

Thorpe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107832
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	377653
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Andrew Clark

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	M Daniels
Headteacher	E Kus
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 16 lessons and parts of lessons led by eight teachers. They held meetings with representatives of the governing body, the staff, parents and carers, and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation and essential policies including those for safeguarding, the school improvement plan, information about pupils' progress and attainment data. They analysed 42 completed questionnaires from parents and carers, as well as questionnaires completed by staff and Key Stage 2 pupils.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress that the pupils make in their English work.
- The extent to which pupils use their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects.
- How effectively all school leaders contribute to monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning.

Information about the school

Thorpe is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils on roll has increased by over a quarter since the last inspection and several teachers are also new to the school. There is a before- and after-school club which is managed by the governing body. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status.

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. The enthusiasm and clarity of vision of the headteacher, with good support from all staff, ensures that pupils of all abilities are eager to learn and achieve well. The good care, guidance and support pupils receive, particularly the effective systems to identify and support potentially vulnerable pupils, contribute significantly to pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. Thorough and systematic self-evaluation procedures draw on the views of staff, pupils, parents and carers. However, some staff are new to leadership roles and first-hand monitoring by subject leaders is not fully embedded. The school has developed well since it was previously inspected and has a good capacity for further improvement.

The school is successful in helping pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make good progress and reach challenging targets. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Attainment is average in English and mathematics by time they leave school at the end of Year 6. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe from harm. They are extremely friendly and considerate towards each other and have a strong understanding of right and wrong. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to live a healthy lifestyle. They make a good contribution to the life of the school and wider community through many opportunities to take on responsibilities in roles such as school councillors, playground 'buddies' and play leaders.

The quality of teaching is good overall. It is sometimes outstanding. Relationships are excellent and teachers make learning challenging through the stimulating use of ICT, drama and games. The school makes good use of skilled teaching assistants to provide specialist support but, very occasionally, teachers do not make the fullest use of all adults in the classroom to promote the best learning. Teachers make good use of marking to help pupils improve their own work. All groups of pupils are engaged by a curriculum which meets their different needs well through interesting themes and topics. However, opportunities for pupils to use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, and so deepen their learning, are less well established.

Teachers know individual pupils well and track their progress carefully. Robust record-keeping contributes to the effective procedures for caring for pupils and effective systems for keeping them safe. The comment, 'I have found the school to

be very supportive and my child really enjoys going there', fairly reflects parents' and carers' positive views.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching in order to hasten pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring all adults in the classroom are well deployed to maximise pupils' learning
 - providing sharply focused opportunities for middle leaders to monitor teaching and learning and to share the best practice in their subjects.
- Raise attainment by making full use of opportunities across different subjects for pupils to select and apply their literacy and numeracy skills and deepen their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy school and take pride in their work. They are often very persistent in taking steps to improve it. For example, Year 2 pupils can explain to their friends how they can make improvements to their writing on the *Billy Goats Gruff* and what the good features are. Writing is interesting and pupils of all abilities write with imagination for a wide range of purposes. They read fluently and accurately with increasingly good levels of comprehension. They enjoy working independently or with others and make good use of different sources of reference such as 'learning walls' and computers. They largely spell accurately and use punctuation well particularly in response to well-planned teaching of the links between letters and sounds. Pupils show care and accuracy in their mathematical skills, such as reading temperature gauges or measuring equipment. However, the pupils' deeper thinking and learning skills in literacy and numeracy are not consistently developed because they do not have enough opportunities to make decisions about which of these skills to apply in their work in other subjects. Overall, pupils' learning skills contribute well to their good progress and future well-being.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally well below the levels expected nationally for their age. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics through Key Stages 1 and 2. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and pupils at risk of underachieving, make good progress because of well-planned interventions and strong care, guidance and support. Good analysis of data concerning pupils' progress, and a subsequent rigorous focus on improving pupils' deduction and comprehension skills, have redressed a recent dip in standards of their written work, as reflected in trends in the results of national tests and a range of assessments. Boys and girls achieve well because they are fully engaged by the rich curriculum overall.

Pupils show kindness and consideration towards each other and are very attentive to adults and other pupils. Through the 'buddy' system they make a positive

contribution to supporting other pupils who may feel vulnerable or concerned. They take their roles on the school council seriously and are involved in organising fund-raising events to support their links with children in Africa. Pupils are competitive and successful in a good range of physical activities. They understand the principles of a balanced diet and eat healthily at school, particularly enjoying the wide range of fruit and vegetable snacks in the school tuck shop.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Expectations are high for all abilities and pupils strive hard to meet them. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it well. This is often evident in the displays of good-quality, imaginative written and other work that enrich classrooms. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to outstanding and is largely good. Teachers make good use of precise targets for pupils to achieve during each lesson. They make particularly good use of ICT, such as the interactive whiteboards, to both inform and stimulate the pupils. Although teachers generally deploy teaching assistants and other adults well, there are a few occasions when the classroom organisation is not flexible enough to have the maximum impact on the learning of pupils of all abilities. The quality of marking and feedback is good overall and sometimes excellent.

Overall, the curriculum is good. A range of interesting topics, including whole-school focus weeks, make learning practical and meaningful to all groups of pupils. For example, pupils interviewed elderly members of the local community for their history work. They make good use of ICT skills throughout their learning and across subjects. Key Stage 1 pupils planned and enacted folk stories with their toys and videoed the results. Increasing links are made between subjects giving pupils some opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in different contexts. For example, they write letters to the headteacher in their work on evacuees and the headteacher writes individual replies. This gives pupils a purpose for writing. However, pupils are not often given the opportunity to make their own decisions about which writing or numeracy skills to apply to work across a range of subjects in

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

order to deepen their learning skills further. There is good provision for promoting pupils’ understanding of environmental and sustainable issues. A good range of extra-curricular activities, and the school’s own before- and after-school club, enrich pupils’ personal and physical development. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well planned, as are opportunities for those with a gift or a talent. Skilled teaching assistants usually help to boost pupils’ basic skills through well-planned interventions. Pupils have good opportunities to learn another language and participate in musical and dramatic activities. Good links with local churches and other institutions contribute to many aspects of pupils’ spiritual and moral development.

