

# Thorpe Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132180
<b>Local authority</b>	Bradford
<b>Inspection number</b>	381451
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Terry McDermott

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	199
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Joan Holliday
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine Lynch
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Albion Road Idle Bradford BD10 9PY
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Seventeen lessons were observed. Nine teachers were seen teaching, many of them twice. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff, members of the governing body and the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its methods for tracking pupils' progress, at a range of school documents, including its policies, minutes of governing body meetings, monitoring records, samples of pupils' work, and reports from the School Improvement Partner. Seventy two responses from parents and carers to the Ofsted questionnaire were received and considered, along with questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well the learning needs of individual children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are met.
- How effectively the school takes action to ensure that the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is as good as for other pupils.
- How accurately adults throughout the school measure the learning and progress that pupils are making.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-size primary school. The number of pupils on roll is rising. The proportion of girls in the school is lower than usually found. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is below average. The proportion of pupils who do not speak English at home is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.

A new headteacher is in post since the last inspection. All other senior staff are relatively new to the school. A much greater proportion of pupils than is usual join or leave the school during term time. Pre-school and post-school clubs operate on the premises under the responsibility of the governing body. The school holds Healthy School status and the Activemark.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. It provides outstanding care, guidance and support for all pupils, and has outstanding links with parents and carers. These are directly reflected in the extent to which pupils say they feel extremely safe, and in their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has coped well with the inevitable effects of recent staffing and leadership changes, and with the ongoing difficulties presented by pupils entering or leaving the school during term time. Adults in the school work very well together and their morale is high. Under the guidance of the headteacher, the new leadership team have quickly and enthusiastically further enhanced the already good curriculum, and improved provision. However, members of the leadership team and all other adults in the school do not always focus sharply enough on the quality of learning taking place in lessons. The distinction between satisfactory and good, or good and outstanding, sometimes lacks clarity. Nonetheless, there is convincing evidence that the very large majority of pupils are making good progress and a small but growing number make excellent progress over time. The success of developments and the effective teamwork show that the school has good capacity to secure further improvement.

Pupils enjoy the vibrant and colourful learning environment, although the attendance of a small minority could be better. Pupils' overall good behaviour is noticeable in lessons and they are keen to do well when given opportunities to work independently. Overall, children enter the Reception class with skills below those normally expected for their age, although there can be wide variations from one year to the next. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average overall. The achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, is good.

Teachers are enthusiastic, have good relationships with the pupils, and generally move lessons forward quickly. In outstanding lessons, not a minute is wasted and learning is excellent. In a small number of lessons, teachers spend too long telling pupils what they were going to be doing instead of letting them get on with it. Sometimes assessment information is not used effectively enough, and all pupils in the class receive the same instruction or task. Higher-attaining pupils understood quickly, but had to wait patiently, while lower attaining could not fully grasp what was being said. In both cases, learning slowed.

The curriculum focuses strongly on the application of basic literacy skills across a range of different subject areas. The wealth of additional artistic experiences ensures that pupils use their imagination to reflect on what they are learning. Pupils' application of numeracy skills is less well developed across themed work.

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

- Raise pupils' attainment through improving the quality and consistency of teaching by:
  - reducing the time spent on general explanation and increasing the opportunities for pupils to work independently and find things out for themselves
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their numeracy skills effectively in themed work
  - making consistently good use of assessment information to set work which accurately meets each individual pupil's learning needs
  - being objective and unequivocal when evaluating the quality of learning taking place in classrooms.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

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Pupils learn well in lessons and some examples of outstanding learning were seen. Across the school, there is no evidence of significant underachievement by any group of pupils. Lessons usually run smoothly and pupils are productive when challenged appropriately. Pupils respond quickly to guidance from the teacher. They listen carefully and politely to other views and opinions. They work sensibly when not directly supervised. This was seen to outstanding effect in a Year 4 mathematics lesson when pupils used correct mathematical terminology while developing their own strategies to secure their full understanding of place value involving multiple digit numbers. They checked their own logic through discussion and made very effective use of resources with minimal adult intervention. As a result learning was rapid and pupils' confidence soared.

The vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school because, 'teachers make the work so interesting'. Overall their attendance is average, but this is skewed by the persistent absence of a small number of pupils. Despite the very best concerted efforts of the school working directly with families, this remains a difficult issue to overcome. Pupils say there is no bullying and are indignant about suggestions that there might be any. Nonetheless, they are well aware what to do should it occur. They can explain in great detail why they are safe in school, and are certain that 'our teachers will always look after us'. They are well aware of the dangers they may face outside school and what steps to take to avoid them. They have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives and can describe the effects of exercise and diet on the body. Pupils are particularly proud of the school and the donations they make to charities, which they choose for themselves. Their involvement in activities in the immediate local area is extremely strong, and their voices are heard not only through the democratically elected school council, but also through the neighbourhood warden, and singing at Bradford cathedral. Pupils respect those who

are different from themselves. They celebrate the achievement of others spontaneously and generously. They treat those less fortunate than themselves with considerable generosity and kindness. When they leave school at the end of Year 6, pupils are well-balanced and thoughtful young citizens with average levels of attainment. They are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education and their lives.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are good and a significant proportion of teaching observed during the inspection was outstanding. Classrooms are colourful and well-resourced places, which reflect the uniqueness of each class group and their teacher. Relationships between adults and pupils are good. Teachers and other adults are well deployed to ensure that their skills make the biggest possible impact on pupils' learning. Close examination of pupils' books shows that teaching is good across the school, though there are some inconsistencies in the level and range of challenges set for pupils. Much marking is helpful and gives good advice to pupils on how to improve their work. Well-deployed teaching assistants play a very important role in supporting all groups of pupils to make consistently good progress over time.

The well-thought-out curriculum is one reason why pupils' achievement and personal development are good. It links subjects together in innovative themes, for example, a local crop circle generated almost a half term of stimulating work for the whole school, with a strong focus on building pupils' basic skills, particularly in English. It also promotes well pupils' respect for the individual and the environment. It does not yet offer as strong a range of opportunities to extend pupils' mathematical skills.

The school knows the pupils and their families very well. Strong links between school and home are established early through home visits prior to entry to the Reception class. These links are sustained and grow over time. This allows the school to identify and address swiftly and sympathetically any personal issues which might

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<sup>1</sup>The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

arise. Arrangements for supporting those pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable are excellent. This ensures that these pupils are able to access all the school has to offer and make the same good progress as their peers. This work is recognised by parents and carers through comments such as, 'The school gave me a great opportunity to work with my child', and, 'This school recognised my child's difficulties immediately'. A weekly newsletter, parent and carer learning activities in the spacious community room and very effective and proactive staff ensure that the school's links with parents and carers are excellent. One parent neatly summed this up as, 'A very good cohesive pupil, teacher and parent community'. Well-managed transition arrangements ensure that pupils transfer into school, from one class to another, and on to secondary education, with the minimum of fuss or misunderstanding. The popular and well-attended pre-school breakfast club is oversubscribed, and gives those pupils who attend a good start to the day. The after-school clubs offer a range of activities including sport, cooking and the opportunity to work quietly doing 'homework'.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The calm and clear-sighted leadership of the headteacher is at the root of the maintenance of previously good aspects of the school's work during recent significant staff changes, particularly at leadership level. Staff are well motivated, highly committed, and feel part of a promising team. There is a strong and united determination to improve the school even more. However, some aspects of self-evaluation still lack crispness and precision.

Adults promote equality for all pupils through their accurate tracking of the progress made by different groups of pupils, thus ensuring that no group or individual significantly underachieves. There is no evidence of any sort of discrimination in this inclusive and happy school. Safeguarding procedures are implemented well. They are regularly updated and rigorously applied. In consequence, the safety and safeguarding of pupils pervades the school's life. This is reflected in the views of pupils and in the positive responses from the very large majority of parents and carers. The school's links with the vast majority of the parents and carers of its pupils are excellent. The school has encouraged and supported parents' learning groups to such an extent that these are now self-sustaining. Comments such as, 'Our son's class blog is updated every week', and, 'The whole school is like a big family', are typical of many others.

