

Inspection of Thameside Primary School

Cotman Close, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 5NL

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2023

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 Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are at the heart of this happy and nurturing school. All staff provide a supportive and caring environment where pupils feel safe. Parents and carers value this support for their children. Pupils are proud to attend this school. They are friendly, welcoming and courteous. Some pupils told an inspector that they particularly appreciate and value their teachers. They believe teachers keep them safe and help them to learn new things.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards learning. Consequently, pupils behave well and work hard. Bullying is not tolerated. Staff deal with any bullying incidents swiftly. The well-ordered learning environment celebrates pupils' achievements.

At breaktimes, pupils play well together. They enjoy using the adventure playground, playing sports and spending time with their classmates. Pupils really appreciate the playground games organised by the pupil play leaders. In particular, they enjoy playing games using a large parachute, which the play leaders manage with great confidence.

Parents are supportive of the school. A typical comment was: 'Thameside has gone from strength to strength over the past year and my children have thrived at this school.'

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

Leaders have rightly prioritised reading across the school. Children learn phonics right from the start of Nursery using a well-structured programme. Pupils who struggle with reading receive the help that they need swiftly. They receive additional support from well-trained adults. This develops their confidence and increases their fluency in reading. There are many opportunities to develop pupils' love of reading. This begins in the early years, where children enjoy reading and sharing books. Pupils also enjoy events such as World Book Day and having authors visit the school. Leaders support parents well to help their children read at home.

The curriculum builds pupils' knowledge and skills over time. Leaders have recently reviewed it and made well-considered changes. The curriculum is sequenced effectively, identifying small steps to support pupils' learning. In some subjects, where changes have been made more recently, the curriculum is not fully embedded. In these subjects, pupils currently do not remember their learning as well as they do in stronger subjects.

Leaders ensure that teaching engages and motivates pupils. For example, in design technology lessons, teachers use practical activities to help develop pupils' understanding of how to design, build and test structures. This deepens their understanding about why some structures are more robust than others. In the early years, well-planned activities enable children to learn about the world around them.

Adults skilfully develop children's vocabulary as they join in activities. Throughout the school, teachers assess pupils' understanding throughout lessons to clarify misconceptions. If a pupil is at risk of falling behind, they receive well-chosen support to help them to catch up.

Children get off to a good start in the early years. For example, in mathematics, well-planned activities help secure children's understanding of numbers. This includes children carefully using equipment to count and learn about one more or one less. Teachers use skilful questioning to check children's knowledge and misconceptions across the curriculum.

Staff have high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders identify pupils with SEND quickly. Teachers carefully adjust the curriculum where needed. This helps pupils to access the same learning as their peers. Staff provide well-planned support that is subtle, but effective.

Children learn about respectfulness, kindness and sharing when they join the early years. Teachers support pupils throughout the school to become responsible citizens. Pupils show compassion towards others and support charities, including a local food bank. They enjoy working with community organisations as part of the academy's character and citizenship awards programme.

Pupils have many opportunities to take on responsibilities around the school. These include librarians, play leaders and pupil mentors. Through the curriculum, pupils learn about a wide range of perspectives and cultures. Pupils understand British values such as democracy through the work of the school parliament. All pupils learn about keeping healthy and the importance of physical exercise. They are encouraged to cycle to school or use their scooter. Pupils also appreciate and enjoy attending a wide range of school clubs, including art, multi-skills and pop choir. They learn new skills through developing their own interests and talents.

The school's senior leaders have a relentless drive to ensure that pupils have the best possible start in life. Leaders from the multi-academy trust provide well-chosen support and challenge. Staff are positive about the support they receive from all leaders to do their jobs well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of vigilance in the school to keep pupils safe. Leaders and staff know pupils and their parents well. Referrals to outside agencies are made swiftly. The designated safeguarding leader and family support workers provide timely support for families. Staff report all concerns they may have about pupils, however minor.

Leaders check carefully that adults are suitable to work with children. Staff undertake regular training, which helps ensure that they are informed about how to keep pupils safe. Pupils have many opportunities within the curriculum to learn about keeping themselves safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, more recent curriculum developments have not yet had time to embed. Consequently, in these subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum development work continues so that all subjects are implemented and embedded to the same high quality.

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](#)' 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	144871
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10240628
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	187
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Beth Taylor
Headteacher	Laura Youngman
Website	www.thameside.oxon.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 September 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher both joined the school in September 2022.
- The school is part of Vale Academy Trust.
- The Nursery provision caters for three- and four-year-old children.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings and spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, inclusion leader and curriculum leaders, teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the board for Vale Academy Trust, the chair of the local governing body and governors. He also met the trust's chief executive officer, the trust's director of education and the trust's leader for teaching and learning.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and design technology. For each deep dive, the 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.
- The inspectors also examined curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.

Inspection team

Darren Aisthorpe, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Gareth Flemington

His Majesty's Inspector

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