

Inspection of Thomlinson Junior School

The Goose Market, High Street, Wigton, Cumbria CA7 9PG

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 March 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel fortunate to belong to this calm, caring school. They understand, and live out, the school's embedded values of respect, tolerance, courage and responsibility. Pupils interact happily together and behave well. They support others through their roles as 'peer supporters'. Pupils truly value the positive relationships they form with staff.

The school supports pupils' wider development well. It enriches the curriculum with visits and visitors to the school. Pupils take part in residential visits in Years 4, 5 and 6, including to London. Pupils relish the opportunities they have at lunchtimes and playtimes to engage in high-quality play. For example, the school provides pupils with resources to promote their creativity and develop their physical skills. It offers a wide range of activities for pupils to access at social times, including sports and group games. Pupils thoroughly enjoy swinging beneath the tree, dancing, role playing, building dens, and playing duets on the piano outside.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. It has designed an ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils typically achieve well across a broad range of subjects. They enjoy their learning and are proud of their achievements.

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

The school has developed strong transition processes with the feeder infant school to ensure that pupils' needs are identified, understood and met from the moment they join. Pupils with SEND, including those who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision), access an ambitious curriculum that is tailored to meet their needs.

The school has identified the key knowledge that it intends pupils to learn. It has carefully considered how this will build over time. Staff deliver the curriculum consistently well and provide pupils with clear explanations when introducing new knowledge. The school's curriculum is broad and prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education.

Reading is at the heart of this school. Staff foster a love of reading among pupils and support them to become confident, avid readers. Pupils enjoy reading books across a wide range of genres. The school has robust systems to swiftly identify gaps in pupils' reading knowledge and skills. It prioritises closing these gaps through its embedded phonics programme, which staff deliver well. This helps pupils, including those attending the specially resourced provision, to gain the knowledge they need to become fluent readers.

The school has developed processes to check that pupils understand and remember key knowledge. This helps the school to evaluate the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning over time. However, in some subjects, these checks on learning are not as effective as they could be at identifying where adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum may be needed. For example, staff do not consistently identify whether pupils

have misconceptions or if they are ready to move on to more complex tasks, so that timely adaptations to activities can be made.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They listen carefully in lessons and work hard. Staff deliver programmes to support pupils to manage their emotions positively. The school places the utmost importance on pupils' attendance and punctuality. It strives to remove any barriers to attendance that pupils face. Pupils' rates of attendance are high, and persistent absence is low.

The school promotes pupils' wider development. Pupils learn how to maintain their physical and mental health. Pupils enjoy accessing a range of extra-curricular activities such as art, choir and sports clubs. They are proud of their successes in sports competitions. Pupils have opportunities to perform. They sing at external events and take part in the school's talent show. Pupils have opportunities to contribute to the school and wider community. For example, the school council were involved in successfully campaigning for a reduced speed limit outside the school.

Governors provide effective support and challenge to the school. The school considers the impact on staff's workload when making decisions about developments to the curriculum. Staff morale is high.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school's assessment systems are not used as effectively as they could be to identify what pupils know and to inform the delivery of the curriculum. This hinders the school from designing activities that consistently support pupils to build on their knowledge. The school should ensure that its checks on learning enable staff to design and adapt activities appropriately so that pupils' learning builds securely and deeply over time.

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	112125
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10348087
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Ferriby
Headteacher	Dawn Maxwell
Website	www.thomlinson.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 and 5 December 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- There is a specially resourced provision for up to nine pupils with SEND. The provision caters for pupils aged seven to 11 with severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties. There are currently nine pupils attending the provision.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 met with the headteacher, other leaders, governors, and staff at the school. The lead inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and computing. 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. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 lead inspector listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils at social times and when moving around the school.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and carers and considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors spoke to pupils and to staff to gather their views. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including those related to the governance of the school.

Inspection team

Liz Dayton, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kathryn Pym

Ofsted Inspector

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