

Thorpe Primary School

Albion Road, Idle, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD10 9PY

Inspection dates 9–10 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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, with the support of senior staff, leads and manages the school well. As a result, any areas of weakness are dealt with promptly and there is a clear focus on further improvement.
- Pupils achieve well from their starting points. They make good progress, especially in reading and mathematics.
- High quality early years provision ensures that children get off to a good start and achieve well.
- Teaching is of a good quality. The work pupils are asked to do is not only challenging but also really enthuses pupils so that they enjoy their learning.
- Pupils are friendly and polite. Their behaviour is good and they have a good understanding of safety issues.
- Good provision is in place for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Governors have benefited from further training. They not only support the school but also provide a good level of challenge.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most-able pupils are not always given challenging opportunities to develop their writing skills.
- Spelling skills are not consistently taught well.
- Teachers do not always make sure that pupils take notice of the comments they make when work is marked.
- While middle leadership is improving, not enough is done to ensure that leaders play an even greater part in making sure that pupils achieve well in the subjects for which they are responsible.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in all year groups, including carrying out joint observations with the headteacher. The inspectors also observed group work and listened to pupils reading. They observed pupils as they arrived for school in the morning and at break and lunchtimes.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and staff, members of the governing body and with a representative from the local authority.
- A wide range of documentation was considered, including systems for tracking pupils' progress, safeguarding arrangements, policies, a record of the leaders' and managers' lesson observations. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work in their books.
- Pupils' views of the school were gathered through informal discussions with individual pupils in lessons and at break and lunchtimes. Discussions were also held with representative groups of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 and with parents.
- Inspectors considered 27 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Geoffrey Yates, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Clare Daniel

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported through the pupil premium, is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The Reception classes provide full-time early years education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding, so that pupils make rapid progress, by:
 - building on the strengths in teaching that exist already
 - providing more opportunities for most-able pupils to use and develop their writing skills
 - ensuring spelling skills are taught well
 - ensuring that pupils take notice of written comments made by teachers when marking pupils' work.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the role of middle leaders is developed in order for them to play an even greater part in ensuring that pupils make good or better progress in their areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- An experienced and established headteacher conveys ambition and high expectations for the school to all members of staff. The responses from the staff questionnaires clearly show that staff value her leadership.
- The headteacher and senior staff have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas in need of improvement. Decisive action is taken to bring about improvements. This includes successfully taking steps this year to eliminate the difference in achievement between boys and girls, and making a good start to improving pupils' spelling skills.
- Teaching is managed well. Regular checks on the quality of teaching are effective in making it clear to staff what their strengths are and how they can improve further. Effective procedures closely link pupils' performance with teachers' salary increases. However, there is the potential to build on the strengths in teaching that exist already.
- Middle leaders are increasingly responsible for their subjects. Not all leaders have a good enough understanding of how to ensure that pupils make good or better progress in their areas of responsibility.
- Good relations are promoted well throughout the school. Leaders are successful in ensuring that discrimination of any sort is not tolerated and demonstrate a firm commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Good links have been established with local schools who work together well in a cluster to support each other.
- The school has very good links with its parents including parenting classes that are well attended. The school's learning mentor plays a valuable role in the family support provided. Parents' positive comments about the school include, 'We live outside the area but like this school because staff really know our children.'
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used well. As a result, these pupils are making good progress and gaps between their achievement and that of pupils nationally are narrowing.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strong feature of the school. Values such as fairness, honesty and mutual respect are promoted well.
- Pupils benefit from a curriculum that includes good art and sporting provision and opportunities to learn musical instruments. Well-planned topics are chosen carefully to interest them. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 3 developed their understanding well in using adjectives to improve their writing linked to a topic about the rainforest.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Pupils appreciate that voting is a good way of making sure that all pupils, if they want to, can put their names forward to become Eco council members or school council representatives. Pupils understand that they have been elected by their classmates, not just chosen by teachers.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. They are effective in ensuring that pupils are safe and looked after well both inside and outside in the playground.
- The local authority sees the school as a good school but nevertheless is now beginning to provide more support to all schools, including this one. It is too early to judge the full impact of this new level of support.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is outstanding. Key components are the exceptionally clear systems in place, the clear focus on the needs of the individual and a tenacious belief in never giving up on a child.
- Additional primary sports funding is used well to enable pupils to take part in out of school sport in increasing numbers. Money is used to secure the expertise of a sports coach, improve teachers' skills in teaching physical education and to extend the range of out of school sporting activities.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effective in both supporting and challenging the school. Governors have self-directed an audit of how effective they are and used the findings to develop their own action plan on how to improve their skills even further. An external consultant was brought in to explain pupil performance data to governors and its implications for school improvement. As a result, by being proactive governors know the school exceptionally well and are much involved in all aspects of school life.
 - Governors ensure that the systems to check on the performance of both the headteacher and teachers are effective. Regular information is provided about the quality of teaching and governors seek assurance that any salary increases are linked to performance. They make sure that additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils benefits this group of pupils, as shown by their good progress. They also make sure that additional primary schools sports funding is used well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are pleasant, polite and well mannered.
- Staff have high standards and pupils mostly respond well.
- In lessons, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and listen to adults carefully. They follow instructions quickly so no time is lost. Any incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with swiftly.
- Pupils conduct themselves sensibly around the school and in the playground. They look after resources carefully, with play leaders readily taking responsibility for putting out and putting back the sporting equipment available at break time.
- Pupils value the opportunity to take responsibility, including school councillors, play leaders and members of the Eco club.
- Parents say their children are cared for well and like the importance the school gives to developing mutual respect.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils report that they feel safe in school and know how to manage unsafe situations, such as bringing to the attention of staff potentially dangerous inside areas where water might have been accidentally spilt.
- The strong emphasis the school gives to meeting both the academic needs and personal needs of pupils ensures pupils are cared for well. There is effective support for pupils' families, if needed.
- Attendance is above the national average.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe on the internet as a result of the importance given to this aspect of safety by the school.
- Pupils have a strong awareness of the dangers of bullying and of how bullying can be stopped. They know about bullying based on prejudice and say it does not happen at this school. Their overall view of bullying is that is rare and that, if it occurs, it is dealt with immediately.

