

# Thwaites School

Hallthwaites, Millom, Cumbria, LA18 5HP

**Inspection dates** 10–11 March 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher leads the school well. She is ably supported by all the staff and governors and together they have created a hard-working and caring school.
- Governors and the headteacher make sure that teaching and achievement are good and that additional support is provided for pupils when needed so that they all achieve well. Together they are focused on improving teaching across the school.
- Pupils benefit from participation in a wide range of sporting activities that promote their physical well-being and their enjoyment of school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and greatly supports the friendly, purposeful ethos of the school.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and the way their children are cared for. Pupils feel safe and secure in school.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy school and they are polite and respectful.
- Pupils are keen to play an active role in school life and take on responsibilities.
- Teaching is good. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to many aspects of pupils' learning.
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils, resulting in a positive atmosphere during lessons. Pupils are keen to learn, participate well and respond to challenges.
- Good progress starts in the early years and continues through school for all groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs.
- Children settle quickly into the early years. The wide variety of interesting activities in the classroom stimulates their curiosity. They cooperate well, share equipment and make decisions together.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In lessons, pupils are not always given sufficiently challenging work as soon as they are ready to move on further.
- Pupils do not get enough opportunities to practise their mathematical problem-solving skills in different subjects.
- Early years children do not get the same opportunities to use a wide range of resources or enjoy different activities outside as they do in the classroom.
- Not all pupils attend school regularly.
- The further development of teachers' skills is hindered with, for example, few opportunities for teachers to see highly effective practice.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited lessons and observed four teachers.
- She held discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils, parents and governors.
- The inspector observed break time and talked regularly with pupils as they moved around school.
- The inspector scrutinised pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- A wide range of the school's documentation was studied including details of systems for tracking pupils' progress, safeguarding arrangements, the school development plan and pupils' work in their books.
- The inspector took account of responses to the school's most recent questionnaire for parents alongside 18 responses from the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector analysed seven questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Sue Sharkey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Thwaites Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well below the national average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority).
- The school has an above-average proportion of pupils who enter the school part way through their primary education.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school offers a daily Nursery class each morning, and provides full-time education for Reception-aged children.
- Pupils are taught in four classes in the morning. Nursery and Reception are taught with some of the Year 1 pupils. The other three classes are composed of the remaining Year 1 pupils and Year 2 pupils, the Year 3 and Year 4 pupils taught together, and the Year 5 and Year 6 also taught together. In the afternoons there are three classes as Reception children join all Year 1 and Year 2 pupils.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding in order to raise pupils' achievement and further accelerate progress particularly by:
  - ensuring that when teachers check pupils' progress in English or mathematics during lessons pupils are moved onto more challenging tasks if appropriate
  - extending further the pupils' practical experiences of mathematical problem solving across different subjects
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - developing the early years outdoor area in order to improve resources and children's learning experiences when they are using this area
  - continuing to work closely with parents to ensure that they fully understand the importance of pupils attending school regularly
  - ensuring that teachers have more opportunities to improve their own skills, for example through witnessing the most effective practice

