

# Inspection of a good school: Thornhill Lees Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant and Nursery School

Slaithwaite Road, Thornhill Lees, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire WF12 9DL

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Inspection dates:

20 and 21 September 2023

## **Outcome**

Thornhill Lees Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The school provides a friendly and welcoming environment. It is a place where pupils are happy and they enjoy learning. The staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the pupils, the school and the wider school community. Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in their learning and in their personal development.

Pupils behave well because school routines are clear to them. The school's values teach them how to treat each other with compassion. The school's values include caring, kindness, respect and community. Pupils understand these values. They are woven into many areas of the curriculum.

Pupils behave very well. Children in the nursery learn to follow good routines. Pupils of all ages get along very well together. Pupils have very good relationships with the staff, who know them well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported effectively.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their character and experience new things. Even the youngest pupils participate in leadership opportunities by being part of the eco-club, the collective worship group, or the 'kindness crew'.

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

The school has an ambitious curriculum. Leaders carefully consider the starting points of pupils. Great emphasis is placed on developing communication and language, reading and mathematics. Leaders ensure that the curriculum in the foundation subjects clearly specifies the important vocabulary that pupils should know. However, in some subjects, there is more work to do to identify the important knowledge that pupils need to know securely to be ready for the next stage of learning.

Supporting all pupils to learn to read accurately and with confidence sits at the heart of the school curriculum. The school has embedded a phonics scheme that has improved the teaching of reading. Most adults in school have undertaken training in how to implement this reading programme. Pupils learn to read well, especially those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils have a rich range of books to choose to read in school and take home. Throughout the school, reading is promoted and celebrated.

The school has effective procedures in place to identify children who may need additional help. This supports prompt identification of pupils with SEND. Pupils are supported through carefully considered adaptations to the school's curriculum. Some pupils with SEND benefit from working in smaller groups within the classroom and in separate spaces. Leaders have thought carefully about how to use the classroom and other spaces to create a calm and supportive environment for these pupils to learn in. Where appropriate, teachers break down learning into smaller steps. As a result of this targeted approach, pupils with SEND receive timely and appropriate support.

Children in the early years learn carefully planned routines from their first days in school. Rhymes and songs help them to remember these routines. Children are supported to express their feelings. High-quality adult and child interactions have a positive impact on the development of communication and language. Children in the early years access a range of learning opportunities, games and activities. This supports their language development and vocabulary. The curriculum in the early years prepares children well for key stage 1 and beyond.

The school provides pupils with a range of experiences to broaden their horizons. Regular trips take place to local parks and museums. Pupils also enjoy trips further afield, including a visit to the pantomime. These trips and visits help pupils to bring to life what they have learned in school. Pupils show a good understanding of different religions. The religious education curriculum begins with pupils learning about their own faith. From this base they learn about the faith of others.

There is a strong sense of teamwork and mutual support among the staff. Staff feel valued and supported. Adults are able to access a wealth of training across the range of roles they undertake in school. Staff feel that their workload and well-being are taken into account. Governors know the school and the local community well. They provide highly effective challenge and support to the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In some foundation subjects, what pupils need to learn and in what order, is not identified clearly enough. In these subjects, pupils struggle to recall facts and

information. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum planning, in every subject, clearly sets out exactly what pupils should know and in what order, so that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2018.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	107705
<b>Local authority</b>	Kirklees
<b>Inspection number</b>	10289944
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	298
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Kate Allen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Debbie Douglas
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://thornhillees.com">http://thornhillees.com</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	23 and 24 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- The school is a Church of England voluntary controlled school and is part of the Diocese of Leeds. The last statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 took place in July 2019.
- The school is federated with Savile Town Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant and Nursery School. The two schools share the same governing body and the headteacher leads both schools.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 governors and representatives from the local authority and the diocese. Further meetings were held with a range of school leaders, including those responsible for early reading, the special educational needs coordinator and the leader for early years.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. Pupils were heard reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector studied a variety of documents. These included the school's self-evaluation, the minutes of governing body meetings, attendance information and safeguarding records.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised the single central record and looked at how safeguarding is managed. The inspector spoke to leaders, teachers, support staff and pupils about the culture of safeguarding in the school.
- The views of parents and carers, staff and pupils were gathered through Ofsted's surveys and face-to-face discussions.

### **Inspection team**

Carl Sugden, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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