

# Inspection of Thorpepark Academy

Laxthorpe, Orchard Park Estate, Hull, East Yorkshire HU6 9EG

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Inspection dates: 25–26 February 2020

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

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

Pupils thrive at Thorpepark Academy. Leaders know the pupils, their families and the community very well. They tailor pupils' experiences to develop pupils' character and raise their aspirations. The school's offer for pupils' personal development is exceptional.

Pupils are motivated to learn. They enjoy lessons and they achieve well. By the end of key stage 2 pupils have secure knowledge in English and mathematics. They are well prepared for secondary education.

Leaders prioritise pupils' well-being. Pupils understand how to keep their minds and bodies healthy. They also know ways to raise their own self-esteem and that of others. Pupil ambassadors check on other pupils' well-being. Pupil mentors support younger pupils and those new to the school. Pupils also monitor the 'worry boxes', where pupils post any concerns. Pupils are empathetic and show understanding of other pupils' needs.

Parents work in partnership with leaders and staff. Many appreciate the adult learning and volunteering opportunities available to them. Leaders, including the trust, ensure that pupil, parent and staff well-being is a top priority.

Leaders are committed to and highly skilled in supporting pupils who struggle to manage their own behaviour. This includes those previously at risk of exclusion from other schools. Pupils and staff agree that bullying and poor behaviour do happen sometimes. They also say staff deal with both well. There is a truly inclusive ethos. One pupil reflected the views of many, saying she would 'fully support anyone in being who they wanted to be'.

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

Leaders have designed the curriculum to develop pupils' sense of belonging, identity and pride in being from Hull. Pupils learn about people and places from their local area in all subjects. For example, studies of Hull Fair and Amy Johnson incorporate learning in history, design technology, art, English and science. These connections between subjects make learning meaningful for pupils. It helps them to remember what they have been taught.

Leaders have mapped out the subject-specific skills and vocabulary pupils will learn in each year group. These aspects get more complex as pupils move through the school. Yet, there is work to do to develop whole-school plans for some subjects. Plans do not always help teachers to build on the knowledge pupils have learned before. Similarly, plans do not consistently tell teachers what crucial knowledge pupils should remember about a topic. This means that work is sometimes not demanding enough. Pupils do not consistently develop a deep knowledge of all the subjects they study.

Leaders have ensured that the teaching of reading is strong. Pupils are exposed to a wide range of high-quality books. Lots of initiatives are in place to encourage pupils' love of reading. Teachers are skilled in posing questions about books and texts. Pupils typically show a deep understanding of their reading. By the end of key stage 2, pupils achieve highly in reading.

Phonics teaching is effective for most pupils. Yet, pupils who are struggling with learning to read do not have enough opportunities to practise by reading to staff. Leaders have chosen strategies to help pupils remember phonics knowledge. Yet, adults teaching lower-attaining pupils do not consistently use the strategies. This means that pupils who are behind do not catch up as quickly as they should.

Children in the early years get off to a good start. Leaders have rightly prioritised developing children's speaking, listening and social skills. During the inspection, in Reception, activities linked to the themes of doctors and the police were especially effective in stimulating children's speech. Like in the rest of the school, work is needed to formalise and develop curriculum plans. These do not give adults the information they need to make activities consistently demanding for all children.

The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is well designed. Pupils often benefit from bespoke plans which are matched to their needs. This often includes a focus on specific life skills. Teaching assistants typically provide effective support. This enables pupils to learn alongside their peers.

Pupils love the 'Thorpepark 50'. This is a wide range of coherently planned visits and experiences which all pupils take part in. For example, pupils talk with pride about overcoming their fears and being courageous on residential trips. Extra-curricular clubs are carefully chosen to stretch individual pupils' talents in music, sport and other areas, including sewing.

Pupils learn the importance of contributing to their community. They apply for leadership roles and jobs in the school. They enjoy being active citizens and getting paid in credits they can spend in the school shop. Pupils are mature, responsible and enthusiastic.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Staff are well trained and are vigilant to signs that pupils may be experiencing harm. Staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding have firm links with outside agencies, including social care, the police and the health service. Frequent communication with these agencies enables leaders to provide effective support for pupils.

Leaders have adapted the curriculum to teach pupils about the dangers they may face. The support for vulnerable pupils and their families is highly effective. Pupils benefit from therapeutic work and some parents have peer mentors.

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

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

- Phonics is effective for most pupils. However, lower-attaining pupils, including some pupils with SEND, do not have enough opportunities to practise early reading. This means that they do not learn phonics sounds, and the skills of sounding out, blending and segmenting, as quickly as they should. This hinders their progress in learning to read. Leaders should ensure that these pupils have frequent opportunities to read to an adult in school. Leaders should also ensure that the strategies they have chosen to help pupils learn to read are used consistently by staff.
- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently coherently planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about. For this reason, the transition arrangements have been applied. Whole-school plans for subjects outside of English and mathematics, including in the early years, do not consistently offer teachers the guidance they need. Hence, pupils do not develop a deep knowledge of all the subjects they study. Plans must be developed so that teachers know which key knowledge to teach and revisit until pupils remember. Leaders should also ensure that teachers understand how their teaching fits into the sequence of learning across year groups so they can build on pupils' prior learning more effectively.

## 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142307
<b>Local authority</b>	Kingston Upon Hull City Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	10144872
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	559
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Terry Johnson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Witham (Executive Headteacher) Caroline Knight (Head of School)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thorpepark.hull.sch.uk">www.thorpepark.hull.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Thorpepark Academy opened in August 2015 when it joined the Venn Academy Trust.
- The school has national support school status. The executive headteacher is a national leader of education. The head of school and deputy headteacher are specialist leaders of education. They support schools across the region with reading and behaviour.
- The school works in partnership with the Tidal Teaching Alliance.
- The Venn Academy Trust is an accredited Team Teach training centre.
- The school is approximately twice the size of an average primary school. It has a Nursery for children from the age of two and a breakfast club for pupils.
- The school is located in one of the most deprived areas of the country. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is approximately twice the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, who is also the chief executive officer of the trust, the head of school and other senior and middle leaders. We met with members of staff and considered the 26 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. The lead inspector met with trust representatives, including the chair of the trust. An inspector also met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at breakfast club, playtimes and lunchtimes. We gathered pupils' views about the school through formal and informal discussions.
- We scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, records of the work of the trust and of governors, as well as safeguarding documents. We also evaluated information relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- We gathered the views of parents at the start of the day. We considered the 38 responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View, along with the 10 free-text responses.
- We did deep dives in reading, mathematics, science, history and art. In doing so, we visited classes across every year group, met with teachers and reviewed pupils' work. We spoke to pupils about their learning and listened to them read.

## Inspection team

Karine Hendley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Zoe Lightfoot	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mujahid Ali	Ofsted Inspector
Marcus Newby	Her Majesty's Inspector

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