

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Thurnby Mead Primary Academy

Dudley Avenue, Leicester, Leicestershire LE5 2EG

Inspection dates:

20 and 21 May 2025

Outcome

Thurnby Mead Primary Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is Michelle Woodhouse. This school is part of The Mead Educational Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sarah Ridley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anthony Glover.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and thrive in this welcoming and inclusive school. Staff build strong relationships with pupils to create a secure and supportive environment. The school provides an ambitious curriculum that helps pupils achieve well. An array of exciting experiences, such as trips to the zoo, city farm, museum, arboretum and outdoor activity centre, broaden pupils' knowledge and horizons.

The school's high expectations for behaviour ensure a calm and focused learning atmosphere. Pupils work hard in lessons and 'walk wonderfully' through the school showing consideration for others. Children in the early years play cooperatively and soon develop a thirst for learning. By focusing on their 'character muscles', the school encourages pupils to grow into independent and resilient learners, who embrace challenges and push themselves to achieve more.

Pupils show great respect for one another at this school. They are proud of the diverse cultures within the Thurnby community. Pupils enjoy learning about these through the regular cultural assemblies.

Playtimes are a favourite part of the day because they are harmonious and fun for everyone. The pupil 'play leaders' contribute to this by organising the equipment and many activities. Through roles like these, the school encourages pupils to become responsible citizens.

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

The school makes learning to read a priority. When pupils' progress with phonics declined, the school took decisive action and changed its phonics programme. It made sure all staff are expert in teaching phonics, including how to support pupils with communication needs and hearing impairment. As a result, pupils become fluent readers more quickly now and have a greater enjoyment of reading. If any pupils fall behind in reading, they receive effective support to catch up with their peers.

Since the last inspection, the school has put in place a broad and ambitious curriculum. It has identified the important knowledge pupils should learn, right from the Nursery Year. More recently, the school has refined the curriculum where it was proving less effective or relevant. The school is actively implementing these changes, though a few are still in their earlier stages.

Typically, staff have the knowledge and expertise to deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers present new content clearly and check pupils' understanding carefully. They use phrases like 'say it again better' skilfully to help pupils explain their thinking more accurately. In a few subjects, where the curriculum is being reviewed, the school has not yet ensured that staff have the knowledge that they need to deliver the curriculum effectively. Learning activities and how staff adapt them for differing needs do not focus as precisely on what pupils need to learn. As a result, pupils do not learn consistently well across the full curriculum.

The English curriculum supports pupils well to become competent writers. However, pupils' skills are much less evident when they write in other subjects. This is because the expectations for pupils' writing, including their handwriting, and presentation are sometimes low. Pupils' work is therefore not of the quality that it could be.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified carefully. Mostly, staff adapt the curriculum effectively for these pupils. The school meets the specific needs of pupils who attend the designated specialist provision well. The school is teaching all pupils Makaton, which helps pupils from the specialist provision feel even more included in the life of the school.

Pupils behave well and are a credit to the school. They follow the 'be respectful, be safe, and be ready for learning' rules consistently. Staff support pupils with clear routines and by recognising their efforts. Pupils know the school's systems well, and the reward system provides strong encouragement to do the right thing. Pupils develop a strong sense of belonging, which has led to significant improvement in their attendance. The school tracks attendance closely and works with families from the moment that they need support.

Through its well-considered provision for pupils' personal development, the school prepares pupils well for life beyond school. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online, and develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. Through taking part in various social projects, the school empowers pupils to make wise

and confident decisions. Pupils learn to recognise and reject stereotyping. Older girls speak of how they learned to appreciate who they are and their strengths, giving them confidence to resist any external pressure to change.

Working in partnership, the trust and local academy council have effective oversight of the school. Leadership is astute and courageous in pursuit of pupils' best interests and achievement. Staff are proud to work at the school. They value that the school considers their views and well-being when making any changes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- For the few subject curriculums that are being reviewed or refined, teachers have less knowledge and expertise and sometimes do not provide precisely focused learning activities or make effective adaptations to meet the needs of pupils. As a result, pupils do not learn consistently well across the full curriculum. The school should ensure that teachers are well supported to implement the curriculum effectively.
- Sometimes, the expectations for the quality and presentation of pupils' work across the wider curriculum are not high enough. Additionally, there is sometimes a lack of consistency around the expectations for pupils' handwriting. As a result, pupils' work is not of the quality it could be. The school should ensure that pupils are supported well to produce work of a consistently high quality.

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 September 2012.

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	142967
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10347618
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	253
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anthony Glover
CEO of the trust	Sarah Ridley
Principal	Michelle Woodhouse
Website	www.thurnby-tmet.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The principal joined the school in August 2021.
- The school is part of The Mead Educational Trust.
- The school has a 20-place designated specialist provision for pupils with primarily speech, language and communication needs or with hearing impairment with associated speech, language and communication needs.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This is the first routine inspection the school has 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 her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector held discussions with the principal and other members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspector met with members of the board of trustees and the local academy council, including the chair of trust. She also spoke with other representatives of the trust.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. She also listened as pupils read to a familiar adult.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site during breaktime.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils and staff. She spoke to parents and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and for staff.

Inspection team

Claire Stylianides, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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