

Thurlaston Church of England Primary School

Desford Road, Thurlaston, Leicester, LE9 7TE

Inspection dates 20–21 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well and leave school with above-average standards in English and mathematics; many pupils making outstanding progress.
- Children in the Reception classes are well managed and make good or better progress from low starting points.
- Teaching is typically good with some that is outstanding.
- Attendance is above average because pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel safe, behave exceptionally well and are very proud of their school
- Parents are very positive about the school and praise the staff's commitment to their children.
- Teachers and other adults have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Pupils have many memorable learning experiences and opportunities which prepare them well for the future.
- The headteacher has a clear plan for the school's future. Staff at the school support him fully and there is a strong team approach.
- Governors are knowledgeable, provide support and ask searching questions.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some lessons the pace is not rapid enough, work lacks challenge and pupils do not have enough opportunities to work independently, assess their own performance and follow up on teacher's comments about their work.
- Senior leaders and teachers are not checking pupils' progress regularly enough which results in slower progress for some.
- Senior leaders and teachers do not monitor closely enough the effectiveness and impact of support which has been put in place.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons, three of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing body, a representative of the local authority, and a range of staff, including senior leaders.
- The inspector took account of the 28 responses from parents and carers to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and their views expressed in one letter. The inspector also met with parents and carers informally.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including the school's own data on pupils' progress, safeguarding documents, and records relating to attendance, behaviour, and bullying. The inspector also met with a group of pupils and talked to them about their experiences and views of the school.

Inspection team

Elaine Long, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Thurlaston Church of England Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority, for which the school achieves additional funding from the government (the pupil premium), is below average.
- The majority of pupils are White British and a low proportion come from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. A below average proportion of pupils is supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - making sure learning moves at a demanding pace and pupils are always challenged
 - giving pupils more opportunities to work independently and to assess their own performance
 - allowing pupils time to follow up on teachers' comments about their work.
- Increase the progress of pupils by making sure that senior leaders and teachers:
 - use information about pupils' progress more regularly to identify pupils in danger of falling behind
 - assess the impact and effectiveness of actions and support to help pupils get back on track quickly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation stage is improving year on year. Some children begin Reception with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age particularly in reading, writing and calculating. Exciting learning experiences, well-matched to their needs, result in the majority of children making good or better progress.
- Attainment in English and mathematics has been broadly average at Key Stage 1 over the past three years but 2012 saw a dip. Pupils in this small year group entered Reception below average in reading, writing and calculating and achievement was affected by pupils' long term absence due to illness.
- Pupils in Year 1 exceeded the required standard for the national screening in phonics (the sounds that letters make). The school provides many opportunities and competitions which encourage pupils to read well and widely.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2012 attainment was above average in reading, writing and mathematics with all pupils making outstanding progress. The proportion of pupils making more-than-expected progress in writing and mathematics exceeds national standards.
- Progress made by current Year 2 pupils is outstanding. They are predicted to gain above average attainment in all subjects, with writing being particularly strong due to very successful staff training in this area. The proportions of pupils making more-than-expected progress in all areas exceeds the national average considerably.
- Maths progress across Key Stage 2 has been slower due to staffing issues, which have now been resolved. Accelerated and outstanding progress in Year 6 across all subjects, particularly in writing and mathematics, however, means pupils are on course to reach above-average standards.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good, sometimes outstanding progress towards challenging individual targets. Their needs are identified early and the support they receive is effective.
- In 2012 the very small number of Year 6 pupils who were eligible for pupil premium funding joined the school after Key Stage 1 and also had special needs. These pupils attained standards in English and mathematics which were two terms behind the average in reading and mathematics and one in writing. The school has used additional funding to provide extra support for these pupils and current tracking shows that the attainment gap is closing rapidly throughout the school due to outstanding progress being made.

The quality of teaching is good

- In all year groups teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers question pupils well to check their understanding and move them quickly on once they have understood.
- Books are well marked and provide a clear record of what the pupils have been asked to do and how well they are doing. In some lessons, however, pupils have too few opportunities to assess for themselves how well they have done or to respond to the comments which teachers have

already made.

