

# Inspection of Thurleigh Primary School

High Street, Thurleigh, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK44 2DB

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Inspection dates: 17 and 18 April 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is a warm, friendly and nurturing school. Pupils are happy and safe here. Respect underpins everything that they do. Pupils appreciate and celebrate everyone's differences.

Pupils enjoy the engaging lessons that teachers plan across the curriculum. They know staff have high expectations of them in everything that they do. Pupils work hard to meet them. This creates a positive atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils take great pride in their work, and they achieve well.

All pupils are polite and courteous. Pupils know that staff will deal with any issues fairly and respectfully. The effective reward system reinforces what pupils achieve and their positive attitudes.

Pupils are active citizens. They make meaningful contributions to their close-knit community. They contribute to litter picking, make and distribute Christmas cards to residents in the community and participate in local competitions.

Pupils know and understand what democracy is. They vote for who will be head boy and girl, school council members and house captains. This develops leadership opportunities throughout the school, promoting confidence and independence in pupils.

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

The school has developed a well-thought-through curriculum. Staff encourage pupils to become independent with their learning. As a result of this, pupils can choose to present their work in a way that highlights what they have learned. They take great pride in this.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They check pupils' knowledge and understanding well in many subjects. This is particularly so in English and mathematics. Teachers use these checks to plan activities and sequences of lessons that build effectively on what pupils already know. However, in a few subjects this is still developing, which the school is aware of. In these subjects, teachers do not always check that pupils have a secure understanding of the knowledge needed to understand more complex ideas. Pupils do not remember as much as they should in these subjects.

The staff across the federated schools have a vast amount of knowledge of special educational needs and disabilities. The school has clear processes in place to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff have received effective training on how to adapt teaching, which they use successfully. This helps pupils with SEND to access the full curriculum. They learn successfully alongside their peers.

The school prioritises reading from the early years. Staff in the early years use books and stories as the basis for many of their activities. Pupils continue to read high-quality texts as they develop their reading skills. Pupils become confident and fluent readers as they move through the school. Staff match books to the stage of pupils' reading. Staff, overall, teach phonics well. However, occasionally staff do not have a sharp enough focus on the precise letter sound that pupils need to say. Therefore, a few pupils do not demonstrate that they have this knowledge and are therefore unable to blend the sounds accurately.

Pupils behave exceptionally well in class and around the school. Routines are well established from the early years. Pupils know staff have high expectations of them and they are determined to achieve them. Pupils' positive and proactive attitudes towards learning ensure that they arrive at school promptly and regularly. The school personalises its effective approach to working with families and pupils who face additional challenges to attend school regularly.

The school has a wide-ranging personal development programme. Pupils' well-being is a priority. Pupils have strategies they can access if they feel they need some calming time. These include reading, singing and dancing. Pupils learn about different careers through local residents, parents and carers, who share what they do through assemblies and talks. Pupils can set up small businesses, which they pitch to other pupils. They consider many aspects of running a business to do this. Pupils can highlight their talents, whether they be in drama, singing, playing an instrument or reading some poetry, through the school talent show. These experiences help pupils to develop characteristics such as resilience.

Governors know the school well. They ensure that staff workload is carefully balanced alongside developments that are needed. Staff are ambitious and enthusiastic to develop in their various roles as well as in providing support across the two federated schools. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school and recommend it highly.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- On a few occasions sufficient accuracy is not given to the teaching of letter sounds for pupils. As a result, some pupils struggle to develop sufficient phonics knowledge on which to build. The school should rigorously check that these pupils know the individual sounds well before they try to blend these sounds together.
- In a few foundation subjects, staff do not use assessment information well enough to ensure that pupils know and remember the important knowledge they need to build more complex knowledge on. Staff are therefore teaching more

complex knowledge without checking the pupils have the initial base knowledge. The school should ensure teachers accurately use the information from assessments to inform their planning and to adapt the curriculum accordingly.

## 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>	109486
<b>Local authority</b>	Bedford
<b>Inspection number</b>	10318570
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	81
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Cathy Piotrowski
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kathy Augustine
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thurleighprimary.uk">www.thurleighprimary.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	22 and 23 September 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher is on a phased return following a period of absence. The assistant headteacher is undertaking the role of acting headteacher in her absence.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is federated with Kymbrook Primary School. The headteacher works as executive headteacher across both schools. Subject leadership is shared across both schools.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school club.

## 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 educational provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector spoke with governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and design technology. 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 work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils by speaking to them during lessons and at breaktimes. They also considered 26 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of staff, to gather their views of the school. Inspectors also considered 20 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspectors considered 16 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The lead inspector spoke to parents at the school gate.

### **Inspection team**

Katie Devenport, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Richard Fordham

Ofsted Inspector

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