

Thorn Grove Primary School

Woodstock Avenue, Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire, SK8 7LD

Inspection dates 13–14 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She is a strong and effective leader with high expectations for each pupil to achieve their potential. She is well supported by all leaders, governors and staff. As a result, the quality of the school's teaching and performance continue to improve.
- Leaders have an accurate view of pupils' progress throughout the school because of their effective checking and monitoring procedures. Additional and timely support is provided for any pupil identified as falling behind.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school, providing effective support and challenge to drive improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are very keen to work hard and to learn. They speak highly of the support they receive from the adults who work with them. Their conduct in lessons and around school is exemplary.
- The arrangements for keeping pupils safe are outstanding. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. All pupils, including pupils with a range of complex learning needs and disabilities, learn harmoniously together. They respect and celebrate each other's differences.
- Teaching is good and there are examples of outstanding classroom practice in all three key stages. Teaching assistants support teachers and pupils exceptionally well.
- From overall broadly average and varied starting points on entry to school, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6 attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has improved and is above average.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils and those who speak English as an additional language make exceptional progress and achieve as well as their peers.
- Parents are very supportive. Their views of the school and its leadership are very positive and they appreciate all that the school does for their children.
- Good teaching in the early years ensures that children make good progress and achieve well in the Nursery and Reception classes. By the end of Reception, they are well prepared to start Year 1.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most able pupils are not challenged consistently well in all classes.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length and in different subjects other than in English and so progress in writing is no better than expected.

Information about this inspection

- Learning was observed in a range of lessons throughout the school and two observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors listened to pupils read in Year 1 and Year 5.
- Inspectors discussed the school's work with members of staff, pupils, the governing body, a representative from the local authority and a parents' group.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at a range of documentation, including that relating to the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, information about pupils' progress and attainment, the school's judgement of its own performance and the school development plan.
- They examined pupils' work on display and in their exercise books.
- Inspectors spoke to some parents at the start of the school day. They took account of 39 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own survey of parents' views. Inspectors also took account of the 25 responses to the staff questionnaire completed during the inspection.

