

# Thorne Green Top Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	130293
<b>Local Authority</b>	Doncaster
<b>Inspection number</b>	360122
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Robert Jones

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

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<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>	360
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Roy Singleton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Helen Rudkin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Southfield Road Thorne, Doncaster South Yorkshire DN8 5NS
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, observed the work of 13 teachers and held meetings with staff, pupils and a member of the governing body. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including policies, the school improvement plan, records of pupils' progress and child protection records. The inspection team received and analysed 63 questionnaires from parents and carers, as well as a number of questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively pupils are taught to read in Key Stage 1.
- The challenge afforded to higher-ability pupils in English.
- How effectively the school monitors boys' progress.
- How effectively children in the Early Years Foundation Stage develop skills in communication, language and literacy.

## Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. Fewer pupils than average have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school holds various awards, including the Active mark.

There have been significant changes in staffing over the past two years which have required senior and middle leaders to assume additional responsibilities and for a number of temporary teaching staff to be employed.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Parents and carers are supportive of the school's work, particularly the well-attended extra-curricular activities, making comments such as, 'Breakfast and after-school clubs are an asset to the school.'

Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points but it varies across classes and subjects because the consistency in the quality of teaching and learning varies so much. In some classes pupils make accelerated progress, but in other classes, progress slows down. In mathematics, the rate of progress pupils in Key Stage 2 has not accelerated at the same pace as in English leaving attainment in this subject currently lagging behind that of reading and writing.

The turbulence in staffing has inevitably had an effect on outcomes for pupils. However, inspectors found that staffing has now stabilised and this is having a positive effect on the school. Over time, senior leaders have been overstretched. This has resulted in some lack of rigour in monitoring, reviewing and recording the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and of ensuring there is consistency of practice between the Reception classes and Nursery classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Since the last inspection, subject leaders have assumed increased leadership responsibilities which include the tracking of individual pupils' progress in the main school and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This process is giving a clearer picture of how well pupils are doing, although the systems are cumbersome, making it difficult for school leaders to track the progress of groups of pupils quickly and efficiently.

Senior and middle leaders undertake satisfactory self-evaluation. They are well aware of areas which require development and have sound plans in place to remedy them. Their strategy to improve the quality of reading has yielded positive results and has spread into Key Stage 2. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are now making more progress in reading than in writing or mathematics. Furthermore, increased numbers of pupils are now on track to achieve the highest level in writing in Year 6. These factors illustrate well the school's satisfactory capacity to sustain its improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching and learning so it is at least good by:
  - using assessment data more effectively to match work to pupils' differing needs

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- ensuring pupils are fully involved in their own learning through collaborative group work and solving problems in teams rather than being directed by the teacher
- sharing the good and outstanding practice that currently exists in the school more effectively
- making best use of the topic based approach by ensuring pupils develop literacy skills right across the curriculum, not only in reading and writing lessons
- simplifying the methods used to record and summarise pupils' progress, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to enable school leaders to efficiently track the performance of groups of pupils.
- Raise attainment and increase the rate of progress pupils make in mathematics by:
  - using resources imaginatively so mathematics becomes relevant and interesting to pupils
  - improving the feedback given to pupils in their mathematics work so they are left in no doubt what they need to do to improve
  - allowing time for pupils to learn mathematical skills, then apply these skills before they move on to a new topic.
- Increase the rigour of record keeping relating to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities by ensuring:
  - pupils' targets are achievable and monitored more closely by school leaders
  - pupils' targets build on previous targets rather than simply repeating them
  - parents and carers are fully informed of pupils' targets so they are in a better position to support their children.
- Establish a consistency of practice between the Nursery and Reception classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - reviewing the displays so they complement and enhance children's learning
  - monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and curriculum more rigorously in the Nursery areas.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Where pupils are busy, involved in their own learning and are given interesting tasks to do, their behaviour is good, they make fast progress, and pupils speak enthusiastically about what they have learned and how much they enjoy the work. In one such lesson, pupils worked in teams solving a mathematics puzzle that had been introduced by a mini-play staged by a group of pupils. In these successful learning situations, pupils are busier than the teacher, who then has the time to help those who need the most assistance. Too often, however, the pace of learning is slow and the tasks pupils have to do are repetitive or mundane. In particular, the assessment data that is available in the school is not used to best effect in ensuring that the work pupils are given is matched to their different abilities. Where this 'one size fits all' approach is used, the quality of learning and progress inevitably suffers and behaviour is satisfactory at best.

