

Thornton in Craven Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121421
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327483
Inspection date	19 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Robert Robinson

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	61
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sheila Jackson
Headteacher	Mrs Karen Hawkins
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cam Lane Thornton-in-Craven Skipton North Yorkshire BD23 3SX

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	19 November 2008
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. The following issues were investigated: pupils' achievement, their behaviour and the leadership and management of the school. The inspectors gathered evidence from lesson observations, examination of pupils' work, assessment data, discussions with staff, pupils and governors and scrutiny of documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a very small school. Almost all pupils are White British. The socio-economic circumstances of the area are more favourable than average. No pupils are eligible for free school meals. Pupils are taught in three class groups: Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Year 1, Years 2 to 4 and Years 5 and 6. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The number of entrants to EYFS has remained constant since the last inspection, with the school able to fill all places. Requests for admission have sometimes been greater than the school's admission limit.

The school has gained the Healthy School Award, the local authority Inclusion Quality Mark and the Financial Management Standard in Schools Award. There have been substantial unavoidable staffing changes since the last inspection.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Thornton-in-Craven serves its local community well and provides a good education for its pupils. Parents praise all aspects of the school's work though they have concerns about the accommodation. The school is led and managed well. The headteacher, staff and governors have made great strides since the last inspection in developing educational opportunities, whilst maintaining well above average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievement is good as is the teaching and the curriculum they receive. The school's care, guidance and support for pupils have a positive impact on pupils' good academic and personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. In this very small school the staff know their pupils well. All safeguarding, risk assessment and health and safety checks meet government requirements.

Standards by the end of Year 6 vary from year-to-year because of the small number of pupils in year groups. Generally, they are well above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress from their entry to Year 1 to the end of Year 6 because they are taught well. By the end of Year 6 almost all pupils reach the level expected nationally and a substantial proportion reach the higher level (Level 5). Moreover, successful initiatives, such as setting targets for pupils linked to a detailed analysis of previous learning, have resulted in improved achievement in writing by the end of Year 6.

The good quality teaching enables pupils to make good progress in their learning. Lessons are planned well and care is taken to ensure activities are suited to pupils' different levels of attainment. Teachers question pupils well to check their understanding. The pace of learning is brisk and no time is lost dealing with behavioural issues. Information and communication technology is used effectively to make new learning clear as well as consolidating and extending pupils' understanding. This was a weakness at the last inspection. In small group activities, teaching assistants skilfully support pupils' learning at all levels of attainment. The marking of pupils' work is of a consistently high quality across the school and in each subject. It clearly indicates to pupils how well they are doing and details precisely what they must do to improve.

Pupils relate well to one another and to adults in the school. The Healthy School Award is recognition of pupils' good awareness of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Bullying is no longer a problem at the school. Successful initiatives to tackle unacceptable behaviour by a small minority of pupils have resulted in a harmonious community where pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Superb attendance rates reflect pupils' enjoyment of learning. Pupils help in the smooth running of the school and take their responsibilities, such as school councillors, seriously. By the time they leave the school, pupils are well prepared for future learning because of their firm grasp of basic skills and positive attitudes to learning.

The recent emphasis on developing writing is particularly successful in literacy lessons, but the practice of extending opportunities to write in other subjects is variable. This particularly affects the achievement of pupils in Years 1 to 4. Purposeful ways to encourage writing in some subjects are missed. For example, in history topics, pupils were not challenged sufficiently to write in different styles. In science, in some year groups, pupils are expected to provide detailed writing about their investigations. Whereas in others, particularly for the oldest pupils, there is too much emphasis on completing worksheets. This inhibits the development of their report writing skills. Teachers do not celebrate sufficiently pupils' written work in classroom displays. Pupils

present their work neatly in English, but the quality of written work in other subjects is not always of this high standard.

Pupils achieve well at the school because of the strengths in its leadership and management. The headteacher has an extensive workload both as a teacher and as the senior leader and manager. She fulfils her duties effectively and has ensured the school has moved on at a fast pace since the last inspection. Her determination and precise understanding of what needs to be improved has been instrumental in the maintenance of pupils' good rate of progress, despite frequent unavoidable staffing changes. She is supported competently by all staff. All work extremely well together for the benefit of pupils. Goodwill is very forthcoming which benefits pupils. In this small school, subject coordinators' responsibilities are onerous. Nonetheless, the quality of their monitoring of subjects is effective. Systems to record and check pupils' progress have improved since the last inspection. They are thorough and used well to plan future learning. Governors play a key part in the success of the school through frequent visits. They use their particular expertise well to support the managers, for example, they have reviewed the school's provision to identify what needs to be done to promote community cohesion further. Pupils' awareness and understanding of the local area is strong and plans are fully in place to develop further their national and international understanding.

The increasing number of pupils joining the school has put pressure on the school's accommodation, which is now cramped. A class has to work in the hall, which results in lost time for learning because of the need to move furniture each day prior to lunchtime. Indoor physical education is not possible. This is overcome by the school travelling by coach to another venue. The time taken to reach the alternative facilities reduces opportunities for other learning, as well as placing a strain on the school's finances and the necessity to ask for parental voluntary contributions to offset the cost of transport.

The consistency of pupils' good progress and the undoubted strengths in the leadership and management at all levels provide the school with good capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the EYFS is satisfactory. On entry, children's attainment varies greatly, but is generally above expectations for their age. Appropriate induction arrangements result in children quickly settling into school routines. Parents praise the pastoral and academic help their children receive. The quality of teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. An appropriate balance of teacher led and child-initiated activities encourage the development of children's basic skills and independent learning. Children make satisfactory progress in each area of learning and good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. By the end of EYFS most children are working at above the nationally expected levels. Pastoral care and welfare arrangements are good. As a result, children's personal, social and emotional development is fostered well. The recent introduction of detailed systems to check and record children's progress from entry to EYFS to the start of Year 1 are beginning to provide teachers with an understanding of children's attainment. This enables staff to plan future learning experiences linked appropriately to children's levels of attainment. However, these positive actions taken by the leadership have had too little time yet to have a good impact on children's progress. Considerable improvements in EYFS have been made through good leadership and management since the last inspection, particularly in the development of the outdoor facilities adjacent to the classroom.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop pupils' writing in subjects other than English, in order to improve achievement throughout the school.
- In the EYFS ensure that information from assessment is used effectively to plan the next steps in children's learning to improve their progress.
- Seek ways to improve the accommodation so that indoor physical education lessons can take place on the school premises and thus reduce the time lost for learning.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your school and being so polite and friendly. We enjoyed our visit and I want to share with you what we found out. Your school provides you with a good education. Standards by the end of Year 6 are well above average. You make good progress in your learning in Years 1 to 6 because you are taught well. Your personal development is good. I know that you enjoy being at school and all get on well together. Bullying is no longer an issue at the school and you behave well. Your attendance is superb. Your headteacher leads and manages the school with great enthusiasm and skill. Other staff and governors ably assist her. Your parents are highly delighted with all aspects of the school, although they would like to see the accommodation improved. I have asked the governors to try to find ways to improve the building so that you can have indoor physical education lessons on the school premises and to reduce the time that is lost for learning.

I was particularly pleased to see the improvement older pupils made in their writing last year. Your standards in writing have improved to levels similar to those in other subjects last year. To help you reach even higher standards in writing, I have asked the staff to provide you all with more opportunities to practise and extend your writing skills in other subjects.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) children's achievement is satisfactory. The checking of children's progress and the use of this information has improved recently but it is too early to see if this is speeding up children's progress. I have asked the school to use this information to plan the next steps in the children's learning very carefully to help them do better.

I appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn. I wish you well for the future and trust that you will continue to work with the staff to make your school even better.