



Thomas Russell Junior School

A school transformed from the ordinary. An expectation of excellence. Relentless drive to improve. (Ofsted 2014)

What Awards do we have and why?



Our latest Ofsted Inspection on 17th June 2014 judged the school to be Good. Ofsted inspectors said: It is a school transformed from the ordinary. Under much improved leadership and management, it shows a lot of potential for further improvement. Pupils' achievement is good. It is speeding up as teaching improves. The relentless drive to improve teaching is working. There is now an expectation of excellence rather than adequacy. Teaching is good. Pupils are kept safe, learn how to keep themselves safe and are happy in school. Pupils behave well. There is a very strong focus on making the school better and raising standards through improved teaching. Staff morale is high and the local authority and community are latching on to the reality that this is a school that has a lot to offer.

To read the full report: <http://www.thomasrussell-junior.staffs.sch.uk/page/?pid=25>

We are due our next inspection in the next few months and have taken actions to address the key reasons why we were not yet Outstanding. We are confident of our impact on these and other areas, as identified in our own self-evaluation since the inspection.



We were successful in our application for the Basic Skills Quality Mark in October 2017. The assessor identified key strengths of the school as: clear evidence of strong leadership at all levels with a sharp focus on Action Planning following audit of provision, with a monitoring timetable to support the on-going evaluation of impact and next steps. There is very strong evidence in data and the high quality of work displayed around the school that Thomas Russell Junior is a very successful school. The focus on the development of the Whole Child is a strength of the setting. Children talked to me about the range of experiences they have available which help to build resilience, self-confidence and a determination to achieve the highest standards in all aspects of school life. Leaders and staff instil in every child a sense of responsibility and respect for each other. This is a vibrant and exciting school with high quality provision and practice. I enjoyed talking with staff, parents, governors and children very much.



The School Games Mark is a Government led awards scheme launched in 2012 to reward schools for their commitment to the development of competition across their school and into the community. At Thomas Russell Junior School, we have already achieved the Silver Award and are working towards Gold by increasing involvement in sporting competition even further. Our children enjoy 3 hours of high quality PE every week as part of the curriculum, including learning to swim in our own pool. They have access to a huge range of extra-curricular sports including football, cricket, tennis, rounders, netball, skiing and snowboarding. Further sporting access is offered through active break and lunchtimes, the Friday Mile and wrap around care activities.



Being an Enhanced Dyslexia Friendly School reflects our long-term commitment to embedding good practice and a holistic approach to the other difficulties that may be found alongside dyslexia. All staff are trained in the identification and support of children with Dyslexia. Our classroom environments are adapted to ensure all best practices are followed and resources to support pupils are easily accessible. Following assessment in April 2015, the assessor said we were "an outstanding example of Enhanced Status" and we received no recommendations for further improvements. We joined a very elite group of only six schools in Staffordshire (out of 426) who have met this standard. Congratulations went to SENCo and staff, but also to children who spoke knowledgeably and confidently about difficulties associated with dyslexia, triumphs of well-known people who have succeeded with dyslexia and the wider picture of child development.



Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group physically or emotionally. At Thomas Russell Junior School, we do all we can to protect children from bullying, to educate them about how to protect themselves and to nurture self-esteem and wellbeing in children to reduce occurrences of bullying. We are a very close knit school with excellent relationships between children and with staff. This creates an atmosphere of trust and respect where bullying is disapproved of.

We are passionate about music at Thomas Russell Junior School. Not only do children receive a musical instrument and specialist music tuition for two whole years across their time in school, we also have a large number of peripatetic opportunities for children to learn a range of instruments: clarinet, flute, violin, viola, cello, cornet, trumpet, trombone, saxophone, guitar and keyboard. Our 100 strong school choir is building an excellent reputation, performing at local and regional events as well as their latest musical endeavours in Joseph and his Technicolour Dreamcoat alongside pupils from John Taylor High School.

We are committed to giving our children a thoroughly rounded education and place huge importance on the PHSE side of the curriculum. We feel the values, learning and growth that pupils engage in PHSE underpin everything else that takes place in school. Children learn respect (for themselves and others), resilience (and how to embrace failure) and to be reflective. Being able to keep themselves safe is vitally important; our learning covers e-safety, road and water safety, stranger danger, health and sex education. As part of our learning, all children work towards a recognised St John Ambulance First Aid qualification each year. Topics cover burns, choking, asthma, allergic reaction, recovery position, cardiac arrest, bandaging and much more...

We are an outward looking school - keen to learn from educational research and experiences of others in a range of fields. We have taken part in an 18 month research project entitled 'Improving Literacy at KS2', funded by the EEF to impact Literacy teaching nationwide. Information from research by Sutton Trust and the Teaching and Learning Toolkit is used to direct financial and physical resources in the most effective ways. Changes in the curriculum and assessment procedures over the last few years have made keeping up to date critically important. Our staff have been involved with the National Assessment Authority in London moderating levels for KS2 writing, and sharing this expertise across our school and cluster.

Financial management of the school is one of the Governing Board's three core functions. We are passionate about securing the best possible outcomes for children through meticulous budgeting, a key feature of this is facilitating small class sizes to maximise feedback opportunities. Governors are committed to securing the long-term financial viability of the school, as well as ensuring money is spent on pupils for which it was allocated. We have maintained a strong financial position for over ten years with this philosophy. Benchmarking data is used to compare our spend across all areas with other local and national schools as well as to profile the most effective schools to understand how they allocate resources.

Healthy lifestyles are vital to children making the best academic progress and emotional development. Our commitment to developing the whole child is reflected in this and other awards the school has achieved. Healthy minds and healthy bodies are our aspirations for all TRJS pupils and we engage, wherever possible, with initiatives to promote this: PE Clubs and tournaments; Bikeability; Y6 Weigh & Measure; Mindfulness; Mental Health & Wellbeing. Our catering providers support in this aspiration through the daily healthy menu, and in additional activities such as smoothie bike, farm to fork assemblies and bread making workshops.

The Next Generation Learning Charter is a simple way for your schools to publicly show their commitment and progress towards best use of technology for teaching and learning. At Thomas Russell Junior, our commitment is evident not just in this mark, but in the ICT provision in every classroom, our fully resourced ICT suite and in the portable trolleys of iPads that are used to support learning. Our curriculum is designed to promote and enhance all learning opportunities whilst embracing technology within the modern world.





Our school environment is delightful and we consider ourselves very privileged to be able to make most advantage of the playground and fields through curriculum based learning (PE, Science, Geography), playtimes and after school activities (Forest Schools / Sports). We welcome many local sports clubs throughout the year to use our extensive pitches and community use is also actively encouraged in the swimming pool. We are equally proud to produce a small amount of school grown vegetables, which our cook has kindly prepared in our school kitchen.

We display the Staffordshire knot as we are proud to remain a LA maintained school. This is a conscious decision and choice by the School Leadership and Governors. We are open-minded to the possibilities of academy conversion and have considered benefits of joining a Multi-Academy Trust or forming a federation with another school(s). We believe there must be a compelling reason for change, and our primary consideration has been and will always be the education and wellbeing of our pupils. So far, we are yet to identify a solution that provides the compelling reason, but remain mindful that maintaining the status quo may not be a viable long term solution.