

Inspection of Thornton Hough Primary School

St George's Way, Thornton Hough, Wirral, Merseyside CH63 1JJ

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 February 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since December 2011.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy school where pupils excel. Parents and carers, staff and pupils praise its 'family feeling'. Pupils' learning is steeped in the proud history and traditions of the local village, including its manor house, churches and community groups. In addition, pupils gain a first-rate introduction to their lives as responsible, respectful citizens of modern Britain.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are supported with immense warmth, care and skill by staff. The school knows pupils' learning, personal development and mental health needs comprehensively. Pupils have high emotional well-being and they feel safe at school. Pupils readily respond to the school's high expectations and they achieve remarkably well.

Pupils benefit greatly from all that the school has to offer. This includes the impressive range of extra opportunities that the school provides to enhance pupils' learning of the curriculum. For example, almost every pupil attends an extra-curricular club, such as chess, reading or 'mad science' clubs.

Pupils build incredibly positive relationships with one another and with staff. In lessons and during other times at school, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They listen, show respect and give their utmost when completing their work.

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

Leaders, governors and staff seek, and achieve, the very best for pupils. The school's curriculum in key stages 1 and 2 is exceptionally well thought out. Staff use their high-level expertise to deliver subject curriculums very well. The school's curriculum has an impressive impact on pupils' knowledge. Pupils, including those with SEND, achieve remarkably well in different curriculum subjects. For example, pupils' attainment is consistently high throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics.

The school uses outside experts to challenge and inform its educational thinking incredibly well. This has helped the school to establish an exceptional education for pupils in key stages 1 and 2. Children in the early years learn well, but not as impressively as older pupils. This is because the school's thinking about some of the knowledge that it will teach children in early years is less well developed.

From the start of the Reception Year, staff ensure that pupils develop excellent reading habits. Teachers choose stories carefully to read to pupils. These stories are often linked to key learning. Pupils learn from exploring a wide range of high-quality fiction and non-fiction books at school. They benefit greatly from staff's skilful teaching of phonics and reading. Staff provide timely and effective support so that pupils who need extra help with their reading catch up quickly. Teachers work successfully with parents to support pupils' reading at home. Pupils become competent early readers and attain highly in reading.

Staff check carefully how well pupils remember important knowledge. When necessary, teachers revisit key prior learning to deepen pupils' understanding. This helps pupils to know and remember the curriculum extremely well.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND swiftly. Staff collaborate with outside professionals and with parents to build the right educational support for pupils at the school. This work begins successfully in the early years. Pupils with SEND learn subject curriculums very well and achieve highly.

Pupils manage their own feelings and behaviour exceptionally well. Staff expertly guide pupils to follow the school rules. Pupils work without distractions and with determination and care. They have a thirst for gaining new knowledge. Teachers can focus fully on teaching the curriculum.

The school takes many well-considered steps to enrich pupils' broader knowledge. For example, it exposes pupils to additional experiences of religion, science and culture through regular and thoughtfully organised educational visits. Staff teach pupils to care deeply about the needs of other people. For instance, pupils develop a first-rate understanding of the importance of supporting the elderly, the sick in hospital, refugees and the homeless. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared to become responsible citizens.

The school reviews carefully how effectively staff teach its curriculum. It ensures that staff have the subject-specific expertise required to design high-quality learning. Staff have a reasonable workload. The school provides staff with appropriate training and support, which enables them to carry out their roles extremely well.

The governing body fully understands its role. It uses its extensive expertise to challenge and support the school successfully. Governors keep a close eye on key aspects such as SEND, safeguarding, finance and the curriculum. The governing body acts responsibly regarding the challenges and opportunities for the long-term life of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	105015
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10294206
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Geoff Dale
Headteacher	Will Lowe
Website	www.thorntonhough.wirral.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 December 2011, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are new to the school since the previous inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative education 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.
- 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 spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, several other leaders, the school improvement partner and a representative of the local authority to discuss the work of the school.

- The inspectors completed deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector listened to some pupils read to staff.
- Inspectors also reviewed the school's work in some other curriculum subjects.
- Inspectors discussed with the school its provision for early years, pupils' personal development, behaviour and SEND.
- The inspectors spoke with staff about their experience of working at the school. They considered responses from staff to Ofsted's online survey.
- The inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at the school. They also considered the responses that pupils made to Ofsted's survey.
- The inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The lead inspector met with seven members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. Inspectors also checked examples of minutes of governing body meetings.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: 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

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kelly Butler

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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