The quality of teaching is good

- Relationships are strong and classrooms managed well.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively as a team to create a culture where pupils can achieve well in a highly supportive environment.
- Teachers use assessment data effectively to track pupils' progress and the information gathered is used to make sure work is well matched to pupils' needs. This can be seen in the good progress shown by the work in pupils' books.
- Teachers mostly make good use of questioning but very occasionally the way the sessions are organised mean that only a few pupils get the opportunity to answer the questions.
- Mathematics is taught well across the school. Pupils commented on how well they had enjoyed some of the activities they had taken part aimed at making mathematics more interesting. The organisation of teaching groups for older pupils in mathematics, based on pupils' prior attainment, is successful in promoting good learning.
- Reading is taught well across the school. The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) has led to an above average number of pupils reaching the expected standard. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to use and develop their reading skills.
- While the teaching of writing is good overall, the school's leaders recognise that there is more to do to improve the teaching of spelling and extend the quality of writing for the most-able pupils. Opportunities are sometimes missed for this group of pupils to develop their writing skills well. At times, the most-able pupils are raring to go in getting on with a writing activity but have to sit and listen when it is clear they know what to do.
- The impact of marking is not consistently good across the school. This is because teachers do not always make sure that pupils actually take notice of the points that have been made. A good feature of marking is that it pinpoints inaccurate spelling as well as other points for development.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Good improvements made to the quality of teaching, including more effective use of assessment information, have brought about further improvements in pupils' achievements since the start of the academic year. From their starting points, pupils now make good progress.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 is in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Thorough tracking data held by the school and inspection findings show that current pupils are making good progress and are on track to improve on the 2014 national test results.
- Younger pupils' learning about letters and sounds is very secure. By the end of Year 1, an above average number of pupils reached the standard expected for their age in the national screening for phonics (the sounds that letters make).
- The school has rightly recognised that pupils' spelling skills need to improve. Across the school, basic spelling mistakes detract from the quality of pupils' writing
- The most-able pupils are challenged well in reading and mathematics and make good progress. They are highly motivated to do their best because of teachers' high expectations. For example, in mathematics a group of Year 6 used their mathematical skills well in answering Key Stage 3 mathematical questions including multiplication, using negative numbers and challenging problem-solving questions. However, over time the most-able pupils' progress in writing has not been as strong. This is because the tasks set do not always sufficiently challenge them to work at higher levels.
- Across the school, the progress pupils make in mathematics is good. This is a result of teachers planning effective opportunities for pupils to work on task that challenge their thinking. The recent re-organising of the way mathematics is taught in Years 5 and 6 has been beneficial in ensuring that pupils of all attainment levels make good progress.
- Progress in reading is good. Younger pupils show interest and enthusiasm for books. Older pupils speak enthusiastically about the type of books they enjoy. Pupils' comments about reading include 'reading helps me create an image in my head'.
- The results gained by disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2014 national tests indicate that they were almost two terms ahead of other pupils in the school in mathematics and writing, and a term behind them in reading. They made expected progress when compared to pupils nationally in reading, mathematics and writing. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils was approximately a year behind other pupils nationally in reading and writing, and a year-and-a-half behind in mathematics.
- Records of the achievement of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school show that they now make good progress. There is now no appreciable gap between what they achieve compared with other pupils in the school in mathematics, and a narrowing gap of around half a term in reading and writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their individual starting points. Teachers and support assistants have a good understanding of pupils' needs and provide learning tasks that get the best out of them.

The early years provision is good

- The early years provision is well led and managed by a highly enthusiastic leader. The key to success is the time and effort put in by all members of staff in knowing every child as an individual.
- Children start school with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age. They make good progress from their individual starting points. The proportion reaching a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year in 2014 was above average and is set to rise this year. As a result, children are prepared fully for what they are expected to learn in Year 1.
- Issues relating to boys doing less well than girls have been addressed well this year.
- Early reading and numeracy skills are taught very well. This is because staff have good subject knowledge and not only pitch the work at the right level but take every opportunity to link children's work in reading and numeracy into all areas of the curriculum.
- The old building, despite its limitations, has been made to provide a good learning environment. The well used outside setting provides a stimulating environment where children can learn, have fun and thrive. For example, children enjoy a hand painting activity that links closely to them developing their mathematical skills.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good. This is because good use is made of assessment information in making activities well matched to children's needs.
- Staff work hard and successfully in ensuring the early years provision makes a good contribution to

children's physical and emotional health, safety and well-being, as well as to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Children behave well and enjoy school. For example, they enjoy explaining to an inspector what they are doing. The school does all it can to encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning.

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

Unique reference number	132180
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	456124

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Suzy Zito
Headteacher	Catherine Lynch
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2011
Telephone number	01274 414126
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