

Thrapston Primary School

Market Road, Thrapston, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN14 4JU

Inspection dates

22–23 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders do not plan carefully enough how they use the pupil premium. They cannot be sure that the funding is having the maximum impact on improving pupils' outcomes.
- The governing body is not effective in holding leaders to account for the impact of additional funding.
- Leaders are not as effective as they could be in holding staff to account. As a result, improvements are not as effective as they could be.
- Pupils' attainment and progress is not consistent. Too many pupils, including the least and the most able, and those who are disadvantaged, do not achieve as well as they should, particularly in writing.
- The quality of teaching is not consistent. Agreed school approaches are not applied equally well.
- Teachers do not have equally high expectations of pupils' accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar, or of the presentation of their work.
- Teachers do not tackle pupils' errors and misconceptions consistently well.
- Teachers are sometimes less effective in teaching pupils the skills they need to be effective problem-solvers and able to reason in mathematics.
- Sometimes, teachers do not use information about pupils' learning well to decide next steps in learning or match work well to pupils' abilities.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. Leaders are developing a range of relevant initiatives that are beginning to improve standards.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Pupils make good progress.
- Pupils behave well at all times of the school day.
- Staff ensure that the curriculum promotes pupils' personal development well.
- Children make a good start to their education in the early years.
- Relationships are positive. There is an ethos of mutual respect.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and those responsible for governance to ensure that:
 - leaders at all levels sharply check the impact of their work and use their findings to more effectively hold staff to account and ensure that agreed approaches to school improvement are followed
 - they act fully on the findings of the reviews of the pupil premium and effectively plan and review the use of the funding so that it has the maximum impact on improving the attainment, progress and attendance of disadvantaged pupils
 - the governing body effectively holds leaders to account for the impact of additional funding, including the pupil premium and for physical education (PE) and sport.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to improve outcomes further by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have high expectations of the accuracy of pupils' use of spelling, grammar and punctuation and in different subjects to improve progress in writing
 - effectively tackle pupils' errors and misconceptions
 - develop further their expertise in teaching pupils the knowledge and skills they need to be effective problem-solvers and the ability to reason in mathematics
 - use assessment information more effectively to identify next steps in pupils' learning and match work accurately to pupils' abilities, including for the least and most able pupils
 - have consistently high expectations of the quality and presentation of pupils' work in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- This is an improving school. Leaders are ambitious for the school and they have recently introduced or are developing further, a wide range of initiatives. However, some of these are at an early stage. Leaders have not been as effective as they could be in holding staff to account to ensure that their actions and the 'non-negotiables' they have identified, are applied effectively by all staff. The quality of teaching and pupils' attainment and progress are too inconsistent.
- Leaders have not created and published a plan for how they will use the pupil premium funding to improve the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils. The school provides additional support for these pupils, including the role of the family support worker, and has introduced initiatives such as the '20-day challenge'. However, the funding is not carefully targeted and leaders have not reviewed the impact of previous funding. Leaders cannot be sure the funding is having the maximum impact.
- The same is true for the use of the additional funding for PE and sport. The school recently achieved the 'gold' active mark sports award, and the funding is being used to, for example, provide a PE specialist. Pupils have access to a broad range of sporting activities. However, focused plans and reviews of the impact of the funding on improving the quality of teaching and increasing pupils' participation in PE and sport are not in place. Again, leaders cannot be sure the funding is having the maximum impact.
- Middle leaders are enthusiastic and committed to bringing about improvements in their areas of responsibility. They have a good understanding of their subjects and many lead staff training sessions and support colleagues to improve the quality of planning and teaching. This is supporting improvements in mathematics, reading, writing and other subjects. They check standards by, for example, looking at pupils' work or visiting lessons. However, they are not as sharp as they could be in their analysis and acting on their findings to ensure that all staff apply their initiatives.
- Leaders have ensured that the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which is enriched by school trips, visitors to the school and a range of extra-curricular clubs. Leaders have considered how they have structured the curriculum. Staff generally promote pupils' moral and social development well. However, some aspects of pupils' cultural and spiritual development are less strong.
- External support has been effective in helping the school to move forward. Staff have opportunities to work with colleagues in other schools, for example, to develop their expertise in assessing pupils' learning or improve teaching. They have benefited from the support of external consultants and the local authority support has been particularly effective in supporting improvements in leadership and teaching in the early years.
- Leaders have accurately identified relevant areas for improvement in their school improvement plan. This is regularly reviewed by leaders and other staff. Leaders hold regular meetings with teachers to discuss pupils' progress, including that of disadvantaged pupils. They identify pupils who are falling behind and set targets for

