

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Thomas Russell Junior School

Gilmour Lane, Barton-Under-Needwood, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE13 8EU

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 November 2024

Outcome

Thomas Russell Junior School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils achieve very well at this high performing school. It is a warm and nurturing place to be. The school does all it can to make sure pupils feel happy and cared for. Some pupils need a little extra support to help them feel ready to face the day. The school provides this in a carefully considered way.

The school is determined that all pupils should reach their full potential. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils show excellent attitudes to learning. Every pupil can learn without disruption. Classrooms are calm and purposeful because pupils behave well and work hard. They produce high-quality work that they are proud of. Pupils also behave extremely well at all other points of the day. They are respectful and have beautiful manners.

Pupils understand the importance of living healthy lives. The school does all it can to ensure pupils spend as much of the day being as active as possible. The school has adopted a new approach to how it organises playtimes. Pupils benefit from these. They learn to cooperate with each other and develop team-building skills. Pupils learn to be a good friend and value the importance of kindness.

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

The school has the highest expectations for its pupils. The commitment to maintaining its high standards is clear to see. Pupils learn to read and write to a very high standard. Staff are quick to identify any misconceptions pupils might have. Staff address these misconceptions with a high level of expertise. Pupils are also confident mathematicians.

They remember important facts and calculations that help with more difficult problems. Pupils with SEND learn the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Staff use their knowledge of individual pupils and their needs to adapt the curriculum effectively. The approaches the school takes are highly effective and enable these pupils to make strong progress.

The school ensures pupils at the earlier stages of learning to read keep up with their peers. Pupils receive extra sessions in school that help them read with greater accuracy. This targeted support leads to the vast majority of pupils becoming confident and fluent readers. Pupils have access to a wide variety of interesting and engaging texts. The school has thought about these carefully. The books expose pupils to a wide range of different experiences and cultures.

The school checks regularly how well pupils learn the curriculum. Across most of the curriculum, this helps pupils build learning in a coherent way. However, in a small number of subjects, this effective approach to assessment is not as well established. This means the gaps pupils might have in learning are not as easily identified and subsequently addressed.

The school supports pupils who need extra emotional support very well. The impact of this is clear to see. It is evident in how calm and settled pupils are in school. This leads to pupils who want to be in school as often as possible and, therefore, attend regularly. It is a praiseworthy aspect of the school's work.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Their attitudes to learning are second to none. They engage in learning, and they always aim to do their very best. Staff are excellent role models. They demonstrate a high level of respect to all pupils. It permeates every aspect of the school's work. Pupils are keen to emulate this, and they do. When a small number of pupils struggle to manage their behaviour, the school responds with compassion and care. Pupils learn to reflect on what they would do differently in the future.

Pupils value the wide range of opportunities to develop as leaders of the future. They understand the power of their voice. The school helps pupils to develop into well-rounded, responsible citizens of the future. Pupils talk confidently about not judging people based on stereotypes. Pupils enjoy attending a variety of clubs after school that develop their talents and interests.

The school is led very well. Staff work with determination to maintain high standards and build on their success, including consistently strong academic results. Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the care, guidance, support and education their children receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On a small number of occasions, the school's assessment of what pupils have learned is not as well embedded. This means that some pupils do not have their precise gaps in learning identified. Consequently, these gaps are not addressed. The school should ensure that it consistently applies the effective systems they have in place for assessing pupils.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in January 2019.

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	124150
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10343870
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	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Phil Evans
Headteacher	James Emery
Website	www.thomasrussell-junior.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 and 16 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides wraparound care before and after school.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection since the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and senior leaders.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector spoke with four governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at different times of the day and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and information on the school's website.
- The inspector talked with pupils and staff to gather information about school life. In addition, they took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff, pupils and parents.

Inspection team

Keri Baylis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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