Inspection team

Gillian Hunter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Martin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by the pupil premium, is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to provide support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.
- The school has an additional specialist resource unit to support pupils who are deaf or who have hearing impairment from within the local authority and neighbouring local authorities. This primary resource base is funded and staffed by the local authority. Some of the pupils have additional and sometimes complex learning needs. At the time of the inspection 17 pupils were on role and registered as pupils of Thorn Grove Primary School. Pupils receive specialist support from within the unit and are integrated with additional support into the mainstream classes.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- Pupils attend the Nursery on a part-time basis for two and a half days per week either Monday to Wednesday lunchtime or from Wednesday lunchtime to Friday afternoon. They attend the Reception class on a full-time basis.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement further to ensure that the most able pupils always reach above average standards in all classes.
- Improve achievement in writing still further by providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in other subject areas throughout the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership for a dedicated team of staff, with a clear determination to continue to raise standards. Together with the governors and staff, there is a shared vision and commitment to reach the highest expectations for achievement, behaviour and sustained improvement.
- School leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have correctly identified the priorities for the school, including the need to improve standards still further especially in writing.
- Leadership of teaching has led to continued improvement so that all teaching is now good with some that is outstanding. Teachers have targets based on their performance and salary progression is linked to both pupils' progress and achievement and to the teacher's contribution to whole-school improvements.
- Middle and senior leaders work well together and with their colleagues to plan lessons and check on pupils' progress effectively.
- Leadership of the resource base for deaf pupils is highly effective because the work between school staff and staff from the resource base is seamless. The headteacher and base leader ensure that the best practice within the resource base is shared in all classrooms throughout the school and methods used to support pupils are consistent. All school staff have received training in British Sign Language and most have achieved a level 1 accreditation in this.
- The work of the school to promote equality of opportunity, foster good relations and tackle all forms of discrimination is very effective. Pupils who are disadvantaged and who are disabled or have special educational needs all achieve well from their starting points and thrive in a happy, positive school that celebrates the uniqueness of each child.
- Pupil premium funding is used to support the small numbers of disadvantaged pupils. The progress of these pupils is closely monitored through rigorous tracking systems ensuring that they make the same progress as other pupils in the school.
- The school has adapted its curriculum to comply with new national requirements. The curriculum is enhanced by interesting visits and experiences while keeping an appropriate emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Subjects are planned to engage pupils' interest and foster a love of learning.
- Displays around the school show the variety of learning opportunities that develop pupils' skills for life in modern Britain. Regular visits and visitors, exploring other faiths and cultures develop a strong sense of mutual tolerance and respect. Pupils confidently express understanding of the difference of right and wrong and the importance of caring for others. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school meets all current safeguarding requirements. Staff have received training in child protection issues and this ensures that there is a good level of care to pupils.
- The local authority agrees with the school's view of its good performance and the priorities for improvement and as a result provides 'light touch' support
- Good use has been made of the primary sport funding. It has increased participation in sports, including tag rugby and street dancing. The skills of teachers have improved and pupils regularly enjoy a wide range of physical activities in well-taught lessons. Pupils confidently talk about the importance of exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors represent the school community well. They have reviewed their work and made changes to their structure and procedures. They are effective at supporting the school and challenging leaders to make further improvements.
 - They know how pupils' achievement compares with national averages and have a good understanding of the priorities for the school.
 - Governors know the quality of teaching in the school and how good teaching is rewarded and underperformance is tackled. They hold leaders to account. They know how to support the headteacher should there ever be any teacher underperformance and they oversee performance management arrangements closely.
 - Governors ensure that school finances are well spent and know how effective additional funding is in improving the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well at all times of the school day and pupils of all ages and abilities are very kind and considerate towards adults and one another. They demonstrate these values from the earliest age which creates a welcoming and friendly atmosphere throughout the school.
- Thorn Grove Primary School is a happy community of which pupils are extremely proud. They enjoy coming to school. Attendance is at the national average and continuing to improve. Pupils understand the importance of regular attendance and the difference this makes to how well they learn.
- Pupils love to learn and want to do well. They are enthusiastic and work hard in lessons. When they work together in groups, they willingly take turns and help each other so that everyone is included. Pupils really appreciate the many educational visits which enhance their learning and provide memorable and valuable experiences for them to further develop their love of learning.
- Parents agree that behaviour is a strength of the school both in school and in the after-school clubs, where the same high standards of behaviour are evident.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel extremely safe in school. They appreciate how well they are looked after by staff and each other. One pupil commented, 'if anything occurs teachers are on to it; eyes everywhere!'
- Pupils can explain clearly how to stay safe in a variety of situations, including when out on the road, using the internet, mobile technologies and social media.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the different kinds of bullying. They are very clear that they have no concerns about bullying but are confident that should an incident occur staff at the school would deal with it quickly and effectively. They have a sensitivity and strong perception about the needs of others including those who may bully. One pupil commented that 'sometimes something may have happened to them (the bully) and so they take it out on someone they perceive to be weaker'.
- Staff provide outstanding pastoral care and support for pupils and their families. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are happy, feel safe and that the school looks after them well.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Good quality teaching, especially of reading and mathematics results in pupils making continuously good progress over time.
- Strong support from senior leaders, along with well-planned training, motivates teaching staff well and strengthens their determination and commitment to provide the best for all pupils.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' good learning. They are deployed effectively and provide targeted support for individuals and groups of pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils and those with disabilities and special educational needs also make good progress.
- Reading is taught well. Teachers ensure that there is a strong focus given to teaching reading skills. Phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is taught successfully. Teachers provide a good range of literature for pupils to enjoy.
- The teaching of writing is good. Teachers ensure that grammar, punctuation and spelling skills are well developed throughout the school. Pupils are confident in a range of writing skills including writing with technical accuracy and organising and presenting their work effectively. They can write imaginatively in interesting and thoughtful ways. However, pupils are not given enough opportunity to produce extended pieces of writing in subjects other than English.
- The teaching of mathematics is at least good and improving. Pupils are provided with activities and challenges that stretch their mathematical skills. Calculation and number skills are well taught giving pupils confidence to solve a range of mathematical problems. They are often asked to explain what they have done and encouraged to talk through how they can apply what they know in order to find a solution. This is helping to deepen their understanding of mathematics.
- The most able pupils in Years 5 and 6 receive focused and sometimes additional support in order to help them reach their potential and make good progress. Although the challenge for the most able pupils is improving, this varies in some classes and is not always sufficient overall to make sure that they consistently achieve well.
- The quality of teaching of specialist staff in the resource base for deaf pupils is outstanding and results in pupils making more than expected progress especially in the acquisition of communication and language