The school has strong systems to support pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, underpinned by very thorough tracking and analysis of pupils’ achievement, good quality record-keeping and good use of external professional support when appropriate. A particular strength is the school’s rigorous system to identify with precision the needs of individual pupils and whether additional support is needed or whether their needs can be met through classroom provision. The procedures for ensuring pupils’ smooth transition through and beyond school are also well planned.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leaders have established systematic and thorough procedures to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the school’s work and they plan well for improvement. Staff morale is high. The thoroughness and enthusiasm of all staff to share best practice are embedded in most aspects of the school’s work. Overall, the monitoring of performance and well-planned professional development have led to improvements, with only a few relatively weaker aspects of provision left to be resolved. However, procedures are not fully embedded for middle leaders to monitor the effectiveness of classroom practice in their subject areas and assess the progress of new initiatives. All staff are ambitious for the school and eager to extend their qualifications. The school is supported by an efficient and effective governing body, working in close partnership with school leaders.

The commitment of parents and carers to the life of the school is good. They have every confidence in the management of the school and, as a result, give time, energy and resources to its development. They make a good contribution to pupils’ learning through their involvement in school activities and the use of homework. They are well informed through the headteacher’s newsletters and other information on the school’s website. A significant strength of the school is the good partnerships with other organisations such as the local children’s centre and Autistic Outreach support. The organisations use the school as a model of good practice because of

the thoroughness with which the school, led by the headteacher, embraces their involvement.

The school has a good understanding of its immediate context and has, since the previous inspection, developed links with contrasting communities in Britain and abroad. Its commitment to sustainability also contributes to good promotion of community cohesion. The school promotes equality of opportunity well. Although progress very occasionally varies in lessons, there is no overall difference in the progress of different groups of pupils. Pupils and staff take all necessary steps to avoid any discrimination. The rigorous systems to vet staff's suitability to work with children, to assess risk and ensure health and safety are frequently reviewed. The school provides effective financial management and ensures that it gives good value for money.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The knowledge and enthusiasm of the new Early Years Foundation Stage leader, combined with very strong teamwork, ensure that children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their individual starting points. There has been a good trend of improvement since the previous inspection. Children often start school with especially limited communication and writing skills and, overall, they are often well below those typically expected. Extremely effective induction systems support children, along with their parents and carers, to ensure a smooth start. The close partnership with the local children's centre, through the hosting of the 'Ready for Thorpe' parenting programme, is ensuring children and their families are increasingly ready to learn.

The systems to monitor progress and to plan accurately for the children's future are good and shared by all adults. Children feel safe and are supported by effective welfare arrangements. The quality of teaching and use of assessment are good. A good balance between adult-led activities and those that children choose for themselves contributes well to all areas of learning. Activities are often exciting and meaningful indoors and throughout the extensive outdoor areas. Early letter recognition and mark-making skills are taught well and children make good progress in developing these skills. Very occasionally, the questions asked by some adults are

not open-ended and purposeful enough to secure the very best learning. Children really enjoy participation in large construction activities building large walls with thoughtful patterns. There are colourful displays of children’s work throughout the classrooms, although a few opportunities are missed to reinforce children’s reading skills through the use of labels for instruction and interaction. Children and staff make good use of a range of ICT resources to develop basic skills and learn more about the world around them. As a result of these experiences, children thoroughly enjoy themselves and are well prepared for their next stage of education.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

About a quarter of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire, which is fewer than usual for similar schools. Other parents and carers offered their views in letters and discussions. All those contributing were supportive of the school. They particularly commented on their children’s enjoyment of learning and that they are kept safe. They feel that staff are helpful and approachable and that the school is well led. A small number of parents and carers feel that behaviour is not always managed effectively. The views of all parents and carers were considered in arriving at the judgements in the inspection 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 181 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	69	13	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	64	14	33	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	50	17	40	4	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	64	12	29	3	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	62	13	31	3	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	50	18	43	3	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	55	17	40	2	5	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)	22	52	14	33	4	10	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	57	14	33	3	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	50	15	36	6	14	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	50	14	33	5	12	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	57	14	33	2	5	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	64	13	31	2	5	0	0

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).

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



30 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thorpe Primary School, Wakefield, WF3 3DG

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you and hearing your views, and seeing you in your lessons and at playtimes. You go to a good school. These are some of the things we liked most.

- The headteacher, staff and the governing body work well together to make your school the best it can be.
- You make good progress through the school, thanks to good teaching.
- The school takes good care of you and you behave well and say you feel safe.
- You make a good contribution to the school through your roles on the school council, as playground buddies and through the many other jobs you do.
- You enjoy your lessons and teachers give you practical and fun things to learn about.

To help your school become even better, I have asked your headteacher and the governing body to improve two things.

- Help you to make even more progress, by making sure that all the adults in your classroom are used in the best ways possible to help you learn quickly. We have also asked the teachers who lead different subjects to look carefully at how well you are doing.
- Ensure that your work in different subjects provides opportunities for you to use your literacy and numeracy skills.

You can all help by always trying your best, thinking hard and continuing to enjoy and attend school.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Clark
Lead inspector

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