

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Thomas A Becket Infant School

Pelham Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN13 1JB

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 December 2024

Outcome

Thomas A Becket Infant School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy and successful school with an exceptionally strong sense of community. Parents and carers describe how their children 'thrive' and are 'nurtured' as a result of the strong relationships that exist within and beyond the school gates. Despite being a large infant school, this is still a tight knit community in which pupils are known well. Here, pupils play happily together and conduct themselves well. Children from Reception upwards are confident and increasingly independent, as they have been taught by caring staff who teach them these skills. They achieve well, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They relish the opportunity to learn and be engaged in well-planned activities.

Relationships across the school are strong. Pupils are assured that staff look after them and listen to them. They are taken seriously. They know how to raise concerns.

Pupils know their school values of respect, effort, attitude, collaboration and honesty (REACH) incredibly well. They know how important they are. For example, children talked about how 'working together' was essential because 'other people might have skills and strengths you don't'.

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

The school has designed a highly effective curriculum, which identifies the knowledge and skills that pupils need, building from the early years upwards. In Reception classes, purposeful activities are carefully designed to embed the strong foundations for future learning. Adults model talk and communication effectively, supporting children in becoming increasingly confident to do the same. Leaders have considered how to engage and enthuse pupils in their learning, alongside the systematic movement through skills

and knowledge. This supports all pupils in achieving well as they progress through the planned curriculum.

There is a strong prioritisation of reading across the school. This is especially evident in the recently redeveloped library, an impressive space that has been redesigned to meet the increasingly high ambitions of leaders and staff in the school. Phonics is taught well in a programme tailored to pupils' needs. Staff model the sounds that children need to become increasingly confident readers. For those who struggle, support is put in place swiftly to help them develop these essential skills.

Staff have strong subject knowledge and explain learning clearly. They pick up on misunderstandings pupils may have and make sure that these are corrected. Recent work has begun to further develop the subject-specific vocabulary that pupils can use in their learning. However, this work is in its early stages. While the vocabulary has been carefully mapped out, the school has not yet embedded its systematic approach to its teaching of this vocabulary. This limits pupils' ability to use more complex, subject specific vocabulary accurately or apply it effectively in their learning.

Pupils with SEND are especially well supported in this school. Their needs are identified rapidly, and support put in place quickly. Staff are adept at modifying their input to meet the needs of pupils. They are flexible and adaptable in using their training to try new things to ensure pupils with SEND are well integrated into lessons. Pupils are supported to do well and to foster an increasing independence.

Pupils conduct themselves well. They treat one another with kindness and are confident that, in the few instances where this might not be the case, staff will deal with it effectively. A clear relationships policy is well understood by all and underpinned by their shared values. This supports the school community in treating one another with kindness and respect. Pupils attend well.

The wider development of pupils is especially strong. Pupils take on roles such as being part of the 'eco-council' or members of the 'TASC Force'. They are proud to hold these responsibilities and contribute meaningfully to their school. A 'nurture farm' on the school site allows pupils to take responsibility for the care of the rabbits, ducks and guinea pigs that live there. Pupils also benefit from a well-developed outdoor learning area. Here, they learn how to keep themselves safe while learning about nature and develop their independence in well-considered activities.

Pupils are taught about the importance of healthy relationships through carefully considered plans that build and connect with the neighbouring junior school, with which the school works closely. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and healthy. For example, pupils talk confidently about road safety and know the risks to be aware of online.

Leaders are well considered in their approaches to all initiatives. A careful programme of training, support and checking ensures that all new ideas are implemented effectively, bearing staff workload in mind. Leaders, along with governors, check to assure

themselves that refinements are having the impact they intend. Governors are a key part of the school community, providing support to staff and asking the necessary questions to ensure things are done in the best interests of pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Work to develop the subject-specific vocabulary that pupils use is in its early stages and not yet embedded. This means that, while pupils are exposed to increasingly demanding vocabulary, they are not yet systematically taught how to use and apply it in their learning. The school needs to continue to embed its training for staff to support pupils in being able to apply this learning effectively.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in July 2015.

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	125954
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10341612
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	536
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Andrew Markwell & Mike Granville (Co-chairs)
Headteacher	Amanda Dingwall
Website	www.tabinfant.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 July 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently uses one form of unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and pupils. The inspector met with the members of the governing body, including the chair.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.

- The inspector took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and governing board minutes.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their experience of the school. They took account of parent and carer and staff views through conversations and responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Marian Feeley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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