

Thorney Island Community Primary School

Thorney Island, Emsworth, Hampshire PO10 8DJ

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher provides strong, stable leadership for this school, where high levels of pupil movement are the norm.
- Senior leaders understand the particular needs of the very large number of service families in the school and provide effective care and support for the pupils.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons that capture pupils' interest and spark their enthusiasm. Staff ask well-chosen questions to deepen pupils' understanding and help them to take the next step in their learning. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are eager to talk about their work.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy school. They work hard, take pride in their achievements and mostly achieve well.
- Pupils behave well around the school and at free times. Their behaviour is impeccable in assemblies.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are extremely positive about the school because their pupils are happy, taught well and make good progress.
- The well-being of pupils is central to the school's work. All staff embrace their responsibility to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for.
- Governors have a wide range of skills and offer the right balance of challenge and support to bring about improvements in the school.
- Most pupils currently in the school are making good progress. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make similar rates of progress to their peers.
- Teachers cultivate a love of reading from an early age. Pupils are knowledgeable and talk enthusiastically about the authors they enjoy.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years and make good progress in all areas of learning. They quickly become sociable, friendly and articulate.
- Senior leaders do not have a reliable way of tracking the progress of groups of pupils across the school. This hinders them from incisively evaluating the impact of their actions and from setting measurable targets for improvements.
- Proportions of pupils who achieve the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well below those seen nationally.
- Pupils achieve less well in writing than in other subjects. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations for pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing systems for tracking the progress of groups of pupils so that leaders and governors have a detailed understanding of how well different groups of pupils are progressing across the school
 - ensuring that plans for improvement contain precise targets and include measurable milestones and timescales against which governors can hold senior leaders to account.
- Strengthen the quality of teaching and thereby improve outcomes in writing to at least national average levels by:
 - providing all pupils with regular opportunities to apply their skills in extended independent writing
 - ensuring that all teachers have the same high levels of expectations of what pupils can achieve, including in spelling, grammar and punctuation
 - sharing the best practice in the school so that more pupils achieve the higher standards.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership for this school. He provides stability and a clear sense of direction for a school where high levels of pupil turnover are the norm because of the high proportion of pupils from service families.
- Senior leaders are ambitious for the school and strive to provide an education that enables all to achieve their best. Leaders and governors have a broadly accurate understanding of the main strengths and areas of improvement for the school and have brought about many improvements, including in the quality of teaching.
- Staff enjoy working at the school and are proud to be part of the team. Everyone that inspectors spoke to and all those who completed the staff questionnaire agreed that this was true.
- Teachers and teaching assistants benefit from a range of professional development opportunities that allow them to develop their skills, including as leaders of subjects. Leaders provide effective support for newly qualified teachers, who get off to a strong start in the school.
- Senior leaders place a strong emphasis on communicating with parents so that all know what is happening in the school. Parents are kept up to date with how well their child is progressing and receive useful advice on how they can help their children learn at home. The overwhelming majority of parents are extremely positive about the school.
- Leaders ensure that the pupil premium is spent effectively. The few disadvantaged pupils in the school achieve broadly in line with their classmates, except where there are multiple barriers to learning. Pupils from service families are taken good care of and given support and a listening ear when a parent is away on duty, so that their learning continues smoothly.
- The additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is put to good use. Leaders engage with external agencies to provide the right support for these pupils so that they mostly make expected progress. Several parents echoed this view although one or two felt that, at times, leaders do not enlist this support quickly enough.
- Diversity is celebrated and embraced and, as a result, this is a highly inclusive school. Pupils from all backgrounds and cultures are treated equally and all are treated with kindness and respect.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of interesting and engaging learning opportunities. Inspectors admired topic books which contained a wide range of well-presented work in a range of subjects. The written work in religious education was thoughtful, interesting and well presented. Attractive, meticulously presented displays around the school showcase work from across the curriculum, including art, history and science.
- The curriculum provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.

