

# Thorndon Church of England Primary School

**Address:** The Street, Thorndon, Eye, Suffolk, IP23 7JR

**Unique reference number (URN):** 149423

## Inspection report: 20 January 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ● ● ● ● ●
Expected standard	●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

### ✔ **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.

## Strong standard ●

### Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Pupils' attendance is high. Leaders act quickly if any pupil's attendance begins to drop, working closely with families to remove barriers to regular attendance.

Pupils are extremely polite and considerate. They look out for one another and readily apologise when mistakes occur. From the early years onwards, pupils learn to share and take turns, and this positive behaviour is seen consistently in every class.

Pupils are highly motivated to learn. They show real curiosity and enthusiasm, speaking with genuine interest about what they have learned. For example, they confidently describe the water cycle and talk about life in different countries. Staff apply the school's behaviour policy consistently, creating a calm and respectful environment. Bullying and discrimination are not accepted. Leaders take effective action whenever any concerns arise to ensure pupils feel safe, valued and included.

Pupils who need support with their behaviour receive carefully planned help over time. They learn to recognise their own triggers and feelings and know when to use the sensory room to help themselves calm down. This enables them to manage their emotions increasingly independently. As a result, all pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

### Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Since the school reopened as an academy, leaders have overseen steady improvement in the quality of the curriculum. It is well designed for the school's context, including the fact that all classes are mixed age. The curriculum goes beyond the national curriculum. For example, all pupils take part in outdoor learning throughout the year. This becomes increasingly challenging for older pupils and helps them develop independence and confidence in using tools.

Teachers make highly effective decisions about what they teach and how to teach it. They make well-chosen 'in the moment' decisions about whether to revisit a learning point or move on when pupils are ready. They focus on individuals when their ongoing checks show that pupils need extra support or encouragement to move forward with their learning. Staff have a well-developed understanding of the subjects they teach and receive ongoing training to develop this further. Pupils develop secure early skills in reading, writing and mathematics because teachers introduce new ideas gradually and revisit them often. This, together with the school's focus on expanding pupils' spoken and written vocabulary, helps pupils explain their thinking clearly.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities access the same curriculum as their peers because teachers make careful adaptations. When pupils face barriers to learning or have gaps in their knowledge, staff address these promptly.

## Early years

Strong standard 

The early years provision is ambitious for children. The curriculum runs alongside that of key stage 1. Staff skilfully adapt lessons and activities so that pupils of all ages have their individual needs met. They ensure that everyone is appropriately challenged or supported, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff are highly adept at focusing children on the key learning at any moment. For example, they use children's interest in the home corner to make cakes for the 'Gruffalo', label them with numbers and then repeatedly make one more. Staff weave the language linked to this learning into every aspect of play, whether children are on bikes, building or threading beads.

Children experience high-quality interactions with adults. Staff build children's vocabulary deliberately, introducing new words and revisiting them throughout the week so that children learn to use language accurately and confidently. For example, when teaching the word 'smooth', staff model and reinforce it in different situations so that children understand the word fully and use it in their talk. Through these rich language experiences, alongside a clear focus on early reading, children develop the communication and early literacy skills they need to move confidently into key stage 1.

Staff know the children extremely well. They work closely with families and provide a carefully staged induction programme that helps children settle confidently when they start school.

## Inclusion

Strong standard 

This is a highly inclusive school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is well above average. The way staff adapt learning benefits all pupils, including those who are most able. Staff identify pupils' needs quickly when they join the school. They make helpful adaptations in lessons and provide effective, additional teaching beyond the school day so that pupils have the best opportunity to catch up and keep up in reading, writing and mathematics.

Staff check pupils' progress both across the school and individually. This ensures that expectations remain high for everyone and that support meets each pupil's needs. Staff receive comprehensive training in strategies to support pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged. Leaders continue to review provision and plan further improvements.

Leaders work closely with families. Families praise the support that helps their children succeed. Leaders use the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils very well. They focus on ensuring all pupils can access the wide range of enrichment opportunities and provide effective, extra support where needed so that pupils keep up.

## Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

The trust and governing body have worked closely together to improve the school over the last few years. When the school first became an academy, the trust acted quickly to secure stable leadership and manage issues such as declining pupil numbers and financial

pressures. This meant governors could shift from an operational role to a strategic one as the school became more settled.

Governors are now highly reflective about how their role has evolved. They now focus much more on the quality of the curriculum, teaching and pupils' achievement. With effective support from the trust, they have developed their monitoring work, including well-structured visits that enable governors to ask informed questions and support leaders to make decisions in the best interests of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders at all levels regularly check how well the curriculum is being delivered, and this informs future planning. For example, when they identified that some pupils were not recalling vocabulary as well as expected, staff received targeted training, and a greater focus on vocabulary was introduced across the school.

Leaders analyse information carefully at individual and wider-group level to be assured that pupils are making appropriate progress.

There is a comprehensive professional development programme at both school and trust level, drawing on research-informed practice. Trustees are well informed about how well the school is doing. Staff feel well supported by the trust, while still retaining the school's own identity. Staff workload is kept appropriate and their wellbeing is considered.

