

# Thornton Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107223
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bradford
<b>Inspection number</b>	356110
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Keith Bardon

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>	520
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Matthew Hill
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Adrian Cogill
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 January 2008
<b>School address</b>	Thornton Road Thornton, Bradford West Yorkshire BD13 3NN
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons, observed 18 teachers, held meetings with staff, members of the governing body and pupils, and talked informally with parents and carers. The inspectors observed other aspects of the school's work, and looked at a range of evidence including policies, the improvement plans, pupils' work and the school's records indicating pupils' progress and attainment. The inspectors also analysed 125 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- The progress boys and girls make in Key Stage 2 and their attainment by Year 6.
- How any variations in the quality of teaching affect pupils' learning and achievement.
- What effects the measures taken to reduce the amount of persistent absence are having.
- How clearly leaders and managers understand what they need to do to increase the school's effectiveness and raise standards.
- How well the school is using information about children's achievements in the Early Years Foundation Stage to accelerate their progress and raise attainment.

## Information about the school

Thornton is a large school with twice as many pupils as most primary schools nationally. It is growing in size and has started to move from two classes per year group to three. The school is situated approximately four miles from the city centre and draws its pupils from a wide, mainly urban, area. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is a little below average. Approaching one in five pupils is from a minority-ethnic background but very few are at the early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is average. The school has Healthy School status, has received the Active Mark and Drugs Prevention Charter Mark awards and is an Investor in Pupils. A school-managed breakfast club is available to pupils. The school shares its site with a children's centre which is managed by the governing body. This will be inspected separately at a later date.

**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

Thornton Primary provides pupils with a satisfactory quality of education and promotes their personal development well. Relationships between adults and pupils are good and the school has a pleasant, welcoming atmosphere. Pupils hold very positive views of the school, describing it as a, 'fun and friendly' place to be.

From a starting point that is often a little below expectations for their age pupils make steady progress and attain standards at the end of Year 6 that are broadly average. This represents satisfactory achievement and learning. The unevenness in attainment of different year groups that has characterised the school in the past is steadily being eliminated. Standards of attainment are rising and pupils' progress is accelerating. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and good in a growing number of lessons. Improvements in teaching are contributing to pupils' better learning and examples of effective practice can be seen throughout the school. However, the characteristics of the most effective lessons are not shared often enough to enable teachers to learn from one another. While children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching and the skills of the staff in planning activities and assessing children's progress vary substantially.

Pupils behave well and mature into thoughtful and considerate young people with a strong sense of responsibility. As part of a broad and interesting curriculum, pupils give careful consideration to issues affecting the world around them with members of the Eco council diligently turning off unwanted lighting to minimise the school's impact on the environment. Pupils from different ethnic and social backgrounds work and play happily together and develop a marked appreciation of richness of different cultures. Staff keep a diligent watch over all pupils and respond quickly and effectively to their needs.

Since the last inspection, school development has been satisfactory but uneven. A drop in performance in 2010 acted as a wake-up call to leaders, managers and governors and they are addressing the causes with vigour and determination. Procedures for monitoring the school's performance and how well pupils are progressing are comprehensive and thorough. Leaders and managers collect a large amount of detailed and accurate data but procedures for evaluating this information, teasing out key findings and summarizing its implications lack refinement and do not always make the best use of skills of the senior leaders. Plans for development are securely in place and address the school's most pressing needs. Taking all factors into account the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

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.

