

Inspection of Thomas Bullock Church of England Primary Academy

Pound Green, Shipdham, Thetford, Norfolk IP25 7LF

Inspection dates: 8–9 January 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this friendly and welcoming school. Despite changes in leadership and staffing, pupils learn and achieve well across the curriculum.

Almost all pupils behave well in lessons and show positive attitudes to learning. They like their teachers and respond well to high expectations of behaviour. Learning is rarely disrupted. Pupils are polite and considerate to one another. They told us that bullying and acts of unkindness are rare. Any incidents are sorted out quickly. Pupils understand the school's values. This contributes to a culture where pupils want to do their best in all respects.

Pupils are proud of opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as helping in lessons, being library monitors or taking part in the school council. All classes have grown vegetables in the school farm, which have been sold or used for meals. Pupils have lots of opportunities to take part in sporting activities and competitions. Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs and visits that add to what they learn in lessons.

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

School leaders are keen for pupils to do as well as they can. Despite changes in leadership, the focus has remained improving the quality of education. The Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (the trust) has provided much needed stability at this time. Alongside leaders and governors, the trust has raised expectations of staff. Staff have responded positively. They feel valued, well led and have embraced opportunities for training and development. As a result, teaching and pupils' work are of a good and improving quality across the curriculum.

Children in Reception make a good start to their education. They respond very well to adults' consistently high expectations. Children play and learn well together. Adults teach the skills of early reading, writing and mathematics effectively. They thoughtfully plan activities in all areas of the curriculum that grasp children's interests. We saw this in a topic on space, when children were enthused and very inquisitive. Children achieve well and leave Reception ready for learning in Year 1.

Adults teach reading consistently well across the school. Teachers ensure that pupils develop and use their phonics skills confidently. They also teach the skills pupils need to fully understand what they read. Pupils told us how teachers encourage them to read for pleasure. Many do so regularly, in school and at home.

Pupils develop the skills and ability to write for different purposes effectively, over their time in the school. They use these skills to good effect in other subjects to produce written work of the same good quality as that in their English books.

Leaders have thought carefully about what pupils need to learn in different subjects. Subject plans set out the knowledge that pupils should learn in a logical order. This helps pupils build on what they know already. Some parents would like more information about what their children will learn.

In mathematics, leaders have taken effective action to improve some of the weaknesses in the curriculum and pupils' learning. They have provided training to help teachers plan learning that better meets pupils' needs. This is helping to ensure that pupils understand the basic mathematics knowledge they need before moving on to harder tasks. However, occasionally teachers are still setting tasks that are too hard. This slows pupils' learning.

Teachers adapt activities for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They ensure that these pupils access the full curriculum, achieve well and enjoy their learning.

Teachers have the knowledge needed to teach the full range of subjects well. They regularly check pupils' understanding in lessons. However, teachers' use of assessment in foundation subjects is underdeveloped. Teachers do not check on what pupils know and can do in these subjects as well as they can in English and mathematics.

Pupils understand the school's values of courage, thankfulness, perseverance, respect, compassion and responsibility. These contribute to a friendly, caring atmosphere and good behaviour. Pupils value learning and attend well. They know why they learn about others' beliefs and cultures. Pupils learn that they should treat everyone equally and with respect. There are many trips that pupils enjoy. Pupils participate in music and sports activities and support the local community and charities. These contribute strongly to pupils' personal development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, governors and the trust ensure safeguarding has the highest priority. Staff receive regular training and updates to keep their knowledge up to date. They are confident to identify and pass on concerns. The designated safeguarding leader makes referrals to outside agencies promptly, so that pupils and their families get any help that they need. Leaders ensure that they carry out the checks required before someone works in the school. The record of these checks is accurately maintained.

Pupils learn to keep themselves safe from harm. Visitors, from external organisations, add to the work done by teachers.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In mathematics, teachers accurately identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers usually plan activities that support pupils' learning effectively. Occasionally, activities involve too many mathematical concepts before pupils are secure in their learning, which slows progress. Leaders should ensure that challenge is well planned by teachers against what pupils already know and can do.
- In English and mathematics, teachers use assessment effectively to plan lessons. This does not make unacceptable demands on teachers' time. In other subjects, teachers do not have a precise understanding of what pupils already know and can do. Foundation subject leaders should ensure that assessment underpins the curriculum in their subjects more effectively to support teachers' planning. This should be done in a way that does not add to teachers' workload.
- There are well sequenced plans in place for all subjects. The school website provides information about what pupils learn each year. The detail provided varies between subjects in the quality of information that it provides. Some parents do not feel that they know enough about what their children are learning. Leaders should improve this aspect of communication so that all parents know what their children will learn and how they can support this.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	141192
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10121368
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Willie Crawshay
Headteacher	Chris Read
Website	www.thomasbullock.dneat.org
Date of previous inspection	13–14 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Thomas Bullock Primary Academy is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Norwich. It has been sponsored by the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust since November 2014. The trust provides overall governance for the school. The trust also provides training and professional development for staff and school leaders. A local governing body carries out some responsibilities delegated to it by the trust.
- The previous headteacher left the school in April 2019. The trust appointed an interim headteacher who supported the deputy headteacher to lead the school two days per week. From September 2019, an interim headteacher, employed by the trust has been running the school full-time.
- A number of staff have left the school since the previous inspection.
- The religious character of the school was inspected under section 48 of the Education Act (2005) in September 2017 and was judged to be good.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is lower than in most primary schools.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the chief executive officer of the trust, two other trust representatives and the chair and vice-chair of the local governing body.
- To evaluate the quality of education, we carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, writing, mathematics, art and science. In each subject, we visited lessons in all key stages, scrutinised pupils' work, which included listening to pupils read, and held discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils. We also reviewed curriculum plans in a range of other subjects, reviewed pupils' topic books and made short visits to lessons to see pupils learning a range of subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, we reviewed a range of documentation, including school policies, procedures and records. The lead inspector met with the designated leader for safeguarding to discuss their work and review examples of the actions taken to keep pupils safe. We also checked staff members' understanding of how to keep pupils safe from harm.
- We reviewed a range of school documentation and policies, including records of governors' meetings, the work of the trust and information relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- We gathered pupils' views on the school by speaking to groups of pupils from the lessons that we had visited, speaking to pupils in their lessons and speaking to pupils at informal times, such as lunchtime and breaktime. We also considered the 52 responses to Ofsted's online pupils' questionnaire.
- An inspector spoke to parents at the start of the school day and we considered the 51 responses and 34 free-text responses submitted to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

Paul Wilson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Julie Harrison

Ofsted Inspector

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 <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020