

# Thornhill Lees Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant and Nursery School

Slaithwaite Road, Thornhill Lees, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire WF12 9DL

## Inspection dates

23–24 May 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Despite no permanent headteacher being in post, the school is in good hands and continues on its journey of improvement.
- Leaders and governors have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school.
- Good relationships with parents support pupils' learning and their well-being.
- Over time, leaders have driven improvements well, particularly in mathematics and reading.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They make learning exciting for pupils who in turn respond with enthusiasm and good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' progress overall is good. However, the work for the most able pupils in the school and for some children in the early years is sometimes too easy.
- The support provided by teaching assistants varies in quality across different classes.
- Pupils feel safe and secure from any threats of bullying. When it does occur, pupils are confident in reporting it and it is dealt with promptly.
- Pupils gain in confidence and improve their speaking through, for example, music therapy sessions.
- Children who are aged two soon make friends, begin talking, sharing toys and learning routines.
- In Nursery and Reception, children thrive in a highly stimulating environment, making good progress.
- In some areas in the early years, there are limited opportunities for children to develop their speaking skills.

## Full report

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

- Improve teaching and so raise standards further, by:
  - raising expectations of what the most able pupils can do and achieve, including in the early years
  - ensuring that the support provided by teaching assistants is consistently strong in all classes.
- In the early years, ensure that children are able to use and apply their speaking skills and widen their vocabulary across all areas of learning, both indoors and outdoors.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Over time, systems to track pupils' progress, check on the quality of teaching and plan developments have been well established. This has meant that despite potentially unsettling changes in leadership, the school has been kept on an even keel. Morale is high. All staff who responded to the questionnaire said they enjoyed working at the school. Almost all staff reported that leaders are considerate in relation to their well-being.
- Since the previous inspection, middle leaders have successfully ensured that reading has improved and that pupils now are better able to solve problems mathematically. In the early years, leaders have ensured that children systematically develop skills between the ages of two and five.
- The curriculum is rich and varied. There is a good programme of visits and visitors to the school. Pupils develop good skills across the curriculum as a result, including in music, art and the humanities. Within these subjects, pupils are able to improve their vocabulary and practise their writing skills.
- A good menu of lunchtime and after-school clubs enhances the curriculum, such as a drawing club, gardening club and an enterprise club.
- The additional funding for sports and physical education is used well to train staff but to also widen the opportunities for pupils, such as playing hockey and cheerleading. Year 2 start the day with a vigorous 'wake up and shake up' exercise session.
- The pupil premium funding is having a strong impact on raising achievement for disadvantaged pupils. Teachers monitor pupils' progress closely. If any slip behind with their learning no time is wasted in them receiving the help they need, sometimes on a one-to-one basis. This is leading to disadvantaged pupils making as much progress as their peers.
- The school prepares pupils well for life in a modern, multicultural, democratic Britain by teaching pupils about different ways of life and religions. There are good opportunities for pupils to make positive contributions, for example through membership of the school council.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View are supportive of the school, happy with communication and would recommend the school to others.
- The local authority has worked well with the school to broker support from other schools, secure leadership and ensure that staff are able to share expertise with staff in other schools locally. This has ensured that the school is well placed to sustain its improvement.

### Governance of the school

- The governing body has ensured that despite turbulence in leadership, the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils have not declined.

- Governors have a good understanding of the community which the school serves. They know the school well and have an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development.
- Governors keep a close watch on the school development plan and monitor the impact of actions carefully. They challenge and support school leaders appropriately.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Thorough checks are made on staff when they are appointed.
- Safeguarding and child protection documents are kept securely. They are well maintained and detailed in their content. School leaders constantly review their systems to ensure that they are efficient.
- Inspectors raised some concerns relating to health and safety. This related to a damaged wooden storage hut and hazardous debris found around the perimeter fencing. The headteacher, working with the site manager, took immediate action to ensure that no pupils were at risk of injury. Moreover, they ensured that routine checks of equipment and risk assessments are more thorough.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff are well trained so they are able to report any concerns promptly.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teachers question pupils well so that they answer in full sentences. This develops pupils' speaking and listening skills well.
- A focus on improving handwriting is now very evident in the work of Year 1 pupils, who form their letters well and write legibly. However, this has yet to have such a positive impact in the work of Year 2 pupils.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is taught daily. Pupils continue the good work they did in the early years, reading and writing more complex words and sentences.
- Pupils read widely and often. Pupils are now taught comprehension skills. This has improved the overall quality of reading.
- The impact of teaching assistants on pupils' learning is inconsistent. Occasionally they do not support pupils' learning effectively.
- Assessment information is used well to identify pupils' next steps in learning. However, the most able pupils are sometimes not as well challenged as other ability groups.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Almost all parents who responded to Parent View said that their children are happy at the school. Moreover, parents said that their children feel safe at school and pupils agree.
- Pupils said that bullying is rare but if they do have worries there is always a caring adult to turn to. 'Teachers are kind,' as one pupil told an inspector. The school's records confirm that bullying is uncommon but is dealt with promptly when it occurs.
- Within the curriculum, pupils' personal development and welfare are developed well. For example, through music therapy sessions pupils with limited speech soon build in confidence and participate fully in lessons. This results in their speech and language improving at a high rate.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In class, pupils apply themselves well to their work. They are eager to help each other and are cooperative with teachers' requests.
- Around the school, at lunchtime and playtimes, pupils play sensibly. Records show that there are very few instances of poor behaviour. Girls' behaviour is exemplary. A minority of boys are occasionally boisterous at lunchtime and playtimes.
- Attendance is broadly average. Teachers and leaders have good relationships with parents. This has helped to reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent to broadly average.

## Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes in the phonics screening check over time fluctuate due to some pupils either being at the early stages of learning English or having additional needs in speech and language. Pupils currently in Year 1 are making good progress in their phonics and are on track to reach broadly average standards in this year's phonics check.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils in Year 2 reaching the national expected standard was broadly average in reading and mathematics and was above average in writing.
- Inspectors looked at the work of pupils currently in the school. This showed that pupils continue to make good progress in all subjects and are on track to reach broadly average standards.
- Pupils use the skills they learn in phonics lessons to read unfamiliar words. A focus on improving reading comprehension skills has improved pupils' reading skills.

- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, make at least as much progress as their peers and sometimes more.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because their specific needs are identified early and often in the early years. A comprehensive programme is then put into place by teachers and teaching assistants to ensure that they make good progress. Music therapy and pony therapy sessions support pupils' language development and their confidence.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The provision for two-year-olds is effective. The high adult to child ratio ensures that adults constantly encourage and talk to children to develop their speaking and confidence. During the inspection children were seen sharing toys, talking to each other and learning routines and habits which prepare them well for Nursery. A number of activities help children to develop their strength and upper body control, such as catching, spinning hoops and kicking balls. Children are supported well by adults to do things for themselves.
- Children enter the school with skills and abilities which are below those typical for their age, particularly in speech and language. The good teaching ensures that they make quick progress. Those who have SEN and/or disabilities gain in confidence and make good progress. Those who speak English as an additional language also learn to speak and write confidently before long.
- The very large outdoor area enables children to run, climb safely, explore the wooded area, grow plants and take part in many role playing activities. During the inspection, boys and girls built dens outdoors, practised their writing with chinks and painted pictures outdoors.
- The two resident ponies provide many opportunities for children to develop their speaking skills as they groom, feed and care for them. This has been particularly successful with children in Nursery who have little or no speech when they start school. Moreover, children learn how to approach the ponies safely and manage, rather than avoid, risk. During the inspection, one child informed another not to 'go near the pony's bottom'.
- Children behave well, share toys, they say 'please' and 'thank you' to adults and each other and have good hygiene when using the bathroom.
- Adults assess children regularly. Assessments are managed well by staff so that it does not take time away from them working with children. Using an online system, parents are able to contribute well to children's assessments. This, along with regular 'stay and play' sessions, has ensured that there is good communication between parents and staff.
- While teachers generally use their assessment information well, the most able children are sometimes not challenged as well as others. This means that they wait for others to catch up before they move on with their work.

- Children learn letter sounds, progressing to reading and writing words in phonics lessons. They learn their numbers and how to add and subtract. This, along with their good behaviour, means that they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Adults help children to use and apply their language skills in many of the activities they do during the day. However, this is inconsistent since in some areas, both indoors and outdoors, there are missed opportunities for children to use and apply their speaking skills and widen their vocabulary.

## School details

Unique reference number	107705
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10042196

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Longstaff
Headteacher	Dughall McCormick (Acting)
Telephone number	01924 430548
Website	<a href="http://thornhillees.com">http://thornhillees.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@thornhillees.com">head@thornhillees.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	6–7 November 2013

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of pupil premium information on its website.
- Since September 2017, two acting headteachers have been in post.
- Since the previous inspection, a 16-place provision for two-year-olds has been added. This provides 15 hours of education per week for children.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is below average. The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language or who are from minority ethnic groups is above the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons, listened to some pupils reading and looked at the work in pupils' books to evaluate their progress over time. They spoke to pupils, staff, parents, six governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised various documents including the summary of self-evaluation, governance documents, safeguarding information, and the tracking of pupils' progress.
- The 13 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered by inspectors. Additionally, 26 staff questionnaires were scrutinised by inspectors.

## Inspection team

Robert Jones, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Cook	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

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](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW4 4TY, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2018