

Thorpe CofE Aided Primary School

The Bence, Rosemary Lane, Thorpe, Egham, Surrey TW20 8QD

Inspection dates

29–30 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher leads a happy and inclusive school. Senior leaders and managers form a collegiate team that works hard to provide the best quality of education for every pupil.
- Staff are reflective and responsive to change. They work closely with leaders to address aspects of the school that need to be better.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. Most make good progress by the end of key stage 2, especially in reading and mathematics.
- All parents and carers who spoke to inspectors were very positive about the school's caring culture. This included parents of children in Reception and of pupils with SEND.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years, where they make good progress from their different starting points.
- Most pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds make good progress across the school because leaders give their outcomes a high priority.
- The local authority and diocese are providing increasingly effective support and guidance for school leaders.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength because the school's curriculum and values-based ethos support this aspect of their education well.
- The culture to keep pupils safe is strong. Staff are vigilant and understand what to do if they have concerns. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and are cared for well in school.
- The school's curriculum meets the needs of its pupils well. They enjoy the extra-curricular opportunities the school offers, especially in the arts and in sport.
- Leaders' work to increase pupils' attendance has been successful. Despite this, the rates of absence of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are still too high.
- Outcomes for most-able pupils are not as strong as they could be because teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough.
- Leaders and governors have an overly positive view of the quality of some aspects of provision in the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the progress most-able pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics across all phases of the school.
- Reduce the rates of absence – particularly persistent absence – of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds so that their attendance improves to match more closely that of other pupils in the school and nationally.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and other leaders are dedicated to the school and aspire for all pupils to become successful learners. They are determined to improve the school further as the number of pupils on roll continues to rise.
- Staff are keen to develop their skills and are open to the changes required to make the school even better. Many have served the school over a long period of time. They are happy to embrace the professional development arranged by leaders, which is having a positive impact on outcomes for current pupils in the school.
- The school's curriculum is a strength and meets the needs of pupils well. Leaders' focus on ensuring that progression – especially as key stage 2 has expanded over recent years – has been successful. As a result, pupils enjoy learning about new things, while making connections to what they have learned in the past.
- The school's Christian ethos and a strong values-based culture support pupils' personal development well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is driven by the day-to-day curriculum, which is enriched by special events and celebrations. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of the different faiths and cultures of others, including those of their peers within the school.
- Pupils are positive about the extra-curricular opportunities the school provides. Additional funding to promote physical education and sport is spent wisely. Pupils talked enthusiastically to an inspector about clubs, team games and the prospect of singing at Wembley with pupils from other schools later this year.
- Leaders work hard to ensure that pupils with SEND are supported well. Leaders have been tenacious and persistent in their efforts to secure additional funding and resources from the local authority to enhance provision for these pupils. Leaders have also taken advantage of specialist support from outside the school, including outreach from a local special school and specialist speech and language support where required.
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds do well at Thorpe, although the rate of attendance of some needs to be better. Leaders monitor provision for disadvantaged pupils closely. They understand the barriers to learning faced by many in this vulnerable group. As a result, staff give disadvantaged pupils' outcomes a high priority.
- Leaders are prioritising the correct areas to develop in order to improve the school further. However, they have an overly confident view of the effectiveness of some aspects of the school. This is particularly the case when assessing the quality of teaching and learning and how this impacts on pupils' outcomes.

Governance of the school

- Governors are experienced and dedicated. They carry out their statutory duties effectively. They understand their collective role of both supporting and challenging leaders to provide the best possible standard of education for pupils.
- The governing body maintains a good strategic overview of the long-term aims and vision for Thorpe. Governors also make it their business to understand and be involved

in the day-to-day life of the school. Visits into classrooms and to help pupils with their reading or to lead collective acts of worship are normal. Governors are particularly supportive of staff and are keen to promote the school's Christian ethos and values, which impacts positively on the welfare of pupils and staff alike.

