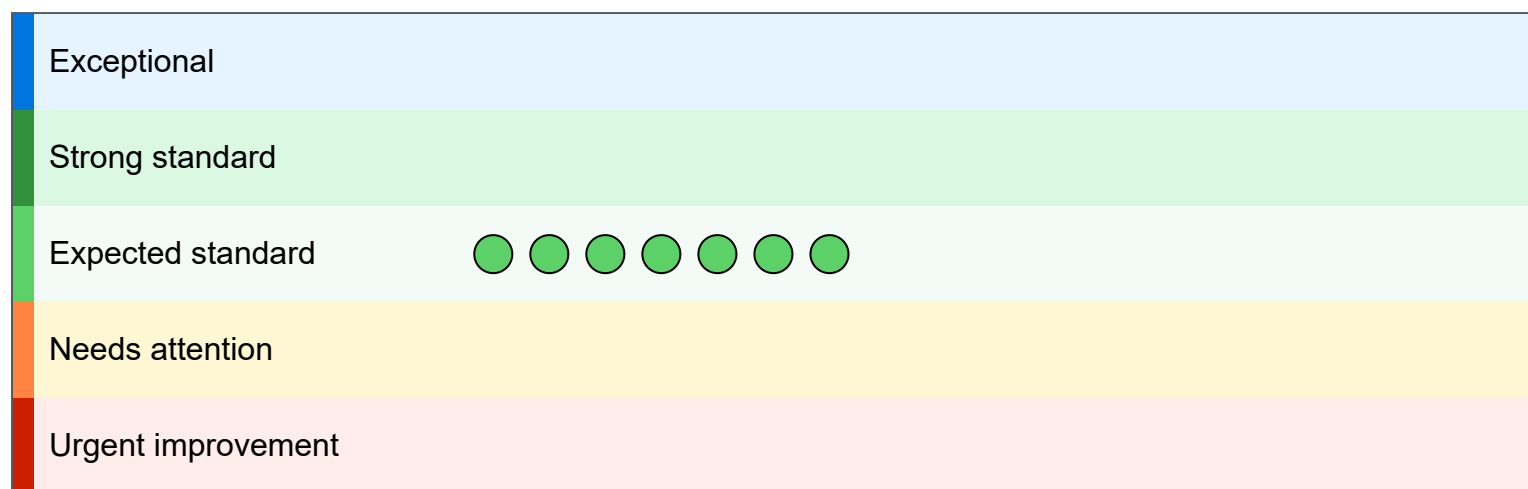


Thorns Community Infant School

Address: Blackthorn Road, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 2DS

Unique reference number (URN): 125550

Inspection report: 28 April 2026



✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils consistently achieve well in the Year 1 phonics check. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have secured the knowledge they need to read accurately and fluently. They secure important handwriting, spelling and number facts quickly. Those with barriers to their learning progress well from their starting points and produce work of a similar quality to their peers.

Across the wider curriculum, pupils develop knowledge and produce some high-quality work. However, in some subjects, the presentation and quality of work are more variable. This has improved since the start of the year and is now at an appropriate standard. By the time pupils finish Year 2, they generally have the knowledge and skills they need to be successful at junior school.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have established effective systems to monitor and analyse attendance. They intervene where pupils' attendance declines. They support families well. This helps ensure that barriers to attendance reduce over time. As a result, overall attendance is consistently high, and persistent absence is very low. Leaders support disadvantaged pupils well. This helps these pupils to improve their attendance over time. While leaders understand the barriers that their pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities face, some of this support is at an early stage, so the impact is more variable.

Pupils typically behave well. Staff understand the systems for supporting behaviour and generally implement them effectively. This results in a calm and positive learning environment. Although most pupils concentrate well, some struggle to focus for longer periods of time. Pupils mostly work hard and take pride in their work, especially in English and mathematics. Where pupils find it harder to make positive behaviour choices, leaders implement reasonable adjustments, such as safe spaces, reward charts and calming strategies. This generally helps these pupils to manage their emotions more effectively. Bullying is rare. Leaders address any form of discrimination decisively. This ensures that it is not repeated.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is interesting and grouped by theme to help pupils to make sense of their learning. They plan purposeful links across the curriculum, while retaining the uniqueness of each subject. This helps pupils to learn and understand new content. Leaders evaluate the curriculum well and seek to continually improve it.