Governance is satisfactory. There have been significant changes in the membership of the governing body in recent times. Current members are committed and active but some lack experience, which limits their confidence in holding the school to account. However, the governing body is scrupulous in ensuring safety and

safeguarding measures. Members give good attention to the welfare of pupils and staff.

Community cohesion is promoted well within and outside the school. The school's leaders have a thorough understanding of the needs of the community they serve. Good partnerships with local schools and community groups support pupils' learning well and make transition arrangements straightforward. These links are extended into the city environment. Wider links to help pupils understand better the world in which they live are somewhat underdeveloped, although the school's commitment to gaining international status is already beginning to address this.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage, which comprises a single Reception class, is good. Children settle into school routines easily and quickly because of the good induction arrangements. Children play and work together in a happy atmosphere where every child, regardless of background or ability, is valued equally. Children join the Reception class with a wide variety of pre-school experiences, but their skills are usually lower than those normally expected for their age. Solid foundations are being laid for children's future learning and development. Children make good progress and achieve well because teaching meets their individual learning needs well. They work and play together in a welcoming, stimulating and supportive environment, though some larger-scale outdoor equipment is limited. Teaching is enthusiastic and raises curiosity, but sometimes shortens the time children have available for learning independently. Children are obviously happy. They are enjoying their learning in the safe and nurturing environment provided. Parents and carers are regularly informed of their children's progress. At the end of the school year, parents and carers appreciate being presented with a CD chronicling their child's learning journey.

Good leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage provide a clear vision for future success and a strong sense of purpose for its work. Staff check children's progress regularly and use the information effectively to plan follow-on activities according to individual children's learning needs. However, the balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities could be better. When necessary,

effective use is made of outside agencies to provide support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Welfare requirements are fully met.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**Views of parents and carers**

Approximately one third of parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. The very large majority expressed positive views about the school. A small minority had concerns about how well the school keeps their children safe. Inspectors followed this up rigorously, examining the school’s systems and procedures, the training of staff, perimeter security and the arrangements for the entry and exit of younger pupils from the building. They also spoke with children in both formal and informal settings. The many pupils of different ages inspectors spoke with could explain with certainty why they feel safe in school. Other issues raised by parents and carers were also explored. Inspectors’ conclusions are expressed in the report.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Thorpe Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 72 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 199 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	63	24	33	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	74	14	19	4	6	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	40	56	25	35	7	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	47	32	44	4	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	45	63	20	28	6	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	58	21	29	8	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	51	31	43	3	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	36	50	28	39	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	54	27	38	4	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	47	25	35	6	8	4	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	42	31	43	5	7	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	40	56	23	32	4	6	4	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	61	24	33	3	4	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school**



29 September 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Thorpe Primary School, Bradford, BD10 9PY**

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful to us when we inspected your school recently. We were really impressed with the certainty you displayed about how safe you felt in school. You told us that this is because of the excellent care, guidance and support the adults in school give each one of you. We agree.

We found that Thorpe is a good school which helps you to make good progress, but we also found that the school could do some things even better to help you reach higher standards. So we have asked the adults in the school to do the following:

- make sure that work is set in lessons which is neither too easy nor too hard, and helps you to learn at a consistently good pace
- help you to be involved in finding things out for yourselves as quickly as possible, in all lessons, rather than sitting listening to instructions as you sometimes do
- make sure that you have as many chances to develop your numeracy skills as you do your literacy skills
- check more closely that each of you is learning as much as you possibly can in all lessons.

It would also help some of you to learn more if you could attend school more often than you do now.

Please continue to be the happy and thoughtful young people you already are. Good luck to you all for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry McDermott  
Lead inspector

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