- Governors have an overly positive impression of the quality of education the school provides.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Routines and systems to keep pupils safe are sound. The culture to keep pupils safe is strong. Pupils told inspectors they feel very safe in school. All parents who talked to inspectors feel that their children are safe and happy in school. The large majority of parents who replied to Ofsted's parent survey said that their children feel safe and are happy in school.
- Staff understand what to do if they have concerns. All staff have been trained at a level commensurate with their level of responsibility. Pre-employment checks are carried out in accordance with current guidelines. Non-teaching support staff understand the importance of their contribution to keeping children safe at the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Classrooms are happy and productive places. Teaching and support staff know pupils well. Their work to support pupils working in small groups in communal areas or on a one-to-one basis when required is especially effective. This is particularly the case for pupils who need additional support and guidance.
- Classroom visits showed inspectors that most pupils understand what they are learning and why. When asked, pupils were able to tell inspectors how their learning was building on what they already knew. This included their topic work when learning about different cultures in the past.
- Most teachers and support staff use questioning well to assess pupils' progress and understanding. Leaders have recently made the development of pupils' vocabulary and comprehension skills a priority. Staff are increasingly effective at doing this.
- The day-to-day pre-teaching of vocabulary before lessons and following up on pupils' misconceptions impact positively on pupils' progress and engagement in lessons. This is particularly the case for pupils with SEND or for pupils in danger of falling behind.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good. The teaching of phonics in the early years and key stage 1 has a positive impact on pupils' early reading skills. As a result, pupils enjoy books and are happy to share their favourite books and the pleasure of reading with each other.
- Levels of challenge offered to most-able pupils are inconsistent. Classroom visits and scrutiny of pupils' work showed that expectations of the most able are not consistently high enough. As a consequence, the proportion of pupils achieving a greater depth of learning could be higher.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils' social and emotional development is supported well by the wider curriculum. The school's values-based ethos also encourages pupils to develop their own sense of resilience and confidence, as well as respect for themselves and others.
- Pupils understand how exercise and maintaining a balanced diet help them to keep fit and healthy. The school's personal, social, health and economic education and science schemes of work ensure that pupils' understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle builds over time.
- Pupils understand the potential dangers of using both social media and the internet. They learn about e-safety in computing lessons, as well as through special events and projects.
- Pupils understand what bullying is. A group of pupils told an inspector that they do not think bullying is a problem at the school. They also agreed with each other that friends sometimes fall out, which is not bullying, but simply a friendship problem.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most pupils behave very well. Pupils disapprove of poor behaviour, especially any that impacts negatively on their learning inside and out of classrooms.
- Routines at the start and finish of the school day are calm and orderly. Pupils enjoy lively break and lunchtimes, but transitions in and out of classrooms are safe and managed well.
- Occasionally, pupils do not engage in learning as readily as they might. This is particularly the case when the work set for them by teachers is too easy.
- Improving pupils' rates of attendance is an ongoing priority for leaders. While actions to reduce absence have been largely successful, rates of persistent absence of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds – although falling quickly – are still too high.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The outcomes of most pupils currently in the school are good. Classroom visits, scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's own assessment information show a strong correlation between outcomes for pupils and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time.
- Despite a slight fall in the proportion of Year 1 pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics screening check in 2018, pupils make good progress with their phonics skills. Most pupils achieve the expected standard by the end of Year 2. This includes pupils with SEND and pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Pupils attained broadly in line with those in other primary schools at the expected standard in writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 in 2018. Attainment in

reading at the expected standard was better. However, the proportions of pupils attaining a greater depth of learning in reading, writing and mathematics did not compare so favourably with the national averages in primary schools.

- Most pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as they move through key stage 2. This includes pupils from vulnerable groups.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was below national averages in 2018. However, most pupils in this year group – many with additional needs – made progress comparable with the national average in other primary schools.
- Proportions of current pupils achieving a greater depth of learning in reading, writing and mathematics are not as high as they could be across the school.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years is well led and managed and is a strength of the school. Staff are experienced and work together as an effective team. Parents who spoke to inspectors were particularly positive about the care that staff provide for their children in the early years.
- Staff constantly assess children's progress and plan appropriate next steps in learning. They ensure that children are provided with a good balance of child-initiated and adult-directed learning, depending on the needs of each individual child.
- Opportunities for children to access all areas of the early years curriculum were evident during inspectors' visits to Reception. This included using both indoor and outdoor learning environments, despite the cold weather.
- Staff use questioning extremely well to lead children to the next stage in their learning. A school-wide focus on extending vocabulary and comprehension stretches into the Reception class. Children are constantly challenged to explain what they mean or to choose better words to describe their understanding, for example of 'big' and 'small'.
- Adults go out of their way to learn about children's personal interests in Reception. They are skilled at using these to plan learning opportunities that excite and engage children.
- Staff know when to step back – but also when to step in – to confirm understanding and move learning on. As a result, children make good progress from their different starting points in Reception.
- Classroom visits showed relationships to be positive and expectations of behaviour high. Day-to-day routines are well established. Children are respectful of staff and each other. They are confident when explaining what they are doing and were happy and proud to show inspectors their work.

School details

Unique reference number	125174
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10084282

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eric Peacock
Headteacher	Helen Southgate
Telephone number	01932 562 329
Website	www.thorpe.surrey.sch.uk
Email address	info@thorpe.surrey.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 January 2014

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. As a school with a distinctive Christian ethos, it was last subject to an inspection under section 48 of The Education Act 2005 in June 2014.
- Since the last full inspection in January 2014, the school has continued to expand year on year, adding its first Year 6 cohort in September 2016.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are small numbers of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is much higher than the national average in primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be supported by the pupil premium is lower than the national average in primary schools.
- Pupil mobility is high in some cohorts, impacting significantly on the school's national test and assessment results at the end of key stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- The school was selected for inspection under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was subsequently deemed to be a section 5 inspection under the same Act by Her Majesty’s Inspector and a full section 5 inspection was then carried out.
- Classrooms were visited on both days of the inspection. During classroom visits, inspectors observed teaching and learning, assessed the quality of pupils’ work and talked to them about the progress that they were making. Classroom visits were accompanied by the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- As well as looking at pupils’ work in classrooms, a separate sampling of pupils’ work in mathematics and English was undertaken together with the English and mathematics subject leaders.
- Pupils’ behaviour was observed in classrooms and as they moved around the school. This included at the start of the school day and at break and lunchtime.
- An inspector attended a collective act of worship and also heard pupils read.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, the headteacher’s personal assistant, the chair of governors – accompanied by two other governors – and a group of pupils.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of the diocesan board and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to parents in the playground at the start of each day of the inspection. Inspectors took into account 30 replies to Ofsted’s parent survey and accompanying free-text messages. Inspectors also considered the school’s own staff survey.
- A wide range of policies and records were scrutinised, including those regarding the safety, behaviour and attendance of pupils. The school’s self-evaluation, improvement planning and information about pupils’ outcomes were considered. Minutes of governing body meetings and notes of visits from the local authority and diocese were also reviewed.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Robert Howell

Ofsted Inspector

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