Staff typically implement the curriculum effectively. In English, mathematics and reading, staff have high expectations and design tasks that enable pupils to develop high-quality responses. This supports pupils, including those with barriers to their learning, to access the intended learning. Across the wider curriculum, staff do not always ensure that tasks are precisely matched to pupils' needs or the intended learning outcomes. As a result, pupils

sometimes find it difficult to organise their responses. Staff use questioning well to check that pupils understand the learning. They provide opportunities for pupils to share their thinking, which helps to develop their spoken language. Staff have the expertise required to deliver clear explanations across different subjects.

Staff teach phonics well. They explain how to hold a pencil properly and help pupils to develop their handwriting. Structured mathematics programmes help pupils to secure basic number facts. As a result, teaching helps pupils to develop important basic knowledge. Where pupils have not secured this knowledge, leaders ensure that they catch up quickly.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise the early years. They understand the importance of a positive start in Reception. On entry, leaders assess children to identify needs and gaps in knowledge. They have planned a curriculum that builds knowledge and skills over time. They adapt this based on children's starting points and changing interests and needs. This helps children to progress well. Leaders choose high-quality texts and ensure that language and communication is high profile. Staff engage children in high-quality interactions. However, sometimes, staff miss opportunities to extend children's language further.

Staff make sure children have the knowledge they need to be ready for key stage 1. For example, they ensure that children hold their pencil correctly and know important number facts. Staff teach phonics well, so children learn to read quickly. Children develop secure knowledge across all 7 areas of learning in the early years.

Staff have positive and warm relationships with children and parents. This supports children to feel safe. Children learn how to manage their emotions. They play happily and cooperatively together in a positive environment. Where children have barriers to their learning or wellbeing, staff provide effective support. They know and value these children as individuals, which helps them to thrive.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify pupils who need extra support at the earliest opportunity. On entry to the early years, leaders quickly assess children's needs and implement support so that children have a positive start to school. Generally, this support reduces barriers to learning and/or wellbeing for younger pupils. For some older pupils, leaders did not identify their specific barriers early enough. This has resulted in these barriers growing. Although leaders have now implemented appropriate support for older pupils, barriers remain. There are a range of strategies in place to help pupils across the school. However, for some of these pupils, reliance on adult support limits their independence.

Leaders generally design appropriate plans for pupils to help reduce barriers to learning and/or wellbeing. Sometimes, these are not as precise as they need to be, which means support does not always respond quickly enough to changing need. However, on the whole, planned support does help pupils to access wider learning in the classroom and enable them to make progress.

Leaders ensure that staff support disadvantaged pupils well. These pupils access the full school offer. Leaders are outward facing and use evidence-based approaches to spend funding for disadvantaged pupils. This results in these pupils achieving well, attending well and feeling they belong. This is also the case with pupils known, or previously known, to social care.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

There have been changes to the leadership team over the past two years. The new team have quickly established a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have prioritised the right actions in the right order. For example, leaders' improvements to inclusion systems have resulted in earlier identification of pupils' specific needs. This ensures that pupils now access appropriate support at the earliest opportunity. Leaders are ambitious for their pupils and work hard to ensure they are ready for junior school. To further strengthen standards, leaders need to ensure that staff maximise interactions in the early years and pupils produce high-quality work across all areas of the curriculum.

Governors know the school well. They are highly committed. They ensure that all aspects of the school's work are effective. This supports leaders to drive improvement. Leaders at all levels act in the best interests of pupils, especially vulnerable pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who may be disadvantaged and those known, or previously known, to social care achieve, belong and thrive. As they do with all pupils, they value them as part of the school family, which helps them to succeed.

