include sports, biking and music clubs. As members of the school council, pupils take a key role in raising money for charity. Older pupils are proud to take on leadership roles such as playground leaders and as buddies to younger children.

Visitors to the school help pupils to develop a broad understanding of the world. Through these experiences, pupils learn about a pilgrim's journey and how to write powerful poetry. During residential trips, pupils enjoy taking part in adventurous activities. This helps them to become resilient young people.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. In each subject, the key information that pupils should learn is well thought out so that most pupils build their knowledge and understanding securely over time. In the early years, most children are well prepared for the demands of Year 1.

In a small number of subjects, the curriculum is new. Some pupils have not had the time to develop sufficient depth of understanding. As a result, they do not achieve as well as they should in these subjects.

The school makes regular checks on what pupils know and remember. Any misconceptions that pupils have about their learning are addressed promptly. In the early years, staff know the children well. The interactions that they have with staff make a strong contribution to their early development. For example, children in the Nursery class enjoy songs, rhymes and stories that help them to learn key words.

Staff use their subject knowledge effectively to design activities that help most pupils to learn the key knowledge that they need so that they are well prepared for each stage of their education. The needs of pupils with SEND are identified accurately. The school uses this information to ensure that these pupils learn well alongside their peers.

Pupils begin to learn to read as soon as they join the school in the Reception class. Staff receive the training that they need so that pupils develop a secure knowledge of phonics. The books that pupils read match the sounds that they learn. Most pupils are well supported to become confident and fluent readers. The school is alert to any pupils that may have gaps in their phonics knowledge. These pupils receive the support that they need to catch up quickly with reading so that they can access the wider curriculum.

Pupils appreciate the joy of reading for pleasure. Through the books that they read, pupils learn to value the differences that exist between people and the importance of caring for others.

Pupils consistently demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. They are enthusiastic about the subjects that they study and they talk with confidence and accuracy about what they have learned.

The school provides parents and carers with information that helps them to support their children's learning at home. This includes resources and online training sessions about the school's approach to teaching pupils to read.

The trust and the governing body have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Together, they take appropriate action to ensure that pupils achieve well in most subjects and enjoy their learning. Staff value the time and the training that they receive to carry out their roles. Recent developments in the way that they provide feedback to pupils about their learning have had a positive impact on staff workload and well-being. Staff are proud to work at 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)

- In a small number of subjects, the curriculums are new. In these subjects, some pupils have not developed the depth of knowledge that they could. The school should ensure that the new curriculums in these areas are fully embedded so that these pupils achieve as well as they do in other subjects.

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, Thornhill Primary School, to be good in March 2019.

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	147396
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10291441
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	85
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Davidson
CEO of the trust	Jonathan Johnson
Headteacher	Lindsey Martin
Website	www.thornhill.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Changing Lives Learning Trust.
- The school does not make use of any alternative providers.
- The school has nursery provision for children aged two and three. This is led and managed by the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time inspection 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher and leaders of SEND, behaviour, attendance and pupil welfare.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, they held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of

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

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record and took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils. They considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture of safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first. They also held a meeting with the designated safeguarding lead and deputy safeguarding lead.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the board of trustees, including the chair of trustees, and the local governing body. He also spoke to a local authority senior manager.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They took account of the responses from staff and pupils to Ofsted's online surveys and gathered the views of staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school life and their views of behaviour and bullying. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors spoke to staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Andy Cunningham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Edmondson

Ofsted Inspector

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