

Inspection of Thomas Eaton Primary Academy

Church Street, Wimblington, March, Cambridgeshire PE15 0QS

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The executive headteacher of this school is Angela Wood. This school is part of The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Susannah Connell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alan Ball. The executive headteacher is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Thomas Eaton Primary Academy enjoy coming to school. They are proud of being a pupil at Thomas Eaton and enthusiastically show their school off to visitors. Pupils know they are cared for by everyone in the school community. The relationships and respect pupils have with each other means bullying rarely happens. Pupils know that there is always an adult who will listen to them and help them out if they need it. This makes pupils feel safe.

Many pupils have an infectious enthusiasm for learning. They respond to adults' high expectations by trying hard. They learn well independently and together. Pupils often produce work that clearly shows what they know.

Pupils love books and stories. The changes to the phonics and reading programmes mean many are confident and fluent readers. They excitedly describe, in detail, the stories they are reading. Pupils explain how their emotions change as plots progress and characters develop.

Pupils and parents appreciate how changes to the behaviour systems have improved the learning environment. What is acceptable, and what is not acceptable, has been clearly defined. Adults are generally consistent in how they deal with incidents. As a result, most pupils behave well, and learning is rarely disrupted.

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

The school has spent time redesigning its curriculum. Rooted in ambition, the curriculum has been developed to give pupils the information they need to succeed in the future. Teachers deliver the knowledge pupils need in a carefully considered order. This helps pupils build on what they have learned before. Consequently, pupils deepen their learning and develop a secure understanding of the subjects they learn.

The importance of reading is embedded throughout the curriculum. All staff have been trained in how the agreed phonics scheme helps pupils learn to read. The delivery of phonics to early readers is of a consistently high quality. Pupils at risk of falling behind are quickly identified and helped to keep up. As a result, many pupils are developing into confident and fluent readers.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. Staff use their understanding of pupils' specific needs to make sure pupils learn. Pupils with SEND benefit from the same access to the curriculum as their peers. Specific barriers to learning for pupils with SEND are identified at an early stage. Plans and strategies are then developed by teachers to overcome these barriers. However, the training teachers have received has not been precise enough to ensure that the fundamental needs of pupils are met. This means some adaptations made to learning are not as focused and effective as they could be.

Pupils understand the importance of respect. In the early years, this results in children being kind to each other. They share and cooperate without prompting during play activities. Older pupils, generally, listen to each other's views and ideas. Pupils develop an increasing understanding of important values. For example, they learn how important preserving someone's individual personal space is in developing healthy and happy relationships. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The school has included opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures, religions and faiths. Pupils learn how to value diversity and celebrate difference. They welcome people for who they are, not for their appearance or beliefs.

The school has determined how it expects pupils to behave. These expectations have recently been redefined and clearly explained to pupils. Pupils understand the boundaries and know what happens if they cross the line. Adults apply the agreed processes and policies consistently. As a result, most lessons proceed without interruption.

While behaviour and conduct in lessons are good, there are instances where pupils' readiness for learning and their attitudes towards learning are not as strong. The school has not clearly defined the routines that support pupils to maintain their attention. Teachers have not been trained to spot when pupils begin to lose their focus. Therefore, on the occasions when pupils disengage, teachers do not address this quickly enough. Consequently, pupils miss important information. When this happens, pupils have gaps in their knowledge, and learning is in less depth.

The school has been through a number of changes in leadership in recent years. The local governing board and the trust have worked with staff and parents to support the community through this period. Their determination to provide the best provision is unwavering.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not provided sufficient training for teachers to develop the plans that address the specific needs of pupils with SEND. Plans do not precisely address the specific barriers to learning, and instead set aims that are generic and, at times, focused on broad learning objectives. This means that adaptations to teaching and resources are not as effective in supporting pupils with SEND. The school should ensure that all teachers are trained to effectively identify and plan to overcome pupils' specific barriers to learning so pupils with SEND have the best possible chance to achieve well.

- The school has not made clear their expectations around classroom routines that support pupils to maintain their focus and attention. There are inconsistencies in the expectations teachers have for pupils' readiness and attitudes for learning. Teachers have not been trained to identify when pupils' attention begins to wane. As a consequence, pupils miss important pieces of information and then struggle to access the next stage of learning. The school should ensure that there is clarity about the expectations around positive learning behaviours. The school should ensure that all staff are trained to identify pupils who begin to lose focus and to reinforce these expectations consistently at all times so pupils do not miss out on important learning.

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	143955
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10288552
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	130
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alan Ball
CEO of the trust	Susannah Connell
Executive headteacher	Angela Wood
Website	www.thomaseatonschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 20 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Thomas Eaton Primary Academy is part of The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust. It joined the trust in 2017.
- The executive headteacher took up her post in September 2023.
- The school provides wraparound provision. This is managed by the school.
- The school uses one alternative unregistered provider.

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 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, including the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the early years leader and the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector met with a representative of the trust board, local governors and the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To further inspect the curriculum, inspectors looked at examples of pupils' writing and reviewed documentation setting out support for pupils with SEND.
- 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.
- Inspectors considered the 36 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the 36 free-text comments submitted. They considered the 14 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff and the 18 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils. Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons to understand what it is like to be a pupil in their school.

Inspection team

Dave Gibson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julie Winwood

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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