- Teaching in the Early Years' Foundation stage is consistently good or better. High expectations, close tracking of children's progress and a strong focus on speaking and listening results in good, sometimes rapid progress. Children's concentration levels are excellent and their relationships with one another purposeful and constructive. Children are happy and confident and enjoy all aspects of their learning.
- Reading is taught well throughout the school. Teachers and teaching assistants successfully promote the pupils' knowledge and use of phonics. Pupils have a love and enthusiasm for reading.
- All teachers have received training in the teaching of writing and the impact of this can clearly be seen in the quality of writing throughout the school and also in the way in which attainment has risen.
- Skills of numeracy, reading, writing and problem-solving are taught well throughout the school. Careful planning and regular review of what is being taught mean pupils are given many opportunities to develop and improve their skills and this prepares them well for the next stage of their learning.
- Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is of a high quality. Pupils know their targets, the lessons move with pace and they have to think and work hard. Pupils show that they persevere and enjoy activities which allow them to investigate and solve problems, for example along the lines of the Fibonacci golden spiral. Pupils were genuinely intrigued and amazed by the sequences and patterns they were discovering and the strong links to nature made them question 'who created these wonders in the first place?'
- Some lessons fail to challenge pupils sufficiently in their learning or allow them enough opportunities to work things out for themselves. In these lessons progress is slower. The pace of learning is not always swift enough, especially when teachers spend too long talking to the class.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning throughout the school. From the time they start Reception children are encouraged to be fully involved in their learning, to ask questions, solve problems and work well with one another. Pupils want to do well and appreciate the help they are given. They do not give up when the work is more difficult; instead they try harder.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is exemplary. They are polite, friendly and courteous. They feel a part of the school and are proud to belong to it. They like being given additional responsibilities and their participation in assemblies is exemplary. They enjoy taking a leading part and are supported and encouraged by other pupils in this. The joy, enthusiasm and respect they show for one another are striking.
- Attendance is consistently above average. There is a friendly, purposeful atmosphere as the day begins. Pupils arrive promptly and show by their enthusiasm they are keen to learn.
- In lessons and assemblies, pupils learn the skills they need to manage everyday risks for themselves. These cover, for example, road and fire safety and keeping safe while using the internet. Pupils know about different types of bullying and that there is always an adult they can speak to if they have any worries. Parents and carers who responded to the Parent View

questionnaire agree that their children feel safe at school.

- Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. Good systems such as the friendship bench, encourage pupils to care for each other and keep a watchful eye out for anyone who might feel left out.
- Staff know their pupils well and manage behaviour successfully. Parents support this view. There are few instances of bad behaviour and when they do happen they are dealt with in a fair and measured way.

The leadership and management are good

- Attainment is rising as a result of strong leadership and teamwork. The headteacher is relentless in his drive to improve teaching and raise achievement. Staff support him fully in this and know that they are held to account for the performance of pupils in their group. There is a common sense of purpose and morale is high.
- The headteacher has set up systems to track the progress of pupils and staff take part in regular reviews of pupils' performance. Sometimes support is not arranged quickly enough for pupils, identified as falling behind, to make sure they get back on track. This support is not regularly reviewed in order to assess its impact and effectiveness.
- Leaders' regular lesson observations, followed by detailed feedback, have ensured that all teaching is at least good and some is outstanding. The headteacher manages the performance of staff well, with clear links between pay increases and pupil progress.
- Subject teaching gives pupils many enjoyable learning experiences that contribute greatly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The work on Florence Nightingale totally absorbed pupils in Reception, Years 1 and 2 who appreciated her commitment and selflessness. Through religious education lessons pupils learn about a number of other faiths alongside Christianity. High quality display throughout the school promotes the qualities of generosity, thankfulness, love and patience; it encourages pupils to think deeply and to really explore the world around them. Assemblies allow time for reflection and prayer and the singing about their 'Great God' was full of enthusiasm and passion. The school's ethos of 'Teaching and living the Christian way of life' can be seen in all aspects of school life.
- The school works closely alongside its family of schools in a number of projects, which allows staff to share best practice. The school is also able to have access to a trained counsellor through its partnership work.
- The school has links with a school in Nigeria which it raises funds for. Trips to Leicester have encouraged pupils to experience and share in the wide range of other cultures and traditions. They support a number of children's cancer charities too because of their strong sense of social responsibility.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body takes a full and active role in the life of the school. Governors make regular visits to the school, meet with the staff and have a full programme of monitoring visits throughout the year. The reports they produce show they have a good understanding of what the school is doing to raise attainment. They ask challenging questions. They understand what data on pupils' progress is telling them and have made sure that the funds available through the pupil premium have been used well to improve the achievement of targeted pupils. They

have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and performance management, and that teachers' pay will only be increased if pupils make good progress. They know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and participate in the development of the school action plan. They make sure all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding pupils.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120201
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	401914

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Jerry Taylor
Headteacher	Gavin Beetham
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2010
Telephone number	01455 888243
Fax number	01455 888243
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