

Inspection of Thornhill Primary School

Grove Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU5 5PE

Inspection dates:	21 and 22 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils enjoy attending this growing, diverse primary school. They know the vision and the values of the school exceptionally well. This is because pupils were part of developing them. Pupils embrace how their local community is changing and growing in size.

Pupils are safe at the school. They know exactly what adults expect of them. Pupils have trusted adults and a team of pupil 'worry busters' that they can go to if they need support. The vast majority of pupils are respectful and polite, and they behave well. Staff deal with the rare incidents of poor behaviour quickly and effectively.

Staff have high expectations of pupils in all lessons. Pupils listen well, contribute to discussions and enthusiastically complete activities. They achieve strong outcomes in national tests and assessments at the end of Year 6.

Pupils have an exceptional breadth of opportunities available to them. Through the school's 'electives' programme, they can learn new skills, for example street dance, crochet, photography or playing the glockenspiel. Many pupils choose to develop these skills even further at lunchtime or through additional lessons. Many excel at the skills they learn from these 'electives'.

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

The school has developed a broad and rich curriculum, which is highly ambitious for all pupils, starting from the early years. Leaders have carefully considered what is taught and when. Subjects are well sequenced, and some topics link together. This is particularly the case in English and mathematics, where pupils achieve well in national tests and assessments.

Staff have strong subject knowledge. They provide opportunities for pupils to think about what they want to find out. As a result, pupils explore new learning and topics with excitement. Most of the learning and activities that pupils complete are well designed and reflect the ambition of the curriculum. However, in a few subjects, teaching is not always adapted to meet pupils' needs. In these subjects, pupils do not learn and remember as much of the curriculum as they could.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn well alongside their peers. The school quickly identifies children's needs from the early years or when pupils join the school. This enables effective support to be put in place quickly. The school ensures that pupils with SEND get the right support from external agencies if required. Staff supporting pupils with SEND receive regular professional development.

Pupils enjoy the routines and repetition of their phonics lessons. These start in Reception. Well-trained staff teach phonics effectively. They regularly check pupils' learning and those who need additional support receive it. Reading permeates through the curriculum, and text choices spark discussions in other subjects. The well-resourced library and

reading spaces around the school ensure that pupils can access a variety of books to enjoy in their breaktimes. Pupils become confident and fluent readers over their time in the school.

Staff follow the behaviour policy, and it is known to pupils, who follow it well. Most pupils attend the school regularly. However, for the few who find this difficult, the school is working with them and their families to ensure that they attend regularly. The school has positive relationships with these families, which is helping to raise attendance further.

The provision for pupils' personal development is exemplary. Pupils embrace individuals' uniqueness. They demonstrate high levels of respect for all and they take excellent care of each other. Pupils value friendships and healthy relationships. They are clear about what these are, and they have strategies to maintain them. The Junior Leadership Team (JLT) is large, with pupils taking responsibility for different aspects of the school. All members of the JLT know their roles and responsibilities exceptionally well, and other pupils aspire to take on these roles. They make a palpable difference to the life of the school. For example, the 'learning ambassadors' discuss the learning that takes place in the classroom and how they think it could be even better. This input contributes to pupils enjoying their learning.

The school prioritises staff's professional development and well-being. Workload is carefully considered for everyone. Parents and carers are positive about the school and the work that it does. The governing body knows its role and responsibilities well and ensures that it works together with the school to fulfil these.

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 subjects, teaching is not always adapted to meet the needs of pupils so that they realise the ambition of the curriculum. Therefore, in these subjects, pupils do not learn what is intended as well as they could. The school should ensure that teaching is adapted effectively to meet pupils' needs.

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	109504
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10378436
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	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing	Ben Nye
Headteacher	Bernice Waite
Website	www.thornhill-primary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher started at the school in January 2020.
- The school is growing from a two-form entry primary school to a three-form entry primary school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's educational 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 lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke with a senior school effectiveness adviser from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education, history and science. 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.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors also spoke to school leaders, including those responsible for behaviour, attendance, personal development and pupils with SEND.
- 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 and considered the views of pupils, parents and staff. This included considering the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

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His Majesty's Inspector

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