

**THRUSSINGTON PRIMARY ACADEMY**

**PRE-INSPECTION REVIEW**

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## **Information about the school**

- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- Nearly all the pupils are from White British backgrounds (94.3%).
- There are currently no pupils who speak English as an additional language, which is obviously significantly below the national average of 18%.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the additional funding provided for children in the care of the local authority, from forces families, and those known to be eligible for free school meals (the pupil premium) is well below average.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and pupils who have significant special educational needs supported through school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs, are above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

During the review all classes and all teachers were observed.

## Achievement

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skill and knowledge broadly in line with those expected for their age, including their communication, language and literacy skills and their mathematical development. The teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage Unit is consistently good and outstanding so children settle well into school life and make exceptional progress. The joint working with the pupils in Key Stage 1 raises expectations and the staff team working extremely effectively together. By the end of the Reception year the percentages at age related levels are well above national averages in the core areas.
- Results in the Year 1 Phonics Screening Test were above the national average for achieving the expected standard (75% compared to 69%). The results were an improvement on those in 2012. Of the [REDACTED] pupils who did not reach the expected standard in Year 1, they all achieved this in Year 2. The school appears to have addressed any issues regarding phonics teaching and outcomes.
- In Key Stage 1 pupils' progress dipped in reading and writing in 2013, although remaining above national averages, especially in writing. Results in reading have dipped for the third consecutive year (18.0 in 2011 to 17.9 in 2012 and 16.6 in 2013).
- Results in reading are just above the national average (16.6 compared to 16.3). In writing the pupils are one term ahead of pupils nationally and in mathematics are two terms ahead.
- The [REDACTED] boys consistently outperformed the [REDACTED] girls in all three core areas, which suggest cohort differences rather than subject concerns.
- There was [REDACTED] eligible for free school meals and [REDACTED] had significant special needs at school action plus and consequently achieved levels well below the rest of the cohort.
- [REDACTED] pupils from Indian backgrounds outperformed [REDACTED] in the cohort in all core areas.
- In contrast the attainment at Key Stage 2 showed results in reading and writing significantly above the national averages whereas results in mathematics dipped for the second successive year. However results in mathematics were half a year ahead of the national average and in line with expected levels at the end of Year 7. Results in reading were more than a year ahead of national averages and in writing four terms ahead. Results in the newly introduced 'Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling Test' were again almost a year ahead of the national average.
- There were no significant gender differences in reading, writing and mathematics outcomes, although the girls performed much better than the boys in the 'Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling Test'.
- The fact that all pupils attained a Level 4+ in reading and writing and all but one in mathematics shows once again the excellent support for the lower ability pupils.
- The fact that eight of the ten pupils achieved a Level 5 in reading (80%), six in writing (60%) and five in mathematics (50%) also indicates a good level of challenge for the more able pupils.

- 90% of the pupils achieved Level 4+ in all core areas, which is significantly above the national average of 75% and well above the national floor standards (60%).
- Pupils leave school at the end of Year 6 with levels of attainment consistently beyond those expected at the end of Year 7. They have also developed outstanding attitudes to learning. Consequently, they are exceptionally well placed to succeed in the next phase of their education.
- From the evidence in pupils' books and from the pupil progress tracking, the pupils make consistently good or better progress across all the year groups. This reflects the consistently high quality teaching and the extremely high expectations of the pupils and staff.
- This good and better progress is also because the school leaders focus on improving the already high quality of teaching and learning in lessons.
- The progress measures for the school placed the school in the top 10% nationally in 2011; the top 5% in 2012 and the top 23% in 2013. The dip in 2013 is because the more able pupils who achieved Level 3 at Key Stage 1 find it very difficult to make better than expected progress and reach the new Level 6 (Year 9 expected levels) by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils across the whole school like the targets set for them by the teachers to improve reading, writing and mathematics. These focus their efforts and contribute well to their progress.
- The pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers and achieve levels of attainment significantly above the comparative results nationally because the systems are in place for their early identification and also for the selection of appropriate interventions to meet their needs through discussions with relevant staff. The work is, therefore, set at the right level and they receive good quality support in small groups from appropriately trained teaching assistants and teachers.
- The more-able pupils also benefit from work that is set at a challenging level for them in lessons so that they are made to think carefully about their work in order to apply and develop their skills and knowledge.
- There were no pupils in Year 6 who were eligible for free school meals and so it is not possible to comment on the impact of pupil premium funding.
- The senior leaders and subject leaders keep a close watch on the progress made by the pupils. They hold meetings regularly with all the teachers to identify any pupil who is falling behind and take action where necessary to give an extra boost to his/her learning in smaller groups with adult support.

