

Inspection of a good school: Kilnhurst St Thomas' CofE Primary Academy

Meadow View Road, Kilnhurst, Mexborough, South Yorkshire, S64 5UA

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 May 2022

Outcome

Kilnhurst St Thomas' CofE Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Kilnhurst St Thomas' CofE Primary Academy is a welcoming, friendly and nurturing school. The staff team have a unique bond that is underpinned by the desire for all pupils to achieve their full potential. Staff and pupils have established strong relationships and treat each other with courtesy and respect. Christian values such as compassion, forgiveness, respect, perseverance and truthfulness are fundamental to the ethos of the school. They are reflected in pupils' character and their attitudes towards school life.

Leaders have high expectations for every pupil. They have made sure that the curriculum is engaging and provides pupils with 'memorable moments' at the start of each term. Pupils talk about their learning with enthusiasm and passion. They can remember learning that took place in previous years.

Behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes is good. Pupils have positive learning attitudes and enjoy being at school. Pupils say that bullying is rare. If unkind name-calling happens, pupils know that staff will sort it out. They trust staff in school and are happy to speak to them about their worries.

Pupils are given responsibilities in school that they really enjoy. 'Upstanding School Prefects', 'Pupil Parliament' and the 'Worship Council' mean that pupils have a voice. They meet regularly with leaders to share their feelings and ideas. Pupils also participate in sporting competitions, musical performances and fundraising activities with great excitement.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that makes sure pupils are prepared well for the next stages of their education. Curriculum content is well ordered so that pupils build new learning on what they have learned before. Leaders have trained teachers to use the 'Teach Simply' model. Knowledge is taught to pupils and then revisited throughout the year to make sure children remember it. For example, history lessons contain quizzes to

see what the children can remember from previous lessons. Leaders have identified the curriculum still needs some more work in some subjects.

The curriculum journey begins in the early years. Children learn in a language-rich environment where they are taught new vocabulary that is linked to the curriculum. Children are provided with a deep understanding of basic concepts to support their learning in future years.

Pupils enjoy reading and listening to stories. Teachers choose books that pupils enjoy and read them with expression and enthusiasm. Pupils frequently read for pleasure in school. Leaders believe that reading is fundamental to pupils being able to access the full curriculum. Children in Reception begin to match sounds to letters straight away. They read books that match the sounds that they know. Staff make sure pupils keep up in phonics lessons. They give pupils extra help throughout the day to help pupils remember more sounds. Pupils who fall behind get extra help to catch up every day. By Year 3, most pupils can read fluently.

Pupils enjoy mathematics. They can talk about what they know and how that helps them to learn more. For example, pupils in Year 5 can explain how knowing their multiplication tables helps them to solve complex division problems. However, pupils have limited opportunities to answer reasoning questions and explain their thinking.

Leaders have designed the curriculum with clear end points in mind. By using sharp assessment processes, staff identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind. The school operates a 'keep up not catch up' policy where pupils receive timely support to unpick and correct any misconceptions.

Pupils of all abilities are given appropriate learning activities. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers break down learning into manageable steps for these pupils. Leaders work in partnership with external agencies to ensure pupils with SEND receive appropriate support. The school operates a nurture provision to support pupils with specific needs.

Leaders have ensured the curriculum allows pupils to develop their character and identity while starting to understand the world around them. They use current news stories about world affairs to discuss and debate topical issues. They learn about the importance of being respectful towards others, regardless of their faith, culture or belief. They enjoy opportunities such as 'Dress to Express' day as it provides them with the opportunity to express their personality.

Staff are happy at the school and feel like they are part of a family. They feel well supported by leaders and think that their workload is always considered. Leaders have provided care and support for staff during some challenging circumstances. This has made the whole team stronger.

The school is well supported by the trustees and local governing body. Both know the school well and offer appropriate levels of support and challenge. They are actively involved in school and are known to staff and children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All members of staff are confident about identifying and reporting issues. They know the signs to look out for and what to do if they have any concerns about the welfare of pupils. They receive regular training which is revisited throughout the year. Updates are provided when required. Leaders take prompt and effective actions to protect children who are at risk. They work well with families and external agencies. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the school maintained high levels of vigilance and provided effective and appropriate support. Governors and leaders have the training and knowledge necessary to follow safer recruitment procedures and to address allegations against staff.

Leaders understand the school context well and respond to potential safeguarding issues through the curriculum. Pupils are taught about positive relationships, keeping healthy and staying safe online. Pupils know who to go to if they have any worries or concerns. They know they can use 'bubble time' to speak to an adult in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils do not always get the opportunity to use mathematical reasoning in their work. They are not always given the opportunity to attain the appropriate depth of understanding. Leaders should ensure they make it clear to teachers how and when they should include reasoning opportunities within sequences of learning.
- For some foundation subjects, the curriculum is still relatively new. Leaders have not had an opportunity to review its success. Leaders now need to make sure teachers fully implement the curriculum. Subject leaders should ensure this is regularly monitored.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Kilnhurst St Thomas CofE Primary School, to be good in September 2014.

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.

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

Unique reference number	145273
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10227617
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Huw Thomas
Headteacher	Rebecca Allard (Executive Headteacher) Rebecca Webster (Acting Head of School) Victoria Sherwood (Head of School)
Website	www.stthomas-kilnhurst.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher has been in position since September 2020. The acting head of school has been in position since January 2022.
- The school is part of The Diocese of Sheffield Academy Trust.
- The school does not use an alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the acting head of school and curriculum leaders.
- The inspector met with three members of the governing body, including the chair. He also spoke with four representatives from the trust, including the chief executive officer.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. He also observed adults listening to pupils read.
- The arrangements for safeguarding were checked. This included checks on the single central record, staff's training and safeguarding records. The inspector also talked to the designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspector discussed the school's records on attendance and behaviour with the executive headteacher and head of school.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at lunchtime. He also met with two groups of pupils.
- The inspector looked at the school's self-evaluation document and improvement plans.
- The inspector talked informally with pupils in lessons and at breaktimes and took into account the responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- The inspector took into account the responses to the survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector met with some staff and took account of the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Simon McCarthy, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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