- There is a wide range of clubs and activities outside the school day. Staff provide pupils with many opportunities for sports and physical education, including competitions against other teams. The Year 6 boys' football team has been particularly successful this year, reaching the county finals in their age group.
- Senior leaders ensure that the sport premium is put to good use, increasing levels of participation among boys and girls and opening up opportunities for all pupils.
- The local authority knows the school well and has offered good advice to help leaders and governors improve.
- Senior leaders know individual pupils well and understand how well each class is achieving. However, they do not have a reliable way of tracking the progress of groups of pupils across the school. This hampers their ability to recognise groups of pupils that are doing less well than others, and hinders them from incisively evaluating the impact of their actions. It also prevents them from setting measurable targets for improvements in pupils' outcomes.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a wide range of skills and expertise that equip them well to support the headteacher and offer the right level of challenge to bring about improvements in the school.
- Each governor has a clear role to play in monitoring the work of the school. For example, individual governors are responsible for each of the national curriculum subjects, while others look after finances or health and safety. As a result, members of the governing body share a wide range of knowledge about all aspects of the school's performance.
- Governors draw from a range of sources of information when reaching their view of the school. The headteacher provides very detailed reports for governors, but they check this information for themselves. Governors refer to published information about the school and independent reports from the local authority. They visit the school regularly to observe pupils at work and carry out important checks to do with health and safety and safeguarding.
- Improvement plans do not contain specific targets or measurable milestones. Consequently, governors are not able to challenge senior leaders to improve pupils' outcomes as stringently as they could.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils are safe in school. The school location on a secure military base contributes to this. However, the well-being of pupils is at the heart of the school's work, so all staff embrace their responsibility to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for.
- Senior leaders provide regular training and updates so that all adults in the school, recognise the signs that may indicate that a pupil is at risk. All staff are fully acquainted with the latest advice about safeguarding pupils. Staff understand the importance of recording all concerns promptly and accurately.

- Policies are up to date and comply with the latest guidance. Office staff take great care to make sure that only suitable people can work in the school and they record these checks thoroughly.
- Leaders work well with external agencies to ensure that the needs of vulnerable pupils are met. The headteacher attends all relevant meetings and case conferences to ensure that the right support is put in place. As a result, pupils who are at risk are protected and have improved stability so that they can make good progress in school.
- During the inspection, the lead inspector pointed out two minor lapses in site security to the headteacher. The headteacher took immediate, effective action to address these issues and also undertook a risk assessment to ensure that the site is closed to potential intruders.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and other staff foster a positive atmosphere and strong relationships in the school. Teachers plan interesting lessons that capture pupils' interest and spark their enthusiasm. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are happy to talk about their learning. One boy in Year 6 explained in some detail how he used a formula to calculate the area of a triangle. Younger pupils spoke to inspectors about their writing and how they had improved their work.
- Classrooms are well organised, tidy places with resources readily at hand, allowing learning to continue uninterrupted. Displays around the school provide clear evidence of the high standards of presentation that most teachers demand.
- Effective questioning based on secure subject knowledge enables staff to deepen pupils' understanding and help pupils to take the next step in their learning. Teachers tackle misconceptions and usually intervene quickly to stop pupils from falling behind.
- Teaching assistants play a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. This is true when they are supporting the class teacher, but also when working with carefully targeted groups and individuals.
- Teachers cultivate a love of reading from an early age. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the books that they have read and authors that they enjoy. Where the teaching of reading is most effective, the teacher knows each pupil's reading preferences well and suggests books that they might enjoy reading. This has a strongly positive impact on pupils' attitudes to reading and their enjoyment of books.
- The teaching of writing is mostly good. Teachers use clear assessments to plan sequences of lessons that build on pupils' previous learning and help them to acquire new skills. Pupils have opportunity to write at length regularly, enabling them to apply their skills in a range of different styles. As they go through the school, pupils take increasingly greater responsibility for editing and improving their work. On occasion, however, pupils have too few opportunities to write and so their progress slows.
- Teachers provide homework in line with the school's policy. Pupils are motivated to do their homework. A reward system in place from Year 3 onwards encourages pupils to learn at home and this has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to homework.
- Most teachers have high expectations of pupils and demand high standards of work. However, books in a few classes show presentation that is untidy and too variable in

