

Thorpe Primary School

Atherstone Avenue, Netherton, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE3 9UG

Inspection dates

15–16 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The proportions of children in the early years who reach a good level of development have been persistently and significantly below the national average for some time. There is no accurate record of children's starting points.
- Pupils' achievement in phonics in Year 1 has been too low.
- Pupils, particularly the most able pupils, do not make the progress of which they are capable in writing.
- Governors do not have an accurate understanding of pupils' progress, which limits their ability to provide effective challenge and support to senior leaders.
- The information collected by teachers for checking pupils' performance relies on tests and is not consistently substantiated by evidence from pupils' books.
- Records of the impact of spending the pupil premium grant do not include details of support or outcomes for children in Reception supported through the funding.
- Teachers do not ensure that pupils make good progress, especially the most able pupils who often find their work too easy.
- Leaders do not make precise enough checks on the impact of support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so their progress is not measured accurately.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and leadership team are taking determined action to improve the accuracy of assessment and teachers' planning.
- Extra-curricular provision is strong and develops pupils' interests and self-esteem. Pupils' social and cultural development are supported well by stimulating activities.
- Strong leadership of subjects such as religious education is resulting in good-quality work.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy.
- Children say, and their parents confirm, that they are happy and well looked after.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision in early years by:
 - ensuring that the children's attainment on entry to Nursery is assessed and recorded accurately
 - setting ambitious targets for the proportions of children to reach a good level of development by the end of their Reception Year
 - making sure that the curriculum builds upon the children's own interests.
- Improve outcomes in reading, writing and spelling, so that pupils make good progress by:
 - providing high-quality teaching of phonics and reading
 - providing good opportunities for the most able pupils to read at greater depth
 - increasing the opportunities in all years and across subjects for pupils to use their literacy skills well in subjects other than English.
- Improve assessment arrangements by:
 - ensuring that data reported by teachers on pupils' progress towards targets is accurate
 - making sure that teachers follow the new feedback policy consistently in all year groups and across different subjects
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information to plan activities to promote rapid progress, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - providing governors with the skills and knowledge to challenge pupils' progress in the new curriculum
 - analysing the effectiveness of support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for disadvantaged pupils rigorously and taking effective action to address weaknesses.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders, including governors, have not successfully ensured that the school has provided a good standard of education. The newly appointed headteacher and her recently extended leadership team have brought momentum to improving the school's performance. This new leadership recognises that the pace of school improvement has been too slow in the past.
- The assessment of pupils' learning was inaccurate in the past, particularly in the early years, and conducted less frequently for other year groups than it is this academic year. Recent changes have started to increase the frequency of assessment.
- Leaders have the capacity to improve because they are now holding teachers firmly to account for how well pupils achieve and for ensuring that pupils make good progress. Staff have been trained to compare and check their assessments. Subject leaders have already noted inconsistencies in teaching and learning among classes, and intervened to support better practice.
- English and mathematics subject leaders have not yet ensured that basic English and mathematics skills are developed throughout the curriculum, such as in science. Subject leaders in other areas have made plans to improve the detail and the accuracy of writing in pupils' topic books but these plans have yet to bear fruit.
- Leaders have not ensured that additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used well. The outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are not improving quickly enough. In 2016, spending was not as effective in improving the outcomes for this group in mathematics as it was in reading. In addition, the use of the funding in the early years has not been analysed.
- Leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not sufficiently well developed. There is no clear information about the learning needs of many pupils on the school's support register apart from the fact that their attainment is low. This makes it difficult to judge the impact of school support on their progress. By contrast, the pupils for whom funding is available through education, health and care plans are making marked progress from their starting points because the support is well matched to their needs.
- The headteacher ensures that performance management processes focus on improving teaching, and makes frequent checks on how well teachers are developing pupils' learning. The expertise available for judging learning and setting targets for improvement has been extended by involving other senior leaders in observing the quality of teaching.
- The headteacher makes sure that teachers have support to meet their improvement goals and does not shy away from difficult conversations about staff performance if

these are necessary.

- The headteacher has motivated the teachers by involving them in drawing up new and more rigorous systems for assessment and for improving pupils' writing.
- Newly qualified teachers value the support that they receive. In the words of one newly qualified teacher, 'I have one official mentor, but there are at least ten other people to whom I can turn if I want help.'
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. The scheme for teaching subjects other than English and mathematics stimulates pupils' enthusiasm with events such as 'India day'. Art, music and sport are taught to a high standard and widen pupils' horizons through their involvement in events such as singing at the O2 arena in London or competing in city-wide sports competitions.
- Extra-curricular opportunities cover a wide range of experiences that are appreciated and build pupils' pride in their achievements. Staff's contribution to clubs and activities creates a family feel that 'we all have the children's well-being at heart'. Choir, language ambassadors, dance and sports clubs all develop pupils' talents well and the 'Good to Me' club is particularly commended for building the confidence of younger children.
- The primary sport and physical education funding is used effectively. Leaders have employed a full-time sports coach to support and train class teachers to improve the teaching of physical education across the school.
- The school's values support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The school is a harmonious community, drawn from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Pupils learn to be respectful of one another and say that 'everyone here is welcoming and friendly'.
- The school has introduced a 'rights respecting' curriculum that supports good personal development. Pupils stand for election to fill posts of responsibility and they express their views in a cooperative and democratic way that helps to prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- Working with the new headteacher, the local authority has identified the improvement of the early years as a priority and is providing relevant training and support. Prior to this year, the underachievement in the early years had been allowed to continue unchallenged.

