

Inspection of a good school: Thomas's Academy

New King's Road, Fulham, London SW6 4LY

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 September 2023

Outcome

Thomas's Academy continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Suzanne Kelly. This school is a single academy trust overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Charlotte Vidal-Hall.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and enjoy school. This is a warm, welcoming and inclusive place. Pupils are caring and celebrate differences. Pupils and staff are proud to be part of the school. Pupils said that they felt safe. They know that staff care about them. Pupils value the wide range of support that adults offer them. Staff support pupils to come to school regularly which helps them to mostly attend well.

Pupils behave well. Leaders have high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils respond to these expectations positively. They follow their school values so that they are considerate of each other. Any concerns are resolved quickly by adults. Pupils are inspired by the broad and interesting curriculum.

Pupils participate actively in a variety of opportunities available in the classroom and beyond. They are enthusiastic about taking part in sports, dance and art clubs and learning musical instruments. Pupils spoke positively about the exciting residential experience and visiting galleries and local landmarks. Older pupils welcome the opportunity to support younger children in reading and at play. This helps them to develop a sense of responsibility.

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

Pupils follow a well-designed and rich curriculum. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. Leaders ensure that the important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to learn and remember have been identified and logically sequenced from the early years. In most subjects, this supports pupils to build their understanding over time. However, in some subjects, curricular thinking is not coherently developed and teaching is not adapted well

enough to support the learning of pupils, including those with SEND. This limits these pupils' learning of important content. Despite this, most pupils achieve well.

Children in the Nursery get off to a strong start in learning to read. Children get to know stories well and enjoy retelling them. They then start learning to read as soon as they join the Reception Year. Staff are well trained to deliver the phonics programme. They provide pupils with extra support if they are struggling to keep up. Leaders check that pupils read books that match the sounds they have learned. As a result, pupils learn to read fluently and confidently. There is a rich supply of books in each classroom and the school library. Pupils told inspectors that they love the books they read and the stories that teachers read to them. Adults help pupils who find reading more difficult, including those who speak English as an additional language. Most quickly catch up with their peers and read well.

Leaders make sure that pupils with SEND learn the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. They are fully included in all aspects of school life. Teachers adapt their lessons and activities to ensure that most pupils with SEND receive effective support to help them learn. However, this is not consistently applied across all subjects in the curriculum.

Pupils are polite and courteous and behave well in lessons. Leaders have improved the attendance of pupils, which had dipped following the COVID-19 pandemic. However, although overall attendance has improved, there are still too many pupils who are not in school regularly enough.

Pupils have many opportunities to broaden their personal development. Leaders plan many curriculum opportunities for pupils to take part in, including exciting outings and visits, such as to galleries, and residential experiences. Pupils develop a keen sense of independence and can debate and discuss many topics. They thoroughly enjoy lunch and after-school clubs on offer, including Irish dance, art, coding and sports clubs. However, the outdoor areas, including the playgrounds and Reception space, do not maximise children's learning of curriculum opportunities.

Leaders and those responsible for governance consider staff's workload and well-being. Staff feel supported and are proud to work at the school. Trustees are well informed about the school's work. They hold leaders fully accountable for their work, including their work to improve the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, curricular thinking is not coherently planned, sequenced and adapted to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. This means that some pupils do not always build on what they know and can do. The school should support

and train leaders to implement the curriculum fully and ensure teaching adapts learning to meet the needs of all pupils.

- The playgrounds and the early years outdoor learning space are underdeveloped. This restricts opportunities to maximise children's learning in Reception Year. The school should ensure that the outdoor environment is used effectively to deepen children's learning.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2018.

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	142256
Local authority	Hammersmith & Fulham
Inspection number	10290296
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dr Charlotte Vidal-Hall
Headteacher	Suzanne Kelly
Website	www.academy.thomas-s.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school does not currently use any alternative education provision for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector observed pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector met with trustees, including the chair of the trustees.
- The inspector considered a wide range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school and their improvement plans. The inspector also reviewed the information

on the school's website.

- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school, in class and in the outdoor play areas.
- 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 pupils about different aspects of school life, including behaviour and bullying.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and considered the views of parents who responded to Ofsted's parent survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector considered the views of staff from conversations and took account of the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Phil Garnham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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