

Inspection of Thorpedene Primary School & Nursery

Delaware Road, Shoeburyness, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS3 9NP

Inspection dates:	7 and 8 January 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Thorpedene Primary School are very well cared for. Relationships between staff and pupils are caring and kind. If a pupil is worried or upset, they have someone to talk to who will help them feel better. Pupils really enjoy coming to school. They like playing with their friends and they look forward to their lessons.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs on offer. Dodge ball, karate, tennis and football are popular. As well as helping them to be healthy, sports clubs help pupils to develop their friendships. Pupils also enjoy attending the cooking club and developing their singing skills at choir. Each year group benefits from a trip such as visits to the planetarium or the science centre. This enhances their understanding of the subjects they study.

Pupils often display positive attitudes towards their learning. They are settled and calm in lessons and eager to learn. The school is ambitious that pupils have the right opportunities to succeed. However, it does not have consistently high enough expectations for what pupils can achieve. For instance, the work given to pupils does not always allow them to deepen their knowledge or understanding. This limits how highly pupils achieve.

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

In many areas, the school has embedded a broad curriculum that prepares pupils well for their next stage of education. From Year 1, teachers know what to teach and when which successfully develops pupils' skills and knowledge. Often, teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and explain new concepts clearly, helping to build pupils' understanding over time. Where teachers regularly check pupils' understanding and adapt their teaching accordingly, pupils display confidence and achieve well.

However, there are inconsistencies in how effectively teachers check pupils' understanding of the concepts taught. Pupils' misconceptions are not always identified well enough, and teaching is not consistently adapted effectively to support pupils from their individual starting points. The feedback that teachers provide to pupils often lacks clarity, leaving pupils unsure how to improve. This hinders the quality of pupils' work, including their written work.

The school has made significant progress in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff provide high levels of care and emotional support, and more pupils now benefit from enhanced educational, health, and care plans (EHC plan). However, some pupils' specific needs are not identified accurately enough. Sometimes, staff are not clear how to best meet these pupils' needs effectively. As a result, there are inconsistencies in how well pupils with SEND achieve.

Early reading is a priority. A suitable phonics programme is in place to support pupils to learn to decode and blend words. Some pupils make secure progress through the programme. However, not all staff are sufficiently skilled to deliver the programme

effectively. Struggling readers, including pupils in key stage 2, do not always receive the targeted help they need. Consequently, too many pupils do not have the skills and knowledge they need to read fluently.

In the early years, children are well cared for. They benefit from warm relationships with staff and a safe, happy environment. Many children follow routines, listen well, and play confidently. Adults support most children to develop their early maths skills. However, the curriculum lacks sufficient detail to help staff to guide children's development over time. This leaves staff unclear on how to best support children from their starting points. Some children, including those with SEND, do not receive consistently high-quality support across different areas, including language and communication, and writing.

The vast majority of pupils behave well. They move around the school respectfully and play sensibly during breaks. Lessons are calm and focused, allowing pupils to concentrate. Pupils appreciate the number of positive improvements in behaviour, which help them feel safe and able to learn. If some pupils struggle with following the school's high expectations, effective support from staff helps them to re-engage.

Pupils benefit from a well-structured personal development programme that prepares them for life in modern Britain. They learn about differences, show respect, and understand how to stay safe and healthy. Pupils enjoy going on trips, participating in clubs, and taking on leadership roles, such as prefects and play leaders. They engage well with the local community through visits to the beach, library, and church, and welcoming visitors like the local reverend.

Leaders, including trustees and governors, have a secure understanding of the school's priorities. They have improved behaviour and attendance and remain committed to further improvements. Staff are proud to work at the school and appreciate the support they receive from leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The support for developing pupils' early reading is not as effective as it should be. Staff are not all appropriately skilled to deliver the phonics programme as the school intends. As a result, too many pupils fail to develop suitable standards of reading fluency. Leaders must ensure staff deliver the phonics programme consistently and effectively. Additionally, it must also ensure that older pupils at the early stages of reading, receive timely and effective support to build their reading skills and confidence.

- The school does not use assessment effectively to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. This means that staff do not provide clear and regular feedback to address pupils' misunderstandings or help pupils improve their work, including their written work. As a result, pupils do not always know how to improve from their starting points. Leaders should ensure that staff are confident in checking what pupils know and can do and use assessment information well to provide pupils with clear feedback to help them achieve well.
- The school does not consistently identify pupils' SEND needs accurately or provide staff with sufficiently clear guidance on how to support pupils with SEND. As a result, staff do not always adapt pupils' learning effectively to help them achieve as highly as they should. Leaders must ensure precise identification of pupils' needs and provide staff with the guidance and resources needed to help pupils with SEND achieve well from their starting points.
- In the early years, several areas of the curriculum lack detail, leaving staff insufficiently equipped to support children's development fully. As a result, children do not consistently receive targeted support to develop their skills in key areas such as writing, phonics, and language and communication. Leaders must implement a robust curriculum in all areas of learning. They must also ensure that staff know how to tailor activities to meet children's individual needs, preparing them effectively for the next stage of their education.

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	143336
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	10345455
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	493
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Riz Malik
CEO of the trust	Ben Stickley
Headteacher	Stephanie Frost
Website	www.thorpedene.secat.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently uses one registered alternative provision.
- Since the previous inspection, a new chief executive officer (CEO), a new headteacher, a new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), and a new deputy headteacher have been appointed.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors met with senior leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and SENCos. They also spoke with the vice chair of trustees, governors and the CEO.
- The inspectors reviewed samples of curriculum documents, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also reviewed documentation relating to pupils with SEND, alternative provision, governance, school improvement, and behaviour and attendance.
- 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.

Inspection team

Bessie Owen, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Fykin

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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