

Inspection of Thornborough Infant School

High Street, Thornborough, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire MK18 2DF

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this happy, inclusive school. They benefit from a warm and caring environment, where every child is known well. As one parent commented, 'This is a small school with a huge heart.'

The school has high expectations for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school's curriculum is ambitious and provides pupils with a rich and stimulating education. Pupils work hard. They demonstrate a high level of commitment and a thirst for learning.

Pupils behave exceptionally well in and around the school. They are always kind and respectful. They play happily together, taking advantage of a wide range of engaging activities. In lessons, there is no disruption to learning. Pupils learn routines very quickly and enjoy taking on positions of responsibility within their school as 'champions' and 'ambassadors'.

There is an extensive range of opportunities open to all pupils. They attend forest school, after-school and lunchtime clubs and participate in local sporting events. The school ensures that, over time, all pupils take part. Pupils appreciate these opportunities. They are proud to represent their school and support their community, for example, by singing to local elderly residents and delivering parcels to their local foodbank.

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

The school prioritises reading. Children start learning to read as soon as they enter Reception. The school has ensured that staff are trained well to deliver phonics. They follow a rigorous phonics programme. Teachers' careful checks quickly identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge, which are addressed promptly. Consequently, pupils catch up quickly. The school library is thoughtfully resourced to reflect the curriculum and pupils' broader interests. Children in early years enjoy sharing books together and learning rhymes and songs. All pupils greatly enjoy listening to stories, particularly from the weekly 'Mystery Reader'. Teachers make sure that pupils read books that match the sounds they know. As a result, pupils learn to read quickly.

The school implements a broad and ambitious curriculum, which builds progressively from the start in Reception. Curriculum knowledge and skills are organised in a logical manner, which helps all pupils, including those with SEND, to remember what they have been taught over time. For example, in science, pupils could accurately recall names of body parts, the senses and discuss the conditions needed for human and plant life to survive. In early years and beyond, there is a strong focus on supporting pupils to become confident mathematicians. The school ensures pupils develop a secure foundation in number skills and knowledge, using subject-specific vocabulary.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning in all subjects. Teachers make sure pupils have the knowledge they need to help them understand new subject content. Occasionally, the activities teachers set in some lessons are not matched to some pupils' needs as precisely as they could be. When this happens, pupils do not always learn as much as they could.

The school has a rich and varied programme for personal development. Pupils learn how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy exceptionally well. In early years, pupils have a very good understanding of how to take care of their bodies, for example, by exercising, eating healthy foods and brushing their teeth. The school has very carefully planned trips and visitors to enhance the pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. These are skilfully woven into the curriculum. The school places high value on learning beyond the classroom. There are numerous opportunities for all pupils to develop their talents and interests. For example, pupils can learn a musical instrument, deepen their art skills and learn to cook. Pupils talk confidently about different faiths and are welcoming of all people.

From early years onwards, children learn the school rules and routines exceptionally well. They share, take turns and develop resilience. For example, when role playing being in a doctors' surgery, children were able to sustain their learning for long periods of time. Pupils across the school learn the school's values very securely and respect differences between people. As one pupil said, 'There are no bullies here'. Pupils really enjoy school and attend regularly.

Governors are ambitious for all pupils and are deeply committed to the school. They carry out their roles effectively. They have a strong vision for the school to be at the heart of its community. Staff are proud to work at the school and have great confidence in leaders' actions to support them. Leaders' approachable manner and care for staff are particularly appreciated. They are committed to making sure staff workload is manageable. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, activity choices do not match the needs of pupils fully effectively. This means that some pupils do not always achieve as well as they could. The school should continue to develop pedagogical approaches, which translate into consistently strong teaching of the curriculum.

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	110253
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10256331
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Philip Luce
Headteachers	Carol-Anne McCollum Laura Passenger
Website	www.thornborough.bucks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 June 2009, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.
- The co-headteachers joined the school in January 2023

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.
- 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.
- Inspectors met with the co-headteachers and the mathematics subject leader. The lead inspector also met online with a group of governors and spoke by telephone with a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also observed some pupils reading to a member of staff. The inspector also looked at some samples of pupils' work in geography and religious education and discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors discussed pupils' behaviour and the wider opportunities the school provides. They also spoke with pupils about these aspects of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- The inspection team took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and governor minutes.
- The lead inspector spoke with parents and carers, and staff. She considered responses to the confidential online surveys.

Inspection team

Fiona Henderson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Rachel Roberts	Ofsted Inspector

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