

Inspection of Glastonbury Thorn School

Pigott Drive, Shenley Church End, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK5 6BX

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 June 2025

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since January 2015. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school is a haven of kindness and belonging. Pupils respond positively to the high expectations set for their behaviour and achievement. They present their work neatly and are proud of their accomplishments. Children in the early years learn important routines. They share resources well and quickly become independent. A wide range of trips and visits to places such as the farm and the train station enhance pupils' learning further. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well across the curriculum.

Relationships between pupils and staff are respectful. The atmosphere around school is happy and harmonious. The school's mantra, 'I can't do it... YET!' encourages pupils to become confident in their abilities and recognise challenges as opportunities for growth. Pupils' enjoyment of school is evident in their high attendance.

Pupils develop a strong sense of character. They are thoughtful and reflective individuals. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of keeping safe, including when online. They trust that adults will help them if any problems arise. Pupils enjoy taking part in clubs which develop their hobbies and talents. These include multi-sports, singing and gymnastics. Pupils relish their leadership roles, which they fulfil with passion.

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

The school is well led. It is resolute in its ambition to provide the best education and care for all pupils, including those with SEND. Rightly, it has worked very well to ensure that pupils experience an engaging, meaningful and interesting curriculum. Across all subjects, the school has set out clearly the 'sticky knowledge' pupils will learn and the order in which it is taught. The school is working effectively to ensure that subject leaders are monitoring and checking precisely the impact of the curriculum in their areas of responsibility.

The school takes every opportunity to promote pupils' love of reading. Pupils relish reading the diverse and exciting range of texts available. There are many exciting spaces around the school where pupils can dive into a book. Pupils look forward to listening to the stories that staff share. The sounds and letters pupils need to know well are introduced right from the start of the Reception class. If pupils fall behind in phonics, they receive the support they need to help them catch up quickly.

Staff value the importance the school places on their professional development. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to present information clearly and engage pupils in interesting learning activities. They work well to promote pupils' use of subject-specific vocabulary. Nevertheless, sometimes, teaching does not check and help pupils secure the important knowledge and understanding before moving on to new work, including in phonics. Where this happens, pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Staff skilfully identify the needs of any pupils with SEND quickly. Adaptations to the curriculum and effective support from adults ensure that these pupils achieve well, from their individual starting points.

Children in the early years get off to a strong start. Language and communication are central to this. Children practise their early number skills when building with blocks or making 'pasta sauce' in the outdoor kitchen. They cooperate well with adults and with each other. Children learn to play together and take turns. They develop kind, supportive and enduring friendships. Pupils are courteous and considerate. Classrooms are orderly, stimulating areas, where pupils work well together and are keen to share their ideas.

Pupils are prepared well for life beyond school. They learn about different beliefs and how families can be different. They are proud to achieve the coveted 'GTS award' which celebrates their contributions as positive citizens and volunteers in the community. Pupils look after the local environment. They plant flowers and herbs to attract bees to the area. They also grow fruit and vegetables, which they use to make soup. Pupils maturely discuss and consider topics such as individual liberty and mutual respect. Children in the early years gain insight into careers from visits by the doctor, the dentist and the police. These visitors help children learn about the wider world. Pupils leave the school as confident and well-rounded individuals who are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

School leaders, staff and governors are unwavering in their determination to seek the best for every child. Governors provide purposeful support and challenge to uphold the school's vision and values. Staff appreciate that school leaders consider their workload when making any changes. Parents and carers appreciate the help and care their children and family receive. One parent, summing up the views of many, said, 'This school is a lovely nurturing environment with really great staff.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, including in the early years and phonics lessons, teaching does not check well enough what pupils understand before moving on to new work. Where this happens, pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that all staff know how to use assessment efficiently to adapt their teaching, or the support they provide, to help all pupils to secure the important knowledge across the curriculum.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked-after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	110400
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10341291
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sophie Sarginson
Headteacher	Jonathan Cursley
Website	www.glastonburythorn.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 and 16 January 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced changes in leadership and staffing. The headteacher was appointed in 2020 and the assistant headteacher started in her post in 2021.
- The chair of governors took up her position in November 2024.
- The school offers before- and after-school wraparound care.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth-form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. An inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to them informally during social times. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online pupils' survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspection team considered the responses to the confidential staff survey and spoke to a wide range of staff about their views of the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings and the school development plan.

Inspection team

Shazia Akram, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lorraine Greco

Ofsted Inspector

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