Governance of the school

- The governors have not been effective in challenging pupils' underperformance in the past because they have not updated their knowledge of standards in the new national curriculum and ways in which these are measured.
- The governors recognise that the school's weaknesses have not been addressed rapidly enough and are committed to playing an effective part in improving the school in future.

- The governors take their obligations about safeguarding children seriously, attend staff training and check up on the impact of the training. They have appointed an additional safeguarding governor to monitor the school's systems so that this function is not dependent upon one person's availability.
- The governors make sure that they are present at open evenings so that they can respond to parents' questions. They are instrumental in building contacts within the community to improve extra-curricular provision.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and that they are confident that they can refer any concerns to staff. They appreciate the changes that the new headteacher has made to the site that help them to feel safer. Assemblies and posters remind pupils about how to stay safe online.
- Staff are trained in relevant aspects of safeguarding children, including those relating to the government's 'Prevent' duty. Staff are alert to the need to report concerns to the designated safeguarding leaders.
- Appropriate checks are made on the suitability of new staff.
- The school weaves safeguarding into its pastoral care. An extended team of care staff, who are appropriately qualified in safeguarding children, conscientiously follow up the concerns of vulnerable pupils and their families with social and health services.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good throughout the school. Some teachers do not plan learning to meet the precise needs of pupils, particularly the most able, who are not challenged enough. Moreover, the pupils say that they find their work too easy.
- Leaders' actions are ensuring that teaching is improving, but there has not been enough time to make a sustained improvement, particularly in the early years. There is still variability in learning within and between classes. Teaching does not consistently meet pupils' needs and pupils do not understand how to improve their work because the marking and feedback policy is not being followed consistently.
- Some teachers are not using assessment information to plan learning effectively. Pupils' previous understanding is not taken into consideration sufficiently and pupils are not challenged appropriately. In a key stage 1 class, for example, pupils were given the same worksheets on telling the time even though some pupils struggled to complete the work and the most able pupils completed the sheets quickly without being challenged further.
- There are variations between the teaching and assessment of mathematics and

English. A new calculations policy and assessment training for teachers has had a positive impact this year. Evidence in pupils' mathematics books supports the subject leader's predictions of improved progress.

- Leaders check both teaching in lessons and the work in pupils' books to establish that reported grades are substantiated by progress seen over time. This more detailed checking of assessment is still at too early a stage to provide evidence that progress in writing is improving quickly enough. Some writing books are too poorly organised and presented to show whether pupils are making sufficient progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive sensitive additional support from teaching assistants. However, the understanding of their learning needs is not precise enough to establish programmes of support that enable the pupils to make good progress.
- Some teachers use their subject knowledge and understanding of pupils' needs to model the appropriate vocabulary pupils need to understand their work. This helps pupils to talk confidently and accurately to each other, and to apply the correct techniques to solve mathematics problems. An example of effective support was seen when a teaching assistant worked with the most able pupils to move them beyond square roots to consider stimulating problems that required the use of cubed numbers.
- The school has a bright and well-stocked library and arranges for staff or volunteer tutors to support pupils who do not read outside school. The most able readers enjoy reading and use some strategies to deal with texts that they cannot initially understand. However, they are not achieving the greater depth in their work that they should.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils explained how they have become more confident in organising their own learning because classroom routines are more focused now on 'making sure that everyone listens in class'. Disadvantaged pupils speak keenly of the extra support that they receive to move on to the next level in their work.
- Pupils' physical and emotional well-being is central to school policies. Enthusiastic mentors work to good effect with those who need support to control their emotions or raise their self-esteem.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe and are very positive about the school in this respect.
- Pupils have confidence in the implementation of the 'rights respecting school' policy: 'There used to be bullying, but now there's not' was a typical comment. Pupils believe that they could confide any concerns to a member of staff or use the 'problem boxes'