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a commitment to supporting every child to achieve well in relation to his or her starting point. She is ably supported by governors and other staff, and together they have created a strong staff team which is committed to improving their practice and raising pupils' achievement.
- The headteacher and a teacher work closely together, sharing the responsibility of leading English and mathematics. They check pupils' books, talk with pupils and observe lessons in order to make sure that all groups of pupils make good progress and have equal opportunities. Collaboration with a neighbouring school helps to ensure that Thwaites is keeping up to date with changes in English and mathematics.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive support and guidance, so that like other pupils they make good progress.
- The special needs co-ordinator ensures that once pupils' needs have been identified, support and guidance is quickly put in place. The progress of these pupils is regularly checked. Support is sought from the local authority or other agencies to ensure that all pupils who need help through health plans, help with speech and language or help in other areas, have their needs met rapidly.
- The performance of teachers is checked by the headteacher. Staff have targets which are linked to training and teachers' pay. However, teachers are hindered in further developing their own practice by, for example, not having opportunities to see how different teaching strategies may lead to outstanding learning.
- Staff morale is high and all those who expressed their views are very positive about the school.
- The local authority has a good relationship with the school. It provides a light touch support through training and occasional monitoring and this has helped the school to maintain its good performance.
- The primary school sports funding has been used effectively to increase the range of activities. For example, an after-school club for gymnastics has been introduced for girls and boys and pupils have taken part in local competitions where they have been successful in winning individual and team awards.
- An exciting range of visits and other activities enhance pupils' experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of the world. Year 6 pupils join with a local school to visit Manchester annually where they meet and talk to people of different cultures, helping to prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to extend and develop their skills in music, art and sports, not only during school times but also after school. Music plays an important role, particularly for pupils in Key Stage 2 who thoroughly enjoy learning to play brass instruments. As a result they play as a band in the local church and at village festivals. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and makes a significant contribution to their good behaviour and their positive attitudes to school and to each other. Relationships are good and leaders ensure that discrimination is not tolerated.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is effective. Regular visits to the school help governors understand how the school is progressing. Governors also assist with sporting activities; for example, the Chair of Governors is a swimming coach and another governor leads and coaches gymnastics. The governing body ensures that the school's resources, including the spending of pupil premium funding and the primary school sports funding, are managed effectively to support pupils' learning. Information about the progress of pupils in different groups is checked but governors are less familiar with how their pupils perform against pupils nationally. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching and make sure effectiveness in the classroom is linked to teachers' pay awards. They ensure that any underperformance in teaching is tackled. Governors ensure that safeguarding meets requirements.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils say they enjoy school because work can be fun, they value time with their friends and they enjoy learning.
- The school has a caring ethos. Pupils are very polite and courteous, showing consideration for the needs of others as well as adults. Pupils' books show that they have a pride in their work, which is neat and well presented.
- The school knows its pupils well and seeks outside expertise if necessary for guidance and ways to support pupils with behavioural and emotional needs. This enables all pupils to be included fully in lessons so that their learning and that of others is not disturbed.

## Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that adults in school watch over them very carefully; doors are secured where appropriate and there are clear rules for both indoors and outside.
- Pupils say they are not aware of any bullying in school. They learn about different kinds of bullying and what to do if it were to happen. They are pleased that if they do have any problems they can put their concerns on paper and post it into the 'worry box', because they know that it will be read and dealt with quickly.
- Over time, pupils' attendance has been above average but, as a result of pupils being absent on holiday during term time, attendance is now average. The school works closely with many parents but the importance of pupils attending school throughout each term is not successfully communicated to some of them.

## The quality of teaching is good

- The impact of teaching on pupils' learning is good because teachers share their good subject knowledge effectively with pupils and use a wide range of teaching techniques that capture pupils' interest.
- Teachers' strong relationships with their pupils as well as positive expectations for their behaviour and progress ensure that pupils work well. Very effective procedures have been developed for managing pupils with behavioural needs so they get the most out of all the school has to offer.
- Throughout lessons teachers check regularly whether pupils understand their work. They also check how well pupils are doing and the progress they are making in their work. However, sometimes there are missed opportunities to challenge pupils even further and this slows down their learning.
- Marking of pupils' work has improved since the last inspection. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide constructive feedback so that pupils know how to improve their work and have opportunities to respond. For example, in a lesson during the inspection, pupils in Years 3 and 4 happily checked their work and the comments of teachers before they started their new learning.
- Teaching assistants guide and question pupils effectively, especially disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They help these pupils to make good progress as well as develop their self-confidence.
- Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Although pupils practise their mathematical skills regularly, they do not get enough opportunities to use these skills in different subjects through real-life problem solving activities.
- Pupils collaborate well together, often in pairs or in small groups. They respect each other's opinions, sharing views or listening carefully to what others have to say. During the inspection, in a Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson, pupils worked quickly as they enjoyed a number challenge; pupils worked in pairs with large numbers, matching the numerical version of the number to the same number written in words. Pupils shared thoughts and valued their partner's opinion as to whether the match was accurate.
- All parents who responded to Parent View say their children are taught well and are happy with the homework their children receive.