quality. At times, repeated mistakes in grammar, punctuation and spelling are unchallenged and so these errors persist.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy school. They work hard, take pride in their achievements and learn well.
- Positive relationships across the school result in a school community where pupils are happy, support each other and respect the well-understood expectations for behaviour. Older and younger pupils get on very well together. The youngest children know that the oldest pupils in the school are friendly and always willing to help younger ones.
- Senior leaders understand the particular needs of the service families in the school and provide effective care and support for these pupils. One parent commented, 'The school is able to meet the challenges of military family life and understands the sometimes complex issues that can often arise.'
- Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in school. The school council, elected annually, is always on the lookout for ways to improve things. Pupils enjoy being monitors and taking other posts of responsibility, such as eco-warriors.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have confidence in staff to deal with any issues that arise. However, pupils say that, while they know adults will always help them, 'it is better to sort out things for ourselves'.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying in its various forms. Leaders ensure that pupils understand are kept informed about what to do if they are bullied. However, pupils say that it happens only rarely, and is quickly sorted out.
- Leaders ensure that pupils understand how to stay safe in a range of different situations, including on the road and online. Teachers provide detailed information to pupils and parents about e-safety and the potential risks that pupils face, including when playing games on consoles. Whenever staff have concerns about pupils' behaviour online they take prompt and effective action, usually contacting parents to alert them and offer advice if needed.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well and mostly show responsibility and maturity in the way they conduct themselves. Consequently, staff trust pupils to undertake quite challenging tasks, such as giving out play equipment at lunchtime and making sure it is collected in at the end of play. Pupils do this thoroughly and without the direct supervision of adults.

- Pupils behave well around the school and at free times. Their behaviour is impeccable in assemblies. Pupils can be seen leaving the hall in complete silence without being reminded to be quiet and sensible.
- Senior leaders work hard to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and so levels of attendance are high. Few pupils are persistently absent. One or two disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities attend less regularly. Leaders have convincing evidence that a very few pupils with medical and other needs have an undue influence on these figures.
- Just occasionally, one or two pupils forget their boundaries and behave in a silly, thoughtless way. Senior leaders ensure that any incidents of poor behaviour are recorded carefully so that they can spot any trends and intervene quickly.
- Exclusions have been high this academic year because of the behaviour of a small number of pupils with well-understood needs. Some of these pupils are new to the school. Leaders work tirelessly with families and other professionals to provide the right support and bring about improvements in behaviour for these pupils. Consequently, there have been no exclusions this half term.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The progress that pupils made in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 was in line with national figures. The proportion of pupils who achieved age-related expectations in all three subjects improved sharply and was close to the national average.
- Rates of progress and levels of attainment in writing at the end of key stage 2 showed marked improvements from 2016, when both were well below the national averages.
- Progress in reading at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 was in line with national figures, but the proportion of pupils reaching age-related expectations dipped. Boys achieved much less well than girls. Leaders have looked closely at the reasons for this decline and have introduced new approaches to the teaching of reading in Years 5 and 6 that are having a positive impact. Many more pupils are on track to achieve the expected level and the higher standard. Pupils achieve well in reading in all year groups.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 in 2017 was below that seen nationally. Pupils achieved much less well in writing than in other subjects. Leaders have acted decisively to improve the quality of teaching so that there are many more pupils on track to achieve the expected standard in all subjects.
- Proportions of pupils who achieved the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics were below the national averages in both key stages. In key stage 1, no pupils achieved greater depth in writing.
- Pupils achieve well in phonics. The great majority of pupils achieve the expected standard by the end of Year 1. In 2017, only one pupil had not achieved the expected standard by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics from their starting points. In almost all year groups, proportions of pupils on track to meet age-related expectations are in line with national figures. Growing numbers of pupils are working at the higher standard.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and the very few disadvantaged pupils mostly achieve in line with their peers who have similar starting points.
- In writing, pupils currently in the school make good progress in most classes. Where pupils make the most progress, teachers plan interesting lessons that build precisely on previous learning. Pupils in these classes have many opportunities to write independently and this enables them to apply their skills and develop their writing ability. Where pupils achieve less well, the teachers' expectations are low and pupils do not have enough opportunity to write at length independently. As a result they make slow progress.
- Pupils are currently making good progress from their starting points in writing. However, levels of attainment lag behind those in reading and mathematics in almost all year groups. Too few pupils are on track to achieve the higher standard in writing.