placed around the school. They trusted that any anxieties would be followed up.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils' behaviour varies within and between classes. Distracted or inattentive behaviour was evident in some classes.
- Every class has a behaviour log in which incidents are noted. The extent to which incidents are followed up varies between classes as does its impact upon any repetition of misbehaviour.
- The headteacher has introduced a new system of classroom rewards for Years 1 to 4 and this is showing early signs of motivating better concentration levels in class.
- Some good attitudes to learning are evident, for example in upper key stage 2, where expectations are very clear. When staff emphasised positive feedback and rewards during tasks, pupils sustained their engagement, particularly when these tasks were suitably challenging.
- Pupils' conduct outside classrooms is orderly and generally self-disciplined. Pupils enjoy playtime and the opportunities they have for games including football.
- Attendance is in line with the national average including the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders make sure that absences are followed up assiduously with parents in order to minimise persistent or unauthorised absences.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Outcomes for children in the early years are significantly below average and have been so for some time. The low achievement means that pupils join Year 1 without being ready for the challenges of the national curriculum. New leaders have identified rectifying this as a priority but there has been too little time to bring about significant improvement.
- In 2016, the minority of pupils who successfully reached the early learning goals in 2014 went on to attain well below national figures in writing by the end of Year 2, which represents considerable underachievement.
- Below-average proportions of pupils reach the expected phonics standards at the end of Year 1.
- In key stage 2, the past trend has been for pupils to leave school with broadly average standards and to this extent they were ready for secondary school. Nonetheless, for the current Year 6, the most able pupils are not on track to attain greater depth in their writing.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils, from their starting points, is too variable. The impact of spending on disadvantaged children in the early years is not tracked.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2016, disadvantaged pupils performed better than the national

average in reading and spelling, punctuation and grammar because of the targeted additional support that they received. Spending on disadvantaged pupils was less effective in mathematics. Despite the fact that the school's outcomes were above average, disadvantaged pupils performed less well than pupils nationally in mathematics. The impact on disadvantaged pupils' progress in other year groups is stronger in reading than in mathematics.

- Pupils with education, health and care plans make stronger progress from their starting points than other pupils who receive support because programmes are carefully planned and implemented.
- Pupils are helped to get ready for secondary school by close liaison with the nearby receiving school. Year 6 pupils mentioned how much they are looking forward to the next stage of their education.
- Pupils have made more rapid progress in writing in their religious education books than in other subjects because they are set clear and consistent expectations about accurate use of language and composition by the well-managed team who teach the subject.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- Fewer than half of the children in the early years provision are ready to make an effective transition to Year 1. A persistently low proportion achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. The children have not been provided with the precise support necessary to enable them to make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Teachers' inaccurate assessments of children's skills, knowledge and understanding on entry to the setting over several years have not been challenged by leaders. As a consequence of inaccurately labelling all children as having skills well below those typical for their age in all areas of learning, activities have been pitched at too low a level to help them to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not track how well the additional funding is used to improve progress and attainment for disadvantaged children because the school's evaluation of this expenditure includes only Years 1 to 6.
- Unhelpfully, the early years provision has not been included in the overall analysis of the school's work in the past. Leaders, new this year, have recognised the shortcomings and are now challenging practices that were previously left unquestioned. The new headteacher has set a target for an improved rate of good levels of development. The new early years leader has recognised that the initial assessments of attainment on entry for three- and four-year-olds are inaccurate but actions have not been rapid enough to make a strong impact on the progress of children currently in the Nursery.
- Teachers lack knowledge of good Nursery practice. Activities are well meaning but do not build on the children's interests. Children are not challenged to develop

vocabulary or discuss what they doing. Teachers provide children of varying ability with the same tasks. There is no adjustment for different interests and capabilities to support rapid progress.

- The new early years leader has successfully raised attainment in some of the early learning goals in the Reception classes this year. The quality of teaching is improving but not yet making a sustained impact on the children's outcomes. The environment for learning has been reorganised to create more purposeful activities. Phonics teaching is now organised effectively and frequent checks are made on Reception children's progress in speaking and writing.
- Children are safe and enjoy interacting with adults who guide them through outdoor activities and prepare healthy snacks for them. Parents of Reception children expressed satisfaction with the ways in which teachers keep them informed of their children's welfare and achievements during the school day.

School details

Unique reference number	110774
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	10023486

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community School
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	496
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Hammond
Headteacher	Kate Trethewy
Telephone number	01733 264340
Website	www.thorpeprimary.co.uk/
Email address	office@thorpe.peterborough.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about this year's pupil premium strategy on its website.
- This primary school is well above average in size.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average, with Pakistani pupils representing the largest group in the school. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium grant is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is

below average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with pupils, staff and governors, and held two telephone conferences with representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in lessons and looked at pupils' books in order to evaluate the quality of learning over time. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work for a range of national curriculum subjects.
- The 21 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and one letter from a parent were considered. In addition, inspectors spoke with parents at the start of both school days.
- Twenty-six responses were received to pupil questionnaires. Inspectors considered the two responses to staff questionnaires as well as their views expressed in meetings.
- Inspectors reviewed records provided by the school, including information about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance; minutes of meetings of the governing body; and the arrangements for safeguarding pupils.

Inspection team

Patricia MacLachlan, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqueline Bell-Cook	Ofsted Inspector
Nathan Lowe	Ofsted Inspector
Tracy Fielding	Her Majesty's Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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