## **Personal development and wellbeing**

**Strong standard** ●

Leaders have ensured that there is a well-developed and effectively delivered programme of personal, social and health education, including relationships and health education. Pupils remember what they have learned with confidence. They are encouraged to reflect on their own beliefs and to develop tolerance and understanding of differences between themselves and others. All pupils benefit from this programme, including those who are disadvantaged. Leaders carefully track the experiences of pupils who receive additional funding to ensure no one misses out. Specialist staff provide additional pastoral support where needed.

The impact of this thoughtfully designed programme is clear in pupils' behaviour around the school. They are resilient and able to look after themselves. As pupils move through the school, they take on greater responsibility for their own workspaces and do so diligently. Pupils cooperate well, sharing tools and resources and taking on tasks that help them build confidence safely. They take part in learning activities that involve moving around the classroom, discussing ideas and working with others.

Pupils have a secure understanding of fundamental British values. They can explain what these values are and how they demonstrate them in daily life. Pupils contribute to their local community in meaningful ways, including fundraising, running coffee mornings and regularly supporting local food banks.

The school actively encourages pupils to be healthy and active. Specialist physical education instructors lead breakfast and lunchtime clubs. These encourage pupils to be active and develop healthy habits. Through the school council, all pupils can help choose the after-school clubs, giving them a real voice in shaping opportunities. Older pupils often

lead their own clubs, such as dance and drama. These help them to develop their confidence and leadership skills.

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## Expected standard

### Achievement

### Expected standard

Pupils achieve well across the curriculum. In 2025, Year 6 national test results were above the national averages. The small numbers in each year group mean that results can vary a lot from one year to the next. In 2024, most pupils reached the higher standard in reading. Although the school has focused on improving writing, this has not yet resulted in more pupils reaching the higher standard.

There is a clear emphasis on early reading, mathematics and writing skills. Regular checks on pupils' understanding inform extra teaching. These sessions, known as 'Early Bird' Interventions, help fill gaps before pupils fall behind.

A substantial proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most work at the level expected for their age because of the individual support they receive. Those who follow an adapted curriculum progress well from their various starting points. Generally, pupils leave the school well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

This is a school where pupils thrive and grow in confidence, both in their learning and in their wider development. The school is much smaller than average. As a result, everyone really does know each other, which helps pupils feel safe and understood. Pupils achieve well and are well prepared for their next stage of education.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to learn more. The school brings learning to life through a wide range of trips and experiences, such as history days. Teachers are skilled in delivering the curriculum and adjust lessons when needed, whether pupils need more time or are ready to move on. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is well above average. Staff know their pupils extremely well, often teaching them for several years. They adapt learning as needed for all pupils effectively, including those with SEND or those with other barriers to learning.

Clear routines and high expectations help pupils behave very well. They become confident and independent. Staff build very positive relationships with pupils. The school gives pupils many opportunities to develop their talents and interests. Staff run daily extra-curricular clubs chosen by the school council, such as Lego and film club. All pupils learn a musical instrument from the start of the Reception Year, progressing from ocarinas to clarinets by Year 5. This gives them a real sense of achievement and enjoyment in music. The school makes sure pupils have many opportunities to take part in larger events, such as sports, with other schools in the trust or local area.

Pupils feel very safe here. They know and trust staff and can talk with them should they have any worries. Bullying and low-level disruption are very rare and are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should further strengthen the teaching of writing so that more pupils achieve the higher standard by the end of Year 6, in line with their achievement in reading.
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## About this inspection

This school is part of All Saints Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Melanie Barrow, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Russell Ayling.

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 school leaders, multi-academy trust leaders, governors, parents and pupils during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Christian (Church of England) religious character. The last section 48 inspection was in October 2022.

The school uses no alternative provision.

Daryl Jones: Executive headteacher

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### Lead inspector:

Tessa Holledge, His Majesty's Inspector

### Team inspector:

Charlotte Martin, 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 20 January 2026

## School and pupil context

### Total pupils

**52**

Well 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

**84**

Well 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)

**28.85%**

Close to 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

**9.62%**

Well above 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**

**38.46%**

Well above average

### **What does this mean?**

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

National average: 15%

### **Location deprivation**

**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).

### **All pupils' performance**

#### **Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics**

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		61%	
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	82%	62%	Above
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	38%	61%	Below
<b>2022/23</b>		60%	

### **Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading**

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		74%	
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	82%	75%	Above
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	75%	74%	Close to average
<b>2022/23</b>		73%	

### **Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing**

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		72%	
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	82%	72%	Above
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	63%	72%	Below
<b>2022/23</b>		71%	

### **Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		73%	
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	91%	74%	Above
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	63%	73%	Below
<b>2022/23</b>		73%	

## **Disadvantaged pupils' performance**

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		46%	
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	S	47%	S
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	S	46%	S
<b>2022/23</b>		44%	

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		62%	

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	S	63%	S
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	S	62%	S
<b>2022/23</b>		60%	

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		59%	
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	S	59%	S
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	S	58%	S
<b>2022/23</b>		58%	

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		60%	
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	S	61%	S
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	S	59%	S
<b>2022/23</b>		59%	

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

## Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

### Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		68%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23		66%	

### Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		80%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23		78%	

### Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		78%	
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	S	78%	S
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	S	78%	S
<b>2022/23</b>		77%	

### Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		80%	
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	S	81%	S
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	S	79%	S
<b>2022/23</b>		79%	

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

## 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 (2 term)	4.3%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.9%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	7.6%	5.9%	Above

## 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 (2 term)	10.0%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	18.4%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	20.4%	16.2%	Above

## 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.

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