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Achievement is satisfactory. Children enter the Nursery with broadly average skills for their age. Pupils make overall satisfactory progress so that when they leave in Year 6 their attainment is average. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, as do those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. The school has successfully accelerated pupils' progress in reading and raised attainment, particularly in Key Stage 1. However, inspectors found pupils' progress in mathematics at Key Stage 2, although satisfactory, is not accelerating as quickly. One of the reasons for this is because the quality of feedback given to pupils is not as specific as it is in English, so pupils are not so sure how to improve their work. Additionally, pupils describe mathematics as being 'hard'. They perceive it as being difficult because in Key Stage 2, mathematics teaching tends to lack imagination in how resources might be used to make mathematics interesting, active and relevant. Furthermore, pupils do not spend enough time practising and consolidating their mathematical skills before a new topic is introduced, which means they quickly forget the work they have done.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say that bullying does go on occasionally but that there is always an adult to turn to should the need arise. They are generally aware of how to lead fit, healthy lifestyles, but are occasionally confused about which foods are good for them. Pupils develop a satisfactory sense of right and wrong. Assemblies provide opportunities for them to consider and reflect upon such issues as basic human rights.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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## How effective is the provision?

Inspectors saw the full range of teaching, ranging from outstanding to inadequate. In the best lessons, teachers show great enthusiasm that really fires pupils' curiosity to learn. In some particularly effective teaching in Year 6, increased challenge for higher-ability pupils is resulting in greater numbers reaching the highest level in English. In these successful lessons, pupils have good opportunities to demonstrate their learning and learn particularly well through working in teams. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, teachers sometimes talk for too long. This does not give enough opportunities for pupils to be so involved in their own learning or to develop their speaking and listening skills by engaging in problem-solving activities or discussions. Assessments are accurate because subject leaders have devoted much time to ensuring all teachers are aware of precisely how to judge work at each level. Assessment is more variable in the feedback given to pupils about their work. It is stronger in English than it is in mathematics, where comments are less sharp or sometimes absent.

A rich menu of extra-curricular opportunities and visits enhances the curriculum. A topic-based approach leads pupils to make reasonable links between subjects but these links are not always emphasised by teachers. This results in some missed opportunities to develop reading and writing within topic-based work. Interventions to boost the quality of reading have been successful due to the 'reading recovery' work in Key Stage 1 and the improved subject knowledge of teaching assistants who support work in this area.

The school monitors attendance adequately and provides satisfactory care, guidance and support. This ensures all pupils, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, make satisfactory progress. Dedicated teaching assistants support pupils adequately in the classroom. However, target-setting and reviewing of targets for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, although adequate, varies in quality. Some pupils have the same targets on progressive reviews and occasionally targets lack sharpness. This is preventing these pupils from making better than satisfactory progress and does not keep parents and carers fully informed of how they can best support their children.

Transition arrangements for pupils moving to secondary school from Year 6 are managed well.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

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## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers, particularly the enthusiastic heads of core subjects, have embedded ambition and secured improvement to a satisfactory level. School leaders are beginning to monitor the quality of teaching and learning with increased rigour, which is apparent in the detailed monitoring of teaching in Years 4 and 5. The school is aware that much remains to be done to address the inconsistencies in teaching and learning. Good and outstanding practice does exist, but the school is still in the early stages of sharing this among all staff. Although pupils' progress is tracked, there is no simple system to summarise the data to ensure that leaders and the governing body have an overview of how different groups of pupils are progressing.

Members of the governing body are a frequent presence in the school and have complementary skills to ensure the school's statutory duties are met. Safeguarding is satisfactory and all relevant checks of staff are in place. The site is safe and secure. The governing body provides an adequate level of challenge to the leadership on matters relating to achievement.