*The overall judgement for achievement is therefore currently 'outstanding'.*

## Quality of teaching

- Teachers plan work for the pupils that is interesting and enjoyable, and which motivates them to learn well. From discussions during the review, the pupils value this. When asked about the 'best things about the school' one pupil replied, 'Mrs Moore and the teachers set us up for life.'
- The majority of teaching observed during the review was outstanding and all the teaching observed was at least good with outstanding features. No teaching observed was less than good.
- Undoubtedly the teachers have exceptionally high expectations of the pupils and the pupils respond to this challenge enthusiastically. For instance, in the Key Stage 1 class the pupils were talking and writing knowledgeably about being palaeontologists and the way they were studying omnivores, carnivores and herbivores. In Years 3 and 4 the pupils were conducting experiments about the permeability of different types of rocks; and in Years 5 and 6 the pupils were designing experiments about reversible and irreversible changes and accurately using technical vocabulary such as 'molecular structure', 'absorption rates', and 'solubility'.
- Outcomes for the pupils in all classes show that the quality of teaching of the core areas of literacy and numeracy is highly effective and a strength of the school.
- The teachers plan activities around the topic themes that provide an excellent range of problem-solving and other tasks that enable pupils to apply their core skills, particularly literacy skills, in all subject areas. The pupils are motivated in these tasks because they have had an active involvement in choosing the themes that particularly appeal to them.
- Lessons are well resourced and teachers and pupils make good use of information technology to enhance learning.
- Generous teacher-pupil ratios make sure that the ongoing monitoring of pupils' understanding and progress in lessons is a strength of the school. The staff know the children in their class exceptionally well and, because of this and their commitment, the teaching assistants provide excellent support in lessons.
- High quality marking and feedback to pupils is another key reason for the good and outstanding progress they are making. Pupils respond consistently well to the next steps provided by the teacher for improving their work. However, a small minority of pupils did comment that their homework was not always followed up by the teachers.
- Throughout the whole school excellent use is made of targets for pupils to improve their work and accelerate their progress. Pupils value these targets and also value the regular feedback through teachers' marking. The pupils have developed very mature attitudes to their learning and therefore are highly motivated to succeed.
- Other strengths include the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are an obvious strength of the school. The pupils show respect for others and work cooperatively together well. They also demonstrate the ability to work independently where appropriate and maintain high levels of

concentration and perseverance from a very early age in school.

*The quality of teaching is judged to be outstanding.*

## **Behaviour and safety**

- Behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school, even where learning areas are compact and space is limited. This is because the high expectations are embedded from the moment the children start at the school and the pupils are keen to learn, enjoy their learning in lessons and appreciate that their learning is of high importance. Consequently the management of behaviour is low-key and barely noticeable.
- The vast majority of pupils are considerate, polite, courteous and well-mannered. The school's behavioural records also confirm that this is the case over time, with only one incidence of a fixed term exclusion over the last three years at least.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and happy in school. Pupils understand the various forms that bullying can take and say that bullying in any form is very rare indeed and is dealt with promptly and effectively by the adults in school. They have a good understanding of how to use the internet safely.
- Attendance is particularly high, with rates significantly higher than the national average. This again reflects the pupils' positive attitudes to school and the fact that they are keen to be there.

*Behaviour and safety are judged to be outstanding.*

## **Leadership and management**

- The Headteacher provides inspirational leadership and has driven the significant improvements since the school was placed in special measures in 2004 and she took over as Headteacher.
- She has created a strong and highly effective staff team, and distributed leadership is now well embedded. Staff monitor their areas effectively through lesson observations, planning checks, pupil discussions, etc. and feedback to staff to secure improvements. They also undertake presentations to the governing body.
- The senior leadership team and the governing body provide a clear direction for the school's improvement. Academy status has been achieved and the school's application to be a Teaching School is currently being considered by the Department for Education. Expectations are high and there is a shared ambition for the school to improve at all times.
- The performance management procedures are well established. Teachers are given clear steps for improvement and value these because they can see the improvements being made. They also value the training organised for them. Governors have a clear understanding of the

appraisal programmes and that teachers' pay progression is linked to performance.

- The school works effectively with parents and the engagement is good.
- The school works effectively with other schools for the professional development of staff and also the sharing of good practice.
- The school provides a rich, broad and balanced curriculum that motivates the pupils because staff have taken time to involve the pupils in agreeing topics that interest them. The curriculum also provides an excellent range of opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has very few pupils eligible for pupil premium funding but uses the funding thoughtfully to raise attainment.
- The school has recently received the new Sports funding from the DfE and has a clear programme for improving opportunities for staff and pupils to improve their skills. It is too soon to evaluate the impact.
- Governors hold the school to account effectively because, through their monitoring, they are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are conversant with the high quality of teaching and are aware about the links between pay progression and performance. The governing body have a good understanding of the priorities that face the school in the future and they have developed a comprehensive project management plan. They have ensured that the school provides equal opportunities. The school fully meets statutory requirements for the safeguarding of pupils.
- The school has demonstrated continuous improvement in recent years. The leadership and management is stable and strong, including governance and the distributed leadership. Therefore the school has demonstrated a good capacity for further improvement.

*The leadership and management of the school is judged to be outstanding.*