

# Inspection of a good school: Thakeham Primary School

Rock Road, Storrington, Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 3AA

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Inspection date: 12 March 2024

## Outcome

Thakeham Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and parents recognise the kind and nurturing nature of this school. Staff place great emphasis on knowing each pupil's needs well. As a result, pupils feel included and welcome. The school ethos of CARE helps pupils to understand courage, ambition, respect and enjoyment. These values underpin the school's behaviour policy.

Pupils are supported to feel safe in school. The school makes sure that pupils understand who they can talk to if anything is worrying them. The focus on pupils' well-being is paramount to the school. In Reception, children love reading to the visiting school dog, Branson. Capturing pupils' opinions is at the heart of the school. These views are then taken into account when making appropriate changes. Recently, for example, the games shed was relocated as pupils shared they were concerned staff could not see behind it.

Since the previous inspection, much work has been done to improve the curriculum. Pupils generally achieve well. However, there is still further work to be done to ensure that pupils can be as successful in other subjects as they are in English and mathematics.

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

Since the headteacher arrived in April 2022, the school has prioritised overhauling the school's curriculum as well as procedures for behaviour and safeguarding. The curriculum begins in the early years and is designed to be ambitious for all pupils in the mixed-age classes. Leaders including governors, are outward looking and work closely with the local authority to drive school improvement activities. The initial focus on bringing about changes to teaching and learning in English and mathematics has now progressed to other subject areas. The school has taken staff workload into consideration when implementing these changes, recognising that staff have multiple responsibilities in a smaller-than-average primary school. As a result, staff feel well supported and valued.

There is a well-sequenced curriculum in place across the school. The school is aspirational for all pupils to achieve and be prepared well for secondary school. Although these

aspirations are generally met, in some subjects, pupils do not remember the most important information which they need for future learning. This is because these points were not emphasised well enough in the previous curriculum. Adults use questioning to check that pupils understand tasks but they do not always revisit the essential knowledge. Staff are well supported to understand pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has identified many ways that staff can assist pupils with SEND effectively in different curriculum areas.

Reading is given the greatest priority in school. Phonics teaching has been refined. There is great enthusiasm for reading, reinforced by a structured approach that all staff understand. Staff expertly identify pupils who need more support and 'keep up' sessions are put in place immediately. However, although all staff have been trained in how to deliver phonics, there is some minor inconsistency in how well this is done. Pupils talk positively about the books they read and the help that adults provide. The school's 'bookworms' take their roles seriously and organise the library so it is accessible for all pupils. Older pupils relish the opportunity to be a buddy and read to the children in early years.

The school has revised its behaviour policy. Staff support pupils to understand the three rules and why these matter. Generally, pupils rise to these expectations and behaviour is positive. Sometimes, pupils need more help and adults provide them with the assistance they need. Children in the early years are taught the routines of school life. They follow these rules diligently and can be seen sharing, taking turns and listening attentively. The school has focused on improving attendance for all pupils and works closely with families to bring about change.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed throughout the school. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum provides pupils with the opportunity to discuss important themes such as relationships and staying safe. Trips and visits are planned to broaden pupils' horizons and promote pupils' understanding of diversity. There are many clubs for pupils to be involved in. These range from pottery to choir to football. Music is valued and all pupils have the chance to learn to play a musical instrument. Developing pupil leadership is given a high priority. During their time in school, pupils have the chance to be a member of the school council, a 'bookworm', play leader and digital leader.

## **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 few foundation subjects, pupils have gaps in their knowledge. They do not always know or recall the key information that the school has identified is the most important.

Teachers should check what pupils have remembered to ensure that the intended curriculum is learned over time.

- There is some minor inconsistency in how well phonics sessions are delivered. This means that pupils do not always learn to read as quickly as they could. The school should continue to ensure that staff have the expertise and confidence to teach phonics in line with leaders' high expectations.

## 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2013.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	125856
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10296319
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	98
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Tom Gray
<b>Headteacher</b>	Liam McDonald
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thakehamps.co.uk">http://www.thakehamps.co.uk</a>
<b>Date(s) of previous inspection</b>	17 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher commenced his role in April 2022. The SENCo is also new to role since the previous inspection. There have also been several new members of teaching staff.
- The school does not currently use any providers of alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- 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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. They also met with other staff and pupils.

- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and one other member of the governing body. She also spoke to a representative from West Sussex local authority.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspection team checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding. The inspectors also talked to a range of staff and pupils informally.
- The inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- The inspection team took account of the 37 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the additional 27 free-text responses.
- The inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally during social times and in lessons.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including the school development plan and self-evaluation.

## **Inspection team**

Sara Staggs, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

James Munt

Ofsted Inspector

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