improvement. While leaders are not fully effective in holding staff to account, leaders and other staff are bringing about improvements in many aspects of the school's work. Standards are steadily improving.

- The additional funding to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is used effectively. The recently appointed coordinator for the provision for pupils with SEND carefully identifies pupils' needs, supports the planning of appropriate support and carefully checks pupils' progress. Most pupils make good progress from their starting points. Many parents commented on the effective support their children receive.
- The large majority of parents are happy with all aspects of the school's work. They say their children are happy, kept safe and enjoy coming to school. Many commented on the friendly, approachable staff. Many parents also commented positively about the benefits of the open mornings in which they visit their child's classroom and talk with their child about their learning.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has not ensured that the school has focused plans for the use of the pupil premium and additional funding for PE and sport or reviewed the impact of these funds. Consequently, it cannot effectively hold leaders to account for the effectiveness of the use of these funds in improving pupils' outcomes. It is crucial that the governing body ensures that the school acts upon the findings of the reviews of the pupil premium.
- The governing body has not ensured that the school has met the requirements of what it should publish on the school website.
- The governing body is effective in other aspects of the school's work. Its members have a range of relevant expertise and are knowledgeable about the school. The minutes of their meetings show that they ask questions of leaders and through their visits, have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas in which it needs to improve. However, the governing body does not challenge leaders as effectively as it could about the progress and attainment of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.
- The governing body has received a range of relevant training to support its work, including for safe recruitment practices and in relation to the 'Prevent' duty.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a secure culture of safeguarding and an ethos of care.
- Leaders ensure that the record of recruitment checks on staff, governors and visitors is accurate and up to date.
- Leaders take timely action when they have concerns about pupils' welfare and well-being. They are tenacious in involving external agencies when this is appropriate and keep detailed documentation of the actions they take.
- Pupils say that they feel safe, and the very large majority of parents who responded to

Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, or spoke with the inspectors, said that their children are safe. Leaders ensure that the school site is adequately supervised.

- The large majority of parents say that staff deal effectively with any concerns, including those relating to bullying, when they occur. Instances of bullying or derogatory behaviour are rare. However, some parents did raise some concerns. Leaders' detailed records show that they take appropriate actions to resolve concerns raised.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a trained designated leader for safeguarding allocated to the different buildings on the school site. Leaders ensure that staff are trained and kept up to date with the latest guidance on keeping pupils safe in education. Leaders are taking additional steps to ensure that all members of staff are clear about school procedures.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are inconsistent. Teachers' application of agreed school approaches, for example in aspects of mathematics, approaches to spelling, giving pupils feedback, presentation and handwriting, are too variable. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are inconsistent. These inconsistencies across the school mean that pupils' progress is not as good as it could be.
- Teachers sometimes do not use information about pupils' learning as well as they could, for example in order decide when is the right time to move learning on to more challenging work or ensure that work is matched well to pupils' abilities. Sometimes, teachers do not address pupils' errors or misconceptions well enough.
- Teachers have had training on developing a 'mastery' approach to the teaching and learning of mathematics. Teachers often use practical resources and visual imagery well to support pupils' learning and encourage them to use and apply their learning. However, while progress has been made, pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills are not taught effectively in some classes. When this happens, some pupils, including the least and the most able, do not make the progress they should.
- Teachers teach spelling, grammar and punctuation skills and give pupils regular and valuable opportunities to develop and practise their understanding of these skills. However, pupils are not taught consistently well how to effectively apply these skills in their longer pieces of writing. In some classes, teachers ask pupils to refer to an example of pupils' own high-quality writing to remind them to do their best work. However, teachers' expectations of the quality and presentation of pupils' writing, including in different subjects, are inconsistent.
- Some teaching is of high quality. Expertise is being increasingly shared by, for example, teachers working alongside each other to develop their skills. In most classes, teachers use a consistent approach to ensuring that pupils know what they are learning, and what they need to do to be successful. Teachers have at least sound subject knowledge and are often skilled in asking questions to check pupils' understanding or further develop their thinking. Some teachers plan sequences of lessons which effectively build pupils' learning over time. This was observed in English for example, when pupils were able to explain fully to inspectors how the skills and knowledge they were learning in the lesson would be used to write a story in a future lesson.