Staff say leaders reduce unnecessary workload and support their wellbeing. Leaders have designed an effective professional learning programme, which builds staff expertise over time. This means staff have the knowledge they need to perform their roles well.

Leaders work closely with parents. As a result, parents are extremely positive about the school. This helps ensure that children are happy and want to come to school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a personal development programme that prepares pupils well for junior school. Pupils learn to be respectful of others, including people from different cultures. For example, they visit different places of worship and learn about significant figures from a range of backgrounds. Pupils understand and appreciate fundamental British values, including the right to choose and the importance of tolerance. The school is a welcoming, inclusive environment.

Pupils develop secure knowledge across the personal, social, health and economic curriculum. They understand the need to eat healthily and take regular exercise. They maintain healthy friendships and challenge unkindness or bullying. Pupils consistently interact positively with one another. Leaders invite speakers, such as firefighters, to teach pupils how to stay safe outside of school. Leaders have implemented a comprehensive digital citizenship programme. This enables pupils to speak with confidence about online privacy and identity.

Leaders provide a wide range of experiences for pupils. They have matched clubs to interests, such as a coding club, and they organise trips to supplement learning in the curriculum. Parents attend events to work alongside their children. As part of the outdoor learning programme, pupils take part in forest school. A very high proportion of pupils learn to swim at the on-site swimming pool. Leaders ensure that these opportunities are an entitlement for all. As a result, disadvantaged pupils, those known, or previously known, to social care and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities fully access the full school offer.

Pastoral support is effective. Leaders work strategically to ensure that they are responsive to emerging needs. Where pupils or families need help, leaders ensure that they access this from appropriate agencies or through internal support. This reduces barriers to pupils' wellbeing.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Thorns Community Infant School is a warm, welcoming and joyful place. Pupils start the day with smiles on their faces. They enjoy the time they spend with their friends and adults at the school. Parents and pupils alike love this caring, nurturing infant school. Relationships across the community are highly positive. Pupils are proud to attend.

Pupils treat each other with respect. They are polite and well mannered. The school's ENRICH values are important to pupils and they live them out day to day. Breaktimes are sociable and enjoyable. Pupils have close friendships and play happily with one another. In lessons, pupils mostly concentrate well and there is little disruption. This helps them to feel safe. Pupils learn calming strategies to help manage their emotions. This helps reduce barriers to wellbeing. Pupils say bullying is rare and always dealt with quickly.

Pupils rarely miss school. They appreciate the interesting opportunities leaders provide, such as musical theatre clubs, swimming and music tuition. Leaders help where there are barriers to access so that every pupil can take part.

Pupils achieve well. In the early years, children settle quickly. Staff care for them and provide the teaching they need to develop language, number and writing knowledge. At times, adults miss opportunities to interact with children to help them progress their learning even further. As they move through school, pupils continue to enjoy learning and work hard. Leaders help them catch up quickly if they fall behind. During their time at school, pupils gain the knowledge they need to prepare them well for junior school. Where pupils have barriers to learning, staff support them well. Sometimes pupils' work across the wider curriculum does not reflect what they can achieve, but this is improving.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that targets to support pupils are sharply matched to their needs so that barriers are removed swiftly and pupils develop greater independence over time.

- Leaders should ensure that staff consistently design tasks appropriately matched to learning outcomes so that pupils produce high-quality work across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff in the early years maximise opportunities for high-quality interactions throughout the school day.
-

About this inspection

The co-chairs of the board of governors in this school are Sue Casey and Rachael Jenkinson.

The school is part of a federation called Thorns and Park Hill Federation.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher, SENDCo, members of the governing body and other leaders during the inspection.

The school uses no alternative provision.

The new headteacher started the school in September 2025.

Executive headteacher: Lizzy Biggs

Lead inspector:

Matthew Seex, His Majesty's Inspector


Team inspectors:

Sarah Malam, Ofsted Inspector

Melonie Davies, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 28 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

176

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

180

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

3.41%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

1.70%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

2.27%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	3.6%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.0%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.5%	5.9%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	6.7%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	8.5%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	10.6%	16.2%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright