

Theddlethorpe Primary School

Mill Road, Theddlethorpe, Mablethorpe, Lincolnshire LN12 1PB

Inspection dates

14–15 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- School leaders have secured vital improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. However, strategies are not yet consistently embedded. Teaching across key stages 1 and 2 is inconsistent.
- Some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not make the progress they should in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stages 1 and 2.
- Not all teachers use accurate assessment information to match learning activities appropriately to pupils' needs.
- Teachers do not consistently address pupils' misconceptions. This hinders their progress, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- For the last two years, pupils' attainment in writing at the end of key stages 1 and 2 has been below national averages.
- Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to write over extended periods of time to practise and develop their writing skills.
- Teaching assistants are not always effective in extending and facilitating pupils' learning, particularly during classroom activities.
- Teachers do not insist that pupils always present their work neatly and accurately across different subjects.
- In mathematics, some teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to develop and consolidate their learning by solving problems and explaining their understanding.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal and leaders of the Tollbar Multi Academy Trust (the trust) are passionate about driving improvements in school.
- Trustees and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas to improve. Plans for improvement are sharply focused and evaluated.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are caring and positive. The curriculum encourages pupils' personal development.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is good. Pupils receive support which enables them to make good progress.
- The large majority of pupils attain the expected standards in phonics at the end of Year 1 and in reading and mathematics by the end of key stages 1 and 2.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in order to improve pupils' outcomes, by:
 - teachers using assessment information to accurately set work that is well matched to pupils' abilities
 - teaching assistants effectively contributing to pupils' learning
 - developing pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics to extend and deepen their understanding
 - ensuring that improved teaching strategies for reading, writing and mathematics are effectively implemented across all year groups and classes
 - providing pupils with opportunities to practise and apply their skills in extended pieces of writing
 - ensuring that teachers promptly address pupils' misconceptions so that they can improve their work and make strong progress
 - teachers insisting that pupils present their work neatly and accurately
 - teaching pupils to accurately and consistently use spelling, grammar and punctuation in their writing.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the school opened in September 2016, there has been a change of principal and a significant period of turbulence in staffing. There have been several changes of teaching staff. These changes have had a negative impact on improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. However, leaders of the trust have supported the school relentlessly to ensure pupils' outcomes continue to improve.
- At the beginning of this academic year, the trust appointed a new, highly skilled principal to the school. Together with a strong network of support for the school from experienced colleagues within the trust, the principal is building a secure leadership structure and establishing a cohesive team of staff who share leaders' ambition to improve the school. The local authority has also provided the school with valuable guidance on sustaining improvements in teaching and learning.
- School leaders have worked diligently to bring swift and necessary change to the school. They are positively driving improvements and are determined to raise aspirations for all pupils. Changes to staffing and improving approaches to teaching, learning and assessment are raising outcomes for pupils and encouraging higher expectations for staff and pupils. For example, the established assessment system is enabling leaders to accurately evaluate the progress of different groups of pupils in their learning.
- Senior leaders have a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and areas to improve. The principal has worked closely with the primary development officer for the trust to develop strong improvement plans. These plans are sharply focused and reviewed regularly for impact to secure sustained improvements. For example, the addition of a new early years classroom has had a positive impact across the school. This has also resulted in pupils being able to use the school hall which was formerly used as a classroom. The new Nursery provision is also helping to sustain the future of the school by increasing the number of pupils attending and ensuring that children are well prepared for school in Reception Year.
- The principal has established successful systems for managing the performance of teachers and teaching assistants. The systems are in line with current procedures across the trust and are closely linked to school improvement priorities. Leaders can hold staff to account effectively for pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning.
- Trust leaders recently reviewed the school's use of the pupil premium funding to ensure it was used more effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, current plans show that funding is more accurately targeted and appropriate measures are in place to support pupils to make better progress in their learning.
- The principal, who is also the coordinator for the provision for pupils with SEND, has acted swiftly to ensure that these pupils are well supported to make good progress. Teachers identify pupils' needs and barriers to learning promptly and create specific targets to move their learning forward. The principal accesses specialist advice and

support for pupils through the trust and from external agencies. Additional adults and targeted activities support pupils in different areas of need. These actions are having an increasingly positive impact on the progress that pupils with SEND are making from their starting points.