Early years provision

Good

- When children start Reception, they are working typically at a level below others of their age, especially in mathematics. Staff carry out baseline assessments to get a full profile of children's skills and abilities when they start school. Children's progress is tracked regularly and targets are set and shared with parents.
- Children make good progress in all areas of learning. By the end of the early years, the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development is in line with the national average. There are no significant differences in the attainment of children for whom the school receives additional funding. As a result, children are ready to move into Year 1 at the end of the early years.
- Children are very well settled and feel secure in the school. They get on well with their classmates, share resources and play happily together. Children quickly become sociable, friendly and articulate. They are curious and interested to talk to visitors, such as inspectors, who come to the classroom.
- Staff expect children to take responsibility for tidying up after play and, consequently, children have developed good self-help skills, as well as being able to cooperate with others. Well-trained staff are always on hand if children need help.
- The early years leader, although new to her role, has taken immediate steps to raise the achievement of children in mathematics. The impact of focused support can be seen clearly in children's learning journeys. Senior leaders have ensured that the early years leader continues to receive strong support from within the school as well as from other sources of expertise.
- The quality of teaching is good. There is a balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities. For example, children weighed the dinosaur figures with an adult, using the language of comparison, and sorted out which dinosaurs did not eat meat. Staff provide a range of well-chosen resources to stimulate children's interest and engage them in purposeful play. Adults are always on the lookout for ways of taking children's learning one step further.
- Parents are involved in their children's learning from the outset. They support their children at home and keep staff at the school up to date with notable successes. Parents are very positive about the start that children receive in Reception. One parent

commented about her daughter's experience: 'A very shy and sensitive child ... the school helped her grow and blossom in confidence.'

- Children learn to respect and celebrate each other's differences. For example, in an assembly, older pupils talked about the school being a diverse community where people of all backgrounds are welcome.
- Staff have the welfare of children at heart. They give out a healthy snack at breaktime and liaise with parents at the beginning and end of each day. Adults working with the Reception children have had the right training to safeguard children, including paediatric first aid training.
- Transition arrangements are effective. Children visit the school in the term before they start. Staff visit pre-school providers to find out as much as they can about children's interests and prior learning. This ensures that pupils settle quickly and are ready to learn. Similarly, children are well prepared to move into Year 1 at the end of the early years, because they have spent time in the next class, so that they feel secure and confident.
- Pupils learn the early skills of phonics well, but are not given enough opportunities to apply these in their writing. Progress in writing, although good, is not as strong as in reading, mathematics and other areas of learning.

School details

Unique reference number	125868
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10041009

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Hallam
Headteacher	Mr Dean Clegg
Telephone number	01243 371317
Website	www.thorneyisland.w-sussex.sch.uk
Email address	office@ticps.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 September 2013

Information about this school

- Thorney Island Community Primary School is located on a military base at Chichester harbour. The overwhelming majority of pupils are from service families and live on the base. However, a significant minority of families come from outside the base and are not employed in the armed forces.
- Turbulence is high. Pupils leave the school and others arrive unexpectedly because parents are posted to different places, sometimes at very short notice.
- This is smaller than the average-size primary school. There are eight classes, one for most year groups, but two for Year 1 pupils.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for the service pupil premium is much higher than the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below that seen in other schools across the country.
- Most pupils are White British. However, there are several groups of pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below that seen nationally.
- The school met the government's floor standards in 2017, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors had several meetings with the headteacher and senior leaders about various aspects of the school’s performance, including leaders’ self-evaluation of the school and how well pupils are currently achieving.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and four other governors, including the vice-chair of governors. He also spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. Some of these observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors observed two assemblies.
- Inspectors conducted a scrutiny of pupils’ work with the leaders of English and mathematics. They looked at a range of pupils’ work across the curriculum from all year groups and all attainment levels. Work included that of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors met with several senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for mathematics, English, the early years and special educational needs provision.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to a group of them about school life. They also met pupils on the playground and observed behaviour at free times around the school.
- An inspector also held a meeting with a group of six staff members, including teachers, teaching assistants and office staff. Conversations were had with a number of staff members throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of the 77 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire, and the 49 written comments that were submitted. Responses from 22 staff and 91 pupils were also considered.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the day.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including those recording the work of the governors and the single central record of checks on people who work at the school. They examined information on pupils’ current progress and scrutinised the school’s safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Bruce Waelend, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kusum Trikha

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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