

# Inspection of Thurstaston Dawpool CofE Primary School

School Lane, Thurstaston, Wirral, Merseyside CH61 0HH

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Inspection dates:	20 and 21 May 2025
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Claire McCann. The school is part of the Chester Diocesan Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Neil Dixon, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Mason.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Thurstaston Dawpool CofE Primary School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness, before it opened as an academy. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

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

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are happy and safe here. Strong, respectful relationships permeate throughout the school. Pupils are delightful to talk to. They are polite, confident and, by the end of Year 6, highly articulate. The school's values are lived out in everyday school life.

The school is ambitious for all pupils. In return, pupils are keen to learn and make the most of the learning opportunities afforded to them. Typically, pupils achieve well.

From the time they enter the early years, routines and expectations for pupils' behaviour are firmly established. Pupils throughout the school understand what is expected of them and try their best to live up to these expectations. School is a calm space in which to learn. At school events such as sports day, pupils encourage each other and conduct themselves well, displaying a high degree of sportsmanship.

There is a broad range of opportunities that extend pupils' wider development. These opportunities are available to all pupils. Lunchtime and after-school clubs enhance and develop pupils' interests and talents.

Pupils eagerly take on leadership roles. Year 6 buddies support younger pupils. Trained play leaders make meaningful contributions to school life. Pupils develop their confidence and leadership skills in these valued roles. The school's work on the young leaders programme ensures that pupils engage positively with their community and gain an understanding of justice and responsibility, both locally and globally.

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

The school has created an ambitious curriculum. Across most subjects, the school has identified the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils should learn. Pupils learn curriculum subject content well, especially in phonics and reading. In 2024, pupils' attainment in these aspects of English was among the highest nationally.

In a small number of subjects, the school is revising its curriculum. What pupils should learn and when they should learn it is not clearly defined. In addition, while the checks that the school makes on pupils' learning are well established in many subjects, they are less clear in some others. On occasion, the school is not aware that some aspects of the curriculum are not covered as intended. As a result, some key learning for pupils is missed. Some pupils do not build a secure body of knowledge in these subjects over time.

The school prioritises early reading. In the early years, children develop a love of books through listening and responding to a wide range of stories and rhymes. Following the school's chosen phonics programme, children begin to learn the sounds that letters represent in their Nursery Year. Staff are well trained in the teaching of phonics. Additional support is put in place promptly for pupils who may need it. As a result, most pupils learn to read accurately and with fluency by the end of Year 2.

The school has fostered a well-established love of reading. The books that pupils read both enthuse and excite them. Pupils said that the books that they read allow them to pass the time, relax and learn new words. They appreciate that being able to read is an important life skill.

The school has highly effective processes to identify and support pupils with additional needs. This happens at the earliest opportunity. As a result of carefully considered adaptations, the school ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well and are involved in all aspects of school life.

Wider opportunities, beyond the academic curriculum, help pupils to broaden their knowledge and be prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils understand the importance of respect for other cultures and faiths. Pupils learn how to debate challenging issues in balanced ways. They also know how to keep themselves physically and mentally well and how to keep themselves safe online.

Trust leaders and governors have a clear, shared vision. They understand their strategic role and responsibilities. They carry out their roles with diligence and fulfil their statutory duties. This enables those responsible for governance to hold the school to account for the quality of education the pupils receive.

Staff told inspectors that they feel valued and appreciate the consideration that the school and the trust give to their workload and well-being. They welcome the time they are given to carry out any additional duties that they are asked to complete. When asked, staff said that they are proud to work at this school and described it as 'one big family'. Similarly, the majority of parents and carers hold the school in high regard.

## **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 curriculum does not set out coherently the smaller components of knowledge that pupils need to learn. This makes it difficult for pupils to develop knowledge as securely as they could because they sometimes lack the necessary prior learning. The school should ensure that, in all subjects, there is clarity for staff about the smaller steps of knowledge that should be taught, and when.
- In some subjects, the school does not check in sufficient depth how well teachers deliver the curriculum. Some aspects of the curriculum are not delivered as intended. As a result, some pupils miss out on key learning, without the school being aware. The school should ensure that it establishes how well the curriculum is being delivered and that all the prescribed content is covered so that pupils' learning is maximised.

## 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>	149512
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	10378045
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	225
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	John Mason
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Neil Dixon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Claire McCann
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.dawpool.wirral.sch.uk">www.dawpool.wirral.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Chester Diocesan Academies Trust. It became an academy on 1 February 2023.
- This is a Church of England primary school. Its last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, was in November 2018. Its next section 48 inspection is due in the academic year 2026 to 2027.
- The headteacher was appointed in December 2024 in an acting capacity.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for its pupils.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school provision for pupils.

## 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 and/or sixth form

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 education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other members of staff. The lead inspector spoke with a member of the board of trustees and the CEO of the trust. She also spoke to members of the local governing committee, including the co-chairs, and a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects: early reading, science and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, considered samples of pupils' work and spoke to some pupils about their learning. The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also scrutinised curriculum documents and samples of pupils' work in other subjects.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour at various times in the school day. This included during lessons as well as at playtime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors met with pupils to ask about their experiences of school.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents and carers in their responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors spoke with some parents as they brought their children to school at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff

### **Inspection team**

Pat Speed, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Juliet Francis

Ofsted Inspector

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