

Inspection of Theale C.E. Primary School

Englefield Road, Theale C.E. Primary School, Reading RG7 5AS

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 November 2024

The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to this inspirational school. Staff are utterly committed to the school's vision that 'the children come first'. They work tirelessly to ensure that pupils flourish. The carefully embedded school values help pupils to learn the value of working hard to achieve their goals. Pupils demonstrate a genuine love for learning. They are confident and happy individuals, who feel safe and cared for by all staff. Across the school, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. From early years, children are taught to work together collaboratively. Pupils value and respect each other's ideas and opinions. Staff consistently model positive relationships.

The school constantly strives for excellence. Pupils' impressive successes and achievements are rooted in the high-quality curriculum on offer. The school is particularly ambitious for disadvantaged pupils. An inclusive learning environment enables all pupils to access the full curriculum offer and achieve well.

The school's offer goes far beyond the academic. Pupils' wider development is at the heart of the curriculum. There are rich opportunities, both inside and outside of the classroom, for pupils to grow their personal skills, including in leadership, and cultural understanding. For example, the school's daily 'Cultural Connoisseur' sessions develop and inspire pupils' love of poetry, music and art.

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

The expertly designed curriculum ensures that learning builds logically over time. Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to teach with flair and confidence. They know exactly what pupils have already learned and carefully select what they should learn next. Across the school, pupils remember what they have learned with ease and are eager to share this. This includes the very youngest children, who demonstrate perseverance and tenacity in acquiring new skills. Teachers select a variety of ways to check that new learning is secure and to address where pupils may have gaps in their understanding or require additional support. Consequently, pupils use and apply their knowledge daily and achieve highly in the national end of key stage tests.

Children in early years make an excellent start to their education. Staff have expertly crafted a curriculum that is engaging and interesting. Highly trained staff support learning effectively and enable all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to access the ambitious curriculum. Children are helped to become independent learners, so they are ready for their next stage of education.

Reading is prioritised from the moment children join the school. The phonics programme is efficiently taught, and pupils acquire reading skills quickly. Routine checks are used to ensure that pupils are on track with their reading. Support is provided where needed. Key texts have been chosen with great care and opportunities for pupils to read are threaded throughout the curriculum. Pupils speak enthusiastically about how staff motivate them to read new and challenging texts. These, alongside meaningful daily discussion sessions, enable them to engage with, and increasingly understand, the world around them.

The school is rightly proud of the way in which it enables all pupils, including those with SEND, to achieve excellent outcomes. Staff see every barrier to a pupil's learning as a challenge to find new and creative solutions. They utilise appropriate expertise or seek advice from external specialists. Pupils with SEND are fully included in all aspects of school life and achieve very well.

Behaviour is impeccable across the school. Staff deal with any unkindness or disrespectful behaviour swiftly. Pupils' rates of attendance are high. Staff act quickly on any identified concerns and offer support to those who need it.

The school provides a wealth of well-considered opportunities for pupils' personal development. Through sporting events, links with the local church and a range of carefully planned experiences, pupils develop their understanding of citizenship, responsibility and respect. Pupils enjoy the many leadership roles available to them, such as being prefects, school councillors and librarians. These responsibilities enable pupils to make a highly valued impact on the school. Performing arts is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy performing in the annual musical, singing for the local community and playing in the popular steel band. The school ensures that there are no barriers to any pupil participating in the wider experiences on offer. The curriculum prepares pupils exceptionally well for life in modern Britain.

School leaders, including governors, are relentless and tenacious in continuing to improve the school. Staff feel valued and are proud to work at the school. They know that leaders carefully consider their professional development, well-being and workload. Parents and carers appreciate the quality of academic and personal development their children benefit from. Everyone is rightly proud to be a part of this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	109980
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	10321768
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	309
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jon Houghton
Headteacher	Catherine Morley
Website	www.thealeprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 October 2012 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Church of England Diocese of Oxford. The school's last section 48 inspection was carried out in May 2018. Section 48 inspections were paused during the COVID-19 pandemic. The school will receive its next section 48 inspection within eight years of the previous inspection.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school club.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils who have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. Currently, 11 pupils attend this provision. All pupils spend some time in mainstream classes as well as attending lessons and therapy sessions in the specialist provision.
- The school currently uses two registered alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school has 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, art, music and modern foreign languages. 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 lead inspector heard pupils read aloud to a known adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders within the school. The lead inspector also met with members of the local governing board, including the chair, a representative of the local diocese and an educational representative from the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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 inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including self-evaluation reports, school policies and behaviour incident logs.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View and inspectors also spoke with parents on the first day of the inspection.
- The views of staff were gathered through interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection, as well as the staff survey.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views throughout the inspection, including through the classroom visits, group discussions as well as at playtimes and lunchtime.

Inspection team

Clare Morgan, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Regan	Ofsted Inspector
Lynn Powell	Ofsted Inspector

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