## The achievement of pupils is good

- The good start children have in the early years gives them a strong base for future learning. As they continue through school all groups of pupils achieve well. Pupils are motivated and push themselves to do well. When work is challenging, they rise to it. Most parents who responded to Parent View agree.
- Over the last two years a high proportion of pupils have joined the school late in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. These pupils are welcomed warmly. They settle very quickly into school because other staff and pupils support them well. Taking into account their individual starting points when joining the school, pupils make at least the progress expected of them, especially in reading and writing. Overall all groups of pupils, including those that have special needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress.
- Phonics (matching letters and sounds) is taught well, so pupils develop a good understanding from an early age and enjoy reading. In the 2014 Year 1 phonics test the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard was below average, but current pupils are already working at levels near to the average with over a term left to achieve more than this.
- In a phonics lesson during the inspection Year 1 pupils enjoyed reinforcing letter sounds. They listened carefully, responding well to the teacher as they linked sounds and letters to whole words. This led well

into using the sounds and words in songs, which pupils enjoyed singing.

- Effective additional reading support starts in Year 1 for any pupil who needs it, and pupils read and speak with increasing confidence as they move up through the school. Pupils are able to choose fiction and non-fiction books from the well-stocked school library as well as books in the classrooms.
- As numbers in each year group are very small the statistics showing overall standards at the end of Year 6 can vary considerably from year to year. In the 2014 national tests, overall results were not as high as the national average although reading was above average and almost all pupils made the progress expected of them. Work in pupils' books and the standard of pupils' reading during the inspection, as well as the school's own data, indicate that pupils are now working close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Throughout the school there are good examples of pupils' writing but their mathematical work is less evident.
- Across the school the most able pupils make good progress from their starting points. In the 2014 Year 6 tests, a well-above-average proportion of pupils achieved the higher level 5 in reading. As teaching is good and the curriculum is exciting, pupils' work, as well as school information on pupils' progress, shows that a higher proportion of pupils are now working closer to level 5 in reading and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils benefit from well-judged support, usually in the classroom, to boost their reading, writing and mathematical skills and also to develop their personal and social skills. As with other pupils they make good progress, but there are too few pupils to make comparisons with other pupils in school or pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress as they move through the school. This is because they receive support that is well matched to their needs and abilities and teaching assistants give good quality guidance to individuals and groups.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children make good progress in the early years because adults provide them with a wide range of activities. When they enter the early years children's skills and knowledge can vary from year to year, so that some years they are weak but in others they are generally in line with what is typical for their age.
- Children get on very well together enjoying each other's company. They like learning with friends and from each other and so they soon learn the importance of sharing and taking turns. Children start to develop good attitudes to learning and are happy to speak and talk about their ideas to others.
- There is a balance between activities children choose for themselves and those led by adults, such as when they help children to learn letters and sounds. Children use these new skills well as they begin to read. Some are at the very early stages of using phonics to sound out letters whilst others are on their way to becoming confident readers. Children thoroughly enjoyed choosing books for the teacher to read aloud. They welcome this time together as they engross themselves in looking at pictures and listening to rhyming words, as well as other information and respond well.
- Children develop into confident individuals, trying out new activities and behaving well. Children's learning is supported well by an exciting range of activities. However, many of these activities are confined to the inside classroom because the outdoor area is not sufficiently developed.
- Good leadership and management ensure that children work and play in a safe, attractive and purposeful classroom environment where each child is valued as an individual and feels safe.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112166
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	456169

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	70
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Suzanne Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Patton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 July 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01229 772554
<b>Fax number</b>	Not applicable
<b>Email address</b>	admin@thwaites.cumbria.sch.uk



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