The school promotes equal opportunities to a satisfactory level. Although the analyses of the progress of different groups of pupils lack simplicity, the school responds well to any differences. For example, boys' underachievement in 2010 has been successfully addressed with reading materials and activities which appeal more to boys' learning. The school has undertaken an analysis of its promotion of community cohesion, which is satisfactory. Pupils are involved in fund-raising in the local community and a rich programme of extra-curricular activities enlivens the community spirit of the school.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>



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## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress across all areas of learning, although it is fastest during their time in the Reception classes. This is because the environment in the Reception classrooms, for example through displays, is more conducive to good learning. Significantly, more rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and curriculum in these classes helps to ensure improvements. Through the key stage, teaching places particular emphasis on developing communication, language and literacy skills and children adequately develop knowledge of letters and sounds. Children of different backgrounds play and learn collaboratively, learning the essential skills of teamwork and cooperation.

In the Reception classes, skilled questioning by staff develops speaking space. For example, when children chose an activity to do they were questioned why they had chosen certain equipment. This ensured that pupils answered in full sentences and planned their activities thoroughly. Provision for outdoor play is adequate. Parents and carers are well involved in their children's learning through the use of 'learning journeys' which keep them fully informed of activities from day-to-day. Record keeping is adequate but, as in the main school, lacks the simplicity required to summarise children's achievements over time. Routines are well established and the setting runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Children are aware of what foods are good for them and show good hygiene practices in the bathroom.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

The inspection questionnaire response rate, at around 17%, is well-below the average found in primary schools. The majority of parents and carers who responded are supportive of the school's work. The positive comments made on the questionnaire related to the interesting extra-curricular activities and visits that enhance the curriculum. A minority of parents and carers expressed concern about the standard of behaviour, the progress made by pupils, how they are helped to support their children's learning, how the school takes account of parents' and carers' concerns and how the school is managed and led.

The inspection team thoroughly investigated these issues. In the recent past, behaviour had deteriorated due to some turbulence in staffing, which resulted in some pupils not developing the routines necessary to establish good behaviour. Inspectors found that staffing has recently stabilised, which has resulted in improved behaviour that is now satisfactory and improving. Inspectors found that middle leaders have improved the ways

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they monitor progress in mathematics, English and science. They found that overall pupils are making satisfactory progress and good progress in reading. The school is aware that it needs to improve the way it works with parents and carers, including how it helps them to support their children's learning. Inspectors considered that this area of the school's work is satisfactory overall. They found that some staffing difficulties have prevented senior staff and administrators from dealing with parents' and carers' concerns in a timely manner but that a more-stable staffing situation has alleviated these problems recently.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Thorne Green Top Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 63 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 360 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	32	34	54	5	8	2	3
The school keeps my child safe	14	22	41	65	7	11	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	14	22	39	62	7	11	3	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	22	35	56	12	19	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	16	25	37	59	6	10	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	25	33	52	8	13	3	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	25	41	65	3	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	11	17	40	63	7	11	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	19	37	59	8	13	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	10	28	44	20	32	8	13
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	14	31	49	12	19	9	14
The school is led and managed effectively	3	5	27	43	15	24	14	22
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	17	36	57	12	19	2	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



26 May 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Thorne Green Top Primary School, Doncaster, DN8 5NS**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we came to visit your school.

You go to a satisfactory school and make satisfactory progress during your time at the school. In some classes you make more progress and your behaviour is better than in others. This is because in some classes, you are more involved in your learning and have many opportunities to take charge of your own learning. You told us that bullying does go on occasionally but that there is always a kind adult to turn to. I was impressed with the prefects and how well they helped younger children to play.

To improve your school, I have asked your headteacher and staff to do five things.

- Make sure teaching in all your classes is good and you have work to do that stretches you.
- Find ways to make mathematics lessons interesting and improve the advice teachers give you so you know how to improve.
- Make sure the paper work for those of you who need extra support is improved.
- Simplify the paperwork that goes with making sure you are all making progress.
- Improve the Nursery areas so that everything in there is as good as it is in the Reception classes.

You can help by asking if you are not sure how to do any work, especially in mathematics and helping each other to behave well in all classes.

Yours sincerely

Robert Jones

Lead inspector

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