- The principal of the school and leaders of the trust set high expectations for staff and lead by example. They deliver good-quality support and guidance for teachers, including those in the early stages of their careers, to improve the quality of their teaching. Staff feel well supported by leaders and are empowered by the opportunities to learn from colleagues in other schools within the trust. Although still inconsistent, the quality of teaching and learning across the school is quickly improving as a result of leaders' relentless actions.
- School leaders have ensured that the current curriculum is broad and balanced and meets pupils' needs and interests. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through a variety of topics of learning and extra-curricular experiences. These include being a junior road safety officer or member of the school council, and participating in events such as celebrating universal children's day. However, leaders are currently in the process of developing a new curriculum design which is to be trialled later this year. They aim to ensure that the curriculum is progressive and relevant to all pupils and their community. The principal is determined to expand on the curricular work already in progress by reinforcing pupils' understanding of topics through linking subjects together more succinctly. Leaders have further identified that the curriculum can be improved to ensure that pupils have a better understanding of life and diversity in modern Britain from a young age.
- Parents and carers are supportive of the trust and leadership of the school. They appreciate the improvements made to the school over the last two years. Those who spoke with the inspector praised the principal and staff for being approachable and spoke positively about the improvements in behaviour and teaching.
- Owing to the small size of the school and the limited number of staff, trust leaders sensibly utilise expertise for middle and subject leadership for the school from colleagues in other schools within the trust. This has led to improved approaches to teachers' planning, opportunities for staff to share good practice and the implementation of new strategies to drive more urgent improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.

Governance of the school

- The chief executive officer for the trust, trustees and members of the governing body share responsibility for the governance of the school. The principal is challenged and supported by the primary development officer for the trust who visits the school regularly and reports her findings to the trustees and governors. Through these visits, meetings with officers and frequent updates sent to the trust, trustees have a comprehensive overview of the school.
- Trustees and members of the local governing body have a clear understanding of the school's priorities and of the impact of the improvements that have been secured over the last two years. They have extensive expertise and knowledge in leading school improvement.

- The principal provides trustees and governors with detailed information about the performance of the school. For example, monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes and attendance are rigorous and precisely reported. Trustees use this information well to provide support and challenge, as required. They demonstrate a strong commitment to the pupils. Their ambition to provide pupils with an aspirational, good-quality education is realised in the considerable improvements made to date and in the relationships between staff and pupils.
- Trust officers maintain a precise focus on the use of additional funding, such as the pupil premium and the additional funding for physical education (PE) and sport. They have reviewed the way the funding is allocated to make sure it is used more effectively than it had been in the recent past to improve the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and the quality and range of sport provision.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that the school's employment checks are in place, in line with statutory requirements.
- The principal has established a good culture of safeguarding throughout the school. She has a good understanding of the local community and works effectively with families to keep pupils safe.
- The principal and senior leaders of the trust ensure that all members of staff are well trained and understand the school's safeguarding procedures. Staff understand their responsibilities for safeguarding children and know what to do to raise a welfare or child protection concern. There is a culture of vigilance for pupils' welfare.
- An appropriate system is in place to enable staff to report any safeguarding concerns. Records are detailed and well maintained. They demonstrate that the principal is tenacious in following up concerns. Staff work in partnership with external agencies when necessary, to ensure the well-being of pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Since the school opened in September 2016, significant improvements have been made to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. However, changes to staffing have affected the pace and consistency of some improvements. The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent across key stages 1 and 2 as a result. While some pupils do well, this inconsistency leads to others not learning and progressing as well as they should.
- A thorough assessment system is in place to enable teachers to monitor and evaluate how well pupils are learning. However, some teachers do not use the assessment information they collect to set work that is accurately matched to pupils' abilities. Consequently, some pupils do not have the right level of challenge to enable them to deepen their understanding, while other pupils receive work that is occasionally too difficult for them.
- Teachers do not ensure that errors and misunderstandings in pupils' learning are

promptly addressed. This means that pupils often repeat mistakes in their work. This is particularly the case with pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation. When pupils' misconceptions are not promptly dealt with by teachers, pupils find it difficult to move on in their learning independently.

- Developments in the teaching of English are increasing pupils' enthusiasm for reading and writing. Improved teaching strategies and the use of good-quality texts that appeal to pupils' interests are fostering a love of reading and increasing pupils' enthusiasm to write for different purposes. Through daily guided and shared reading and writing experiences, teachers are developing pupils' understanding of vocabulary to improve their comprehension of the texts they read and the use of language in their writing. At present, these approaches are not yet consistently effective across all classes.
- Teachers increasingly ensure that pupils have a purpose for their writing through links made to other topics of learning. However, teachers do not ensure that pupils regularly practise and apply their skills in extended pieces of writing, to consolidate their learning.
- Not all teachers plan lessons in mathematics that enable pupils to sufficiently practise and apply their skills to solve problems. Some teachers do not give time for pupils to think about their reasoning when solving problems in order to extend their learning and deepen their understanding.
- Teachers have raised their expectations for the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation of their work. However, these expectations are not yet high enough or consistently maintained by all teachers across classes and subjects.
- Teachers and teaching assistants develop good relationships with pupils. They give pupils encouragement and praise. This has a positive effect in keeping pupils interested in their learning. Nevertheless, teaching assistants are not always effective in their support of pupils. In some lessons seen, teaching assistants focused more on completing the learning task rather than ensuring that pupils were learning what they needed to know.
- In most lessons seen by the inspector, teachers used questioning well to model appropriate subject-specific vocabulary for pupils. They encouraged pupils to work together and reflect on the quality of their work.
- The teaching of phonics is good. The majority of pupils acquire a good knowledge of phonics. This helps them with their reading and writing. Pupils who read their books to the inspector and were heard reading in class were confident and used their phonics skills well. Pupils were happy to discuss their books and talked animatedly about their favourite books and authors.
- Teachers plan motivating learning experiences for pupils across different subjects. Consequently, pupils enjoy learning. For example, pupils learning to write explanation texts were taught about the lifecycle of a Monarch butterfly, which enhanced their scientific learning about lifecycles. The teacher encouraged pupils to act out the narrative of the lifecycle to help them recall vital facts. Pupils then worked in pairs and independently to enthusiastically plan their own explanation texts about their own choice of animal or insect.
- When teachers match work appropriately to pupils' abilities and maintain high expectations, pupils respond very positively. For example, pupils were enthused in their

mathematics lesson when they were learning how to solve problems by translating shapes. There was a buzz of enthusiasm as pupils focused on applying their knowledge to solve the problems.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Staff have a good understanding of the local community. The school has a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Pupils are confident and are proud of their school. As one pupil told an inspector, 'I love school, it's so much fun!'
- Parents are supportive of the school. A typical comment from parents was, 'Theddlethorpe is a fantastic school. Teachers know pupils well and are caring and considerate towards them all.'
- Pupils feel safe in school and say that adults help them with any concerns or worries they may have. They understand how to keep themselves safe in different situations. For example, they explained to the inspector that they are taught how to stay safe online and that some pupils have trained to become junior road safety officers.
- Through the curriculum, pupils develop a good understanding of the choices they should make to live healthily. They develop their physical fitness through exercising regularly. They appreciate the good-quality PE lessons they receive from specialist teachers who work across the trust.
- Pupils of all ages socialise and cooperate well with each other, including at breaktimes. They are respectful and enjoy taking on elected roles of responsibility, such as members of the school council, to contribute to events and school improvements. However, not enough pupils can confidently demonstrate a thorough understanding of British values. Leaders have identified that this is an area for development in their current review of the curriculum.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their conduct around the school is good. Pupils say that they like coming to school and enjoy their learning. The vast majority of pupils respond promptly and appropriately to adults' instructions.
- Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take. They say that incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are rare but, when they occur, staff deal with them quickly and effectively.
- Leaders monitor the attendance of pupils carefully. Overall attendance is in line with national averages for similar schools. However, persistent absence, although reducing, remains above the national average. Leaders are taking rigorous and effective actions to further reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent. The principal and educational welfare officer for the trust work closely with families. They consult with external agencies, when necessary, to ensure that pupils are safe and are supported to

attend school regularly. Although persistent absence is improving, it remains a priority.

- Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils listen attentively and work cooperatively. They are confident to express their opinions and are interested in their learning. Occasionally, in some lessons, pupils lose concentration when the work they are set is not well matched to their needs.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The proportion of key stage 2 pupils who attained the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics combined increased in 2018 but remained below national averages. For the last two years, pupils' attainment in writing at the end of Year 6 has been below the national average. However, the very small and varied cohorts make year-on-year comparisons of pupils' attainment difficult.
- In 2018, pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 improved to be in line with national averages. Pupils' attainment in writing, although improved, remained below national averages. The proportion of pupils attaining a greater depth of understanding in English and mathematics declined in 2018.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils make progress in line with the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The progress current disadvantaged pupils make in some year groups is not as good as that of their peers.
- Some pupils, including the most able, do not make the progress of which they are capable in a variety of subjects, including in English and mathematics.
- The inspector's scrutiny of pupils' workbooks and observations during lessons showed that too few pupils are making consistently good progress in a range of subjects. Significant improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have taken place. However, strategies are not yet consistent across all classes and not all teachers maintain high expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly in their writing and mathematics.
- The large majority of pupils gain the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. The proportion who do so has been above the national average for two years. Pupils who read with the inspector enjoy reading and are developing their reading skills well.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points.
- Improved teaching strategies and the introduction of a more precise assessment system are demonstrating an increasingly positive impact on pupils' outcomes.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of early years is good. Staff establish good relationships with parents and children to ensure that children settle quickly into school life.
- Children enter early years with skills and knowledge that are just below those typical for their age and stage of development. Good teaching enables children to make good progress and ensures that they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Over the last two years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception Year has fluctuated. Year-on-year comparisons are difficult due to the small and often changing needs of cohorts entering the school. School assessment information and work in children's books show that the large majority of current children are making good progress and are on track to achieve a good level of development.
- During this academic year, the school has benefited from the addition of a new, purpose-built early years classroom and now offers Nursery provision. Children in the Nursery Year make an excellent start to their school life as a result of the high expectations of staff and good-quality resources for learning.
- Adults in early years use skilful questioning and modelling of sentences to promote good speaking and listening skills for children and extend their knowledge and understanding. For example, when reading a story to children, the Nursery practitioner paused frequently to ask children if they could explain words or predict what might happen next. She clarified words that children mispronounced by repeating the sentence back to them clearly and correctly.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills well. The teacher places a high priority on the teaching of phonics to support children to read and spell confidently. Children are encouraged to practise and apply their English and mathematical skills in a broad range of curriculum experiences. For example, children playing in the outdoor provision were observed using their phonic skills to enthusiastically write sentences about the 'Rainbow Fish', linked to their learning about animals. In another activity, children used their knowledge of numbers to play a game independently on the computer of finding 'one more and one less' than a given number.
- The indoor and outdoor environments provide children across early years with a variety of opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding in different areas of the curriculum. They are encouraged to be imaginative and enthusiastic learners.
- Nurturing, positive relationships between adults and children enable children to feel well cared for. They enjoy school and socialise well with each other and older pupils in the school. Children move confidently and safely around the learning areas because adults have secured effective procedures to keep children safe. Their behaviour is good.
- The small number of disadvantaged children and children with SEND are well supported. Focused adult support and additional activities are carefully planned to meet children's needs well.
- Parents are very positive about the early years provision. They speak highly of the caring staff and good progress their children are making both academically and socially. A typical comment from parents to the inspector was, 'Since starting in the

Reception class, my child has grown in confidence, loves learning and loves school!’

- Leaders, both within the school and the trust, have a good understanding of the strengths and areas to improve in the early years provision. They are keen to secure further improvements and to increase the proportion of children achieving a good level of development. They have sensibly raised the profile of the Nursery provision at the school so that more children enter Reception Year with knowledge and skills that are at least typical for their age.

School details

Unique reference number	143132
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10087329

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Philip Bond
Principal	Rebecca Scott-Ahmad
Telephone number	01507 353458
Website	www.theddlethorpeacademy.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@theddlethorpeacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Theddlethorpe Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and of pupils who speak English as an additional language are below those seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The school opened in 2016 as an academy within the Tollbar Multi Academy Trust.
- The school accesses support and training for staff through the trust.
- The current principal took up post in September 2018. She is an experienced leader within the trust.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all year groups. The majority of the observations were carried out jointly with the principal. In addition to observing the teaching of reading, the inspector listened to pupils read. She talked with pupils about their school and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- The inspector held meetings with the principal and two members of staff. She met with three members of the governing body and four trustees, including the chief executive officer of the trust. The inspector also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. She also took account of the nine responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the four responses to Ofsted's survey for staff. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including: the school's self-evaluation of current performance and plans for improvement; the school's most recent information on the achievement and progress of pupils; information relating to safeguarding; information about behaviour management; information relating to the school's use of the pupil premium funding and funding for pupils with SEND; the school's most recent information relating to the attendance of pupils; and minutes from meetings of the governing body and committee of trustees.

Inspection team

Stephanie Innes-Taylor, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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