skills. Individualised and targeted programmes of work, strong links with families and coordinated work with other agencies all support in preparing these pupils for the next stage of their education.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Since the last inspection, the rate of pupils' progress has increased, particularly in reading and mathematics. Progress in writing is good overall but the pace of improvement has been slower than in the other subjects. Standards have improved in Key Stage 2 and pupils achieve well.
- Progress in Years 1 and 2 builds well on the good start children make in the early years. In 2014, an above average proportion of Year 1 pupils reached the expected standards in phonics (letters and the sounds they make). The proportion of pupils in Year 1 currently at that stage is slightly higher. Their good start in phonics means that they tackle their early reading and writing confidently.
- Good progress continues in Year 2. All pupils reach at least the expected level for their age in reading, writing and mathematics and some pupils do better. Overall, standards at the end of Year 2 in 2014 were below average because over one third of the pupils had identified disabilities and special educational needs that impacted on their learning. Samples of pupils' work and school assessments in reading, writing and mathematics indicate that achievement in the current Year 2 is significantly improved on previous years.
- Pupils in the school read well. They have many reading opportunities in school and at home and have read extensively over the year. They talk enthusiastically about a wide range of authors and books that interest them. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are enthusiastic, enjoy reading and strive to achieve the school target known as the reading passport where they progress through awards, the ultimate being the gold William Shakespeare award when they have achieved the maximum number of points based on how much they have read.
- The school's results in the 2014 national tests for Year 6 pupils were below average and a decline on the previous two years especially in writing. This particular cohort had a higher percentage of pupils with complex needs including those with hearing impairments. Overall pupils made good progress from their end of Key Stage 1 results in reading and mathematics but progress in writing was lower than in the other subjects. The school has addressed this through well-targeted support and intervention for pupils currently in the school in Years 5 and 6.
- Writing is improving and progress has accelerated and is now in line with reading and mathematics. However, attainment in writing has not kept pace with other subjects. This is because there have been too few opportunities for pupils to broaden their experiences by writing at length and in different subjects.
- Standards have risen in all subjects and more pupils are reaching average standards in writing as well as reading and mathematics. Good proportions of pupils are also working at the higher Level 5 and some pupils at the highest Level 6 in reading and mathematics.
- While an increasing number of pupils are achieving above average levels by the end of Year 6 this is not consistent throughout the school. Some of the most able pupils are missing opportunities to reach their potential because the work they do in lessons is not challenging their higher-level thinking skills quickly enough.
- Progress from Year 3 to Year 6 is at least good and for some groups it is outstanding. In Year 6, for example pupils from minority ethnic groups make outstanding progress in reading and writing. There are other examples of outstanding progress for some disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in Year 3 and Year 5.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs including those pupils who are supported by the resource base for deaf pupils are well provided for and their learning is managed well. Pupils' specific needs are identified early and planning and support are put in place to ensure at least good progress from their starting points. Parents are fully informed of their child's progress and the school works well with specialist staff and other outside agencies to ensure pupils get the help they need.
- Data from the 2014 national assessment tests show a difference in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and all other pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 6 included a proportion of pupils with additional and complex learning needs, which resulted in these pupils being two terms behind non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in mathematics and over a year behind in reading and writing. Compared with other pupils in the school, disadvantaged pupils were over two terms behind in mathematics and writing and a year behind in reading.
- Current school data show that gaps have been closed significantly and that disadvantaged pupils reach similar levels of attainment and make at least similar good progress to non-disadvantaged pupils in the school and nationally. This is the result of more rigorous tracking and targeting of pupils together with

improved skills of teaching staff who have received training and support from school leaders.

The early years provision

is good

- Achievement in the early years is good. Children enter the Nursery with broadly typical skills and abilities for their age overall but with above average numbers of children who have disabilities and special educational needs. They flourish in the Nursery and quickly adapt to routines and enjoy the rich variety of activities provided. They continue to learn well throughout Reception and most enter Year 1 well prepared, with at least typical knowledge and skills for their age. The proportion who reached a good level of development in 2014 was above the national average. That proportion is similar in the current Reception year.
- Staff plan exciting activities and they work well in teams to ensure that children move on to the next steps when they are ready. All staff, including those in the resource base for deaf pupils, are very sensitive to the particular requirements of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Their learning and their welfare are nurtured well and they make good progress. The most able children in Reception are developing greater independence and are beginning to achieve goals in reading and writing that are above what is typically expected. The quality of teaching is good and phonics is taught well. Staff are particularly good at questioning children as they play to encourage them to think about what they are doing and decide what to do next.
- Learning is well focused on ensuring that children develop well both physically and emotionally. They are kept safe and feel secure and happy in school. Parents speak highly of the way their children have settled and that they are made to feel welcome. Children behave very well because that is what is expected. They learn to play harmoniously and respect others.
- The early years provision is managed well. The leader is skilled at establishing strong teamwork and is knowledgeable about early years education. She maintains high expectations of the early years team and ensures that children thrive under their care.

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	106079
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	461734

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julian King
Headteacher	Susan Denford
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2011
Telephone number	0161 485 1177
Fax number	0161 485 1233
Email address	headteacher@thorngrove.stockport.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