- The teaching of phonics is effective. Staff have a consistent approach to teaching the school's phonics programme. Teaching is lively and matched well to pupils' needs. Staff throughout the school provide a structured approach to teaching pupils reading comprehension skills. Books are matched well to pupils' reading abilities. Staff ensure that through well-structured guided reading sessions and initiatives such as 'book talk', pupils have positive attitudes to reading.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well and provide effective support for pupils of different abilities and learning needs.
- The majority of parents were happy with the homework their children receive. As well as holiday project work, tasks often relate to key skills or knowledge they need in their lessons such as spelling, multiplication facts and practising reading.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Relationships are positive and pupils are keen to learn. There is an ethos of mutual respect.
- Pupils have a well-developed sense of right, wrong and fairness. They collaborate and work well together.
- Pupils value the roles and responsibilities the school provides. These include the school council, librarians, the 'eco-action' and recycling teams, as well as the older 'reading buddies' who read with younger pupils. Pupils understand how these roles link to the school values and the importance of helping others.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They understand the importance of healthy lifestyles. They were, for example, able to share with inspectors their clear views on the foods offered by the school tuck shop.
- Pupils learn about different forms of bullying. Some say there is some bullying, but that it is rare. Most are confident that staff will resolve any concerns they may have. Pupils told inspectors about the role of the school pupil 'bully busters', who pupils can speak to if they have a worry.
- Pupils have a positive attitude to learning and apply themselves well to all that is asked of them. They only lose focus when teachers do not match work well to their needs or when they are unsure about a task they are given.
- Pupils understand the school's values and the importance of respecting others. They say this is important to 'make the world a better place'. However, some older pupils are not as confident as they should be in their understanding of some aspects of the British values.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff manage behaviour consistently well and pupils know what is expected of their behaviour. Pupils respond quickly when staff ask for

their attention, for example. They conduct themselves well at all times of the school day.

- Staff teach pupils to be friendly, confident and polite. Pupils are courteous. They were happy to talk to inspectors about their work and experiences of school life. They play nicely together at playtimes. Some said they wished they had more activities to make playtimes more interesting.
- Pupils enjoy school. Teachers ensure that classrooms are calm, orderly places to learn. Pupils take pride in their school, their appearance and increasingly in their work.
- Overall attendance is below the national average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders regularly scrutinise attendance and emphasise the importance of high attendance with parents. They, together with the family support worker, work to support families of pupils who have low attendance. Leaders make concerted efforts and take reasonable actions to reduce persistent absence and improve attendance. However, improving attendance remains a priority, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment and progress are inconsistent. Too many pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not make the progress or attain as highly as they should, particularly in writing.
- At the end of key stage 2 in 2018, pupils' progress in reading was average, while progress in writing and mathematics were below the national averages. While attainment at the end of key stage 2 was similar to the national averages, over the last two years, the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils has been below that of pupils nationally, particularly in writing, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- At the end of key stage 1 in 2018, pupils' attainment was similar to the national averages for reading and mathematics, but below for writing.
- Current pupils' work throughout the school shows that pupils' attainment and progress are inconsistent in different classes and subjects. While leaders and staff are bringing about improvements, too many pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are not making the sustained progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils' work shows that pupils are making increasingly strong progress. In writing, for example, pupils are taught how to write increasingly complex sentences over time. In mathematics, pupils are taught increasingly well, how to use more efficient methods of calculation or apply their knowledge and skills to solve problems. However, this is inconsistent. When work is not matched well to pupils' needs, or learning builds less effectively over time, pupils, particularly the least and most able, and including those who are disadvantaged, do not make the progress they should.
- Pupils generally take pride in their work and presentation is improving. While inconsistent, pupils are given increasing opportunities to write at length.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their phonics and reading skills. The proportions of pupils achieving the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening

check have been similar to the national averages for the last three years

- Pupils with SEND overall make good progress from their starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- Many children join the early years with skills below those typical for their age. The proportions of children achieving a good level of development have been similar to the national averages for the last three years. Children make good progress and have a good start to their education in the early years. They are prepared well for key stage 1.
- The leader of the early years carefully checks children's learning and development across the different areas of learning, and effectively identifies what is needed to help children make good progress.
- Expectations of what children can achieve are high, including in mathematics and writing. Inspectors saw how children were able to write simple, punctuated sentences or draw pictures to demonstrate their understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Routines are quickly established. Children are confident in explaining what they are learning. Children can concentrate and listen well. They are resilient and independent in their learning.
- Teachers and other adults use questioning effectively to take children's learning forward. In a lesson exploring time in the Reception Class, for example, children were able to explain why some children's names took longer to say than others because they had more syllables. In the nursery, staff encouraged pupils to extend their vocabulary as well as develop their fine motor skills through making a cake.
- The teaching of phonics is effective.
- Staff encourage children's personal development and good behaviour well. Children have positive attitudes to their learning and behave well. They are taught to collaborate well and be respectful of each other.
- The leader of the early years is developing effective transition arrangements between Nursery and the Reception Year. She has also improved the involvement of parents in their children's learning. Parents are involved in contributing to assessments of children's learning and development.
- The leader of the early years ensures that the indoor and outdoor learning areas are well organised and provide children with a broad range of opportunities across the different areas of learning, both in the Nursery and Reception classrooms. The curriculum is adapted to take account of children's interests.
- Leaders ensure that the arrangements for welfare and safeguarding children in the early years meet requirements.

School details

Unique reference number	122111
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10057650

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	545
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Adam Boon
Headteacher	Mrs Pauline Turner
Telephone number	01832 732512
Website	www.thrapston-primary.northants.sch.uk
Email address	head@thrapston.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	28–29 September 2016

Information about this school

- A new assistant headteacher who is also the coordinator for the provision for pupils with SEND was appointed by the school in September 2018.
- The school receives support from the local authority through regular visits and support to arrange training.
- Thrapston Primary School is larger than an average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and of pupils who speak English as an additional language, are below those seen nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy and assistant headteachers, middle leaders and other staff. The inspectors met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. Discussions explored a wide range of subjects, including safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspectors observed 19 lessons, as well as eight phonics sessions. Many lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher, deputy or assistant headteacher. During these visits, the inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke with them to evaluate the quality of their learning. The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work with leaders. The inspectors listened to pupils read and met pupils informally as well as in a formal meeting with a group of pupils.
- The inspectors spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day and account was taken of the 100 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the 98 free-text responses. Account was also taken of the 45 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- A range of documents were scrutinised, relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, pupils' attainment and progress and staff performance. The inspectors looked at plans for improvement as well as leaders' evaluation of the school's performance. The inspectors also considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

Inspection team

John Lawson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jane Ferguson	Ofsted Inspector
Rob Gooding	Ofsted Inspector

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2019