

# Inspection of a good school: Thomas Keble School

Eastcombe, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL6 7DY

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Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

## Outcome

Thomas Keble School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have created a nurturing environment which supports pupils to learn and achieve well. The school's 'REACH' principles set out the high expectations leaders have for all pupils. Pupils respond to these expectations and achieve well. They feel part of a supportive family where relationships are very strong between pupils and staff.

Pupils are polite and respectful. They are keen to do their best. Pupils are confident to share their concerns with staff and know that they will be taken seriously. Leaders take effective action to tackle bullying. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe in school. Leaders are trialling a new behaviour system with Year 9. Pupils involved in this trial feel this has raised expectations and is fair.

Leaders provide pupils with a rich set of experiences during their school life. For example, pupils participate in a range of residential trips and an array of clubs. Pupils build character through their involvement in leadership roles, such as school council representatives and house captains. The house system creates a competitive buzz around the school.

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

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. They have carefully considered the knowledge that is most important for pupils to learn. Leaders ensure that teachers are clear about what they should teach and when this content should be taught. This helps pupils to connect their new knowledge to what they have learned before.

Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects and present new information clearly. They prioritise teaching the important knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember. Most teachers use assessment strategies effectively to identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge before moving on to new learning. Nevertheless, sometimes, assessment is not used effectively to address pupils' misconceptions quickly enough. This means that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. The SEND team works closely with parents, external agencies and pupils to identify how to best support pupils' learning. Leaders share this information with staff, who adapt the learning to meet the needs of all pupils. A small number of pupils complete the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) qualification and are proud of their work, such as the well-kept horticulture area. Pupils with SEND are well prepared for their next steps.

Leaders ensure that pupils who have developed gaps in their reading knowledge are identified quickly. These pupils benefit from effective support. They learn to read confidently and fluently so that they can access learning across the curriculum.

Pupils' behaviour is calm and friendly. They follow the instructions of staff and disruption to learning is rare. However, sometimes, staff are slower to challenge low-level disruption. Leaders are aware of this and have started to implement a system to ensure low-level disruption is challenged quickly. It is too early to determine the impact of these new approaches, but most pupils feel this system has improved behaviour. Pupils enjoy earning achievement points which contribute towards the house competition.

Leaders have designed a rigorous and cohesive programme to support pupils' wider development. Pupils' learning is enhanced through assemblies, speakers and workshops which bring their learning to life. For example, planned performance and workshops are intended to raise awareness around the topics of sexual assault and harassment. Leaders provide comprehensive careers support for pupils from Year 7 to Year 11, which prepares pupils well for their next steps.

Parents and pupils value the enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities at the school. For example, pupils still enthuse about the school show, 'Billy Elliot'. Pupils are also proud of the range of sports clubs available to boys and girls. These opportunities develop pupils' confidence and support their understanding of the curriculum.

Leaders and governors have positive relationships with staff, parents and carers. Staff feel supported and valued. They say that leaders care about their workload and work with staff to support their well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders maintain accurate records of pre-employment checks. Safer recruitment policies are followed effectively.

Staff are knowledgeable about and alert to the signs that may indicate a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff use the new system confidently to report and record concerns. Leaders take swift action in response.

Leaders have strong relationships with external agencies and they are proactive in seeking advice and training. Leaders are tenacious in their efforts to secure help for their most vulnerable pupils.

Pupils feel happy and safe at school. They know who to speak to if they have concerns. They learn about the risks they may face and how to stay safe online.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders' high expectations for behaviour are not consistently applied across the school. This means that, sometimes, staff are slow to challenge low-level disruption. Leaders must ensure that all staff are supported to deal with behaviour and insist on high expectations of behaviour for all pupils.
- Sometimes, teaching does not routinely check pupils' understanding or address misconceptions before moving on to new learning. As a result, some pupils do not have a secure understanding of what has been taught. Leaders need to ensure that they support teachers to use assessment strategies successfully to identify and close gaps in pupils' learning more rapidly.

## **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 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137059
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10288177
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	685
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Alex Norman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steven Peter Shaw
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thomaskeble.gloucs.sch.uk">www.thomaskeble.gloucs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of a single-academy trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science and languages. For each deep dive, inspectors 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.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff survey and responses to the survey for pupils.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and examined the school's safeguarding records. Inspectors also spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator and curriculum leaders.
- The lead inspector met with a group of trustees, including the chair of trustees, and reviewed documentation relating to governance.
- Inspectors observed and spoke with pupils in lessons, in small discussion groups and during social times to evaluate the standard of behaviour.

### **Inspection team**

Frances Bywater, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Simon Tong

Ofsted Inspector

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