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

- Accelerate the progress pupils' make and improve the quality of teaching by:
  - eliminating inconsistencies in teaching so that in all lessons it is good or better
  - sharing the most effective practice across the school
  - ensuring that pupils have enough time to fully complete their independent tasks
  - encouraging pupils to give complete and detailed answers to questions.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that all the information collected through monitoring is evaluated systematically and outcomes summarised succinctly
  - making more efficient use of the skills of senior leaders.
- Improve children's attainment and progress in Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - increasing teachers' and teaching assistants' understanding of how to use observation to assess children's achievements and to plan for their future learning
  - improving the balance between adult-led and child-chosen activities, particularly in the Reception classes
  - increasing opportunities for children to learn out-of-doors.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning and participate willingly in lessons. They approach practical tasks with enthusiasm and work well together in pairs or small groups, sharing ideas and helping each other over any difficulties. Most pupils respond positively to the questions teachers put to them although the answers they give sometimes lack detail. Levels of concentration are generally good, with pupils of all ages staying on task until they have successfully completed what has been asked of them. Pupils' appreciation of the need to check the accuracy of their work and how to evaluate how well they have done is satisfactory and increasing in response to the guidance and encouragement teachers are giving.

Since the last inspection pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 has been inconsistent: average some years but below average others. Cohort factors, such as the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have had an influence but a dip in attainment in 2010 alerted the school to the need for improvement. The rigour with which pupils' progress is monitored has increased and expectations of what they can and will achieve has been raised. As a result, pupils' progress, particularly in Key Stage 2, is stronger and more consistent than in the past and standards of attainment are rising. The school's most recent assessments show attainment in the current Year 6 to be about half-a-year in advance of last year's cohort. Although girls tend to be higher attaining than boys the gap is narrowing as the progress boys make accelerates. Pupils from minority-ethnic backgrounds maintain a similar rate of progress to other pupils and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are included fully in lessons and, with support, make satisfactory and at times good progress.

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Pupils have confidence in staff to look after them well and feel safe and secure in the warm and friendly atmosphere which prevails. They show a good understanding of how to keep safe in their everyday lives, including what to guard against when using the internet. Although a small number of pupils need regular support to behave well, the vast majority are polite, well-mannered and well-behaved both in and out of lessons. They give the example of eating vegetables grown in the school garden when explaining what constitutes a healthy diet and show a detailed understanding of the impact of unhealthy living. Being able to contribute to school and to do things that help others is a source of considerable pride for pupils of all ages. Responsibilities are taken very seriously and issues, such as how to make playtimes more enjoyable and how best to care for the environment, are given careful consideration. Average levels of attendance combined with a steadily developing range of basic skills, including literacy and numeracy, provide pupils with a satisfactory foundation for the future.

*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>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</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>2</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

## How effective is the provision?

Positive relationships underpin learning and in almost all classes there is a strong work ethic. Teachers plan lessons carefully and identify clear learning objectives which they share productively with the pupils. 'Steps to success' enable pupils to recognise what they have to achieve. In the better lessons these are constructed through meaningful discussion so that pupils have ownership over them. Most lessons have a brisk pace and

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are generally resourced well. On occasions teachers spend too long talking to the class leaving insufficient time for pupils to complete their independent tasks and use and practice what they have been taught. Teachers ask well-judged questions to encourage pupils' to think carefully and participate fully. At times they intercede before a pupil has finished what they want to say or move on too quickly, missing opportunities to encourage detailed or extended answers. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good. Their use of assessment to match work to pupils' differing abilities is satisfactory but improving quickly, and in the most effective lessons well targeted tasks ensure a good pace of learning. In most lessons teaching assistants are deployed effectively and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. They address the behavioural problems a small minority of pupils encounter with particular skill, ensuring minimum disruption to lessons. Teachers mark pupils' work constructively, celebrating what has been done well and giving clear pointers for improvement.

The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of interesting and stimulating opportunities to learn and promotes their personal development well. Colourful displays throughout the school reflect the breadth of the curriculum and are a testament to the enjoyment pupils gain from it. Periodic theme weeks such as the 'Good to be me' activities taking place at the time of the inspection, add to the variety. Planning incorporates pupils' views and staff are systematically breaking down barriers between subjects to bring learning to life. Opportunities for writing in different subjects are utilised well and this is helping to raise standards. Regular visits, including residential and foreign trips and visitors to school, including those from different religions and backgrounds, enrich pupils' experiences and broaden their horizons. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities which are much enjoyed by the pupils, although opportunities for sport after school have reduced since the last inspection.

The school provides a welcoming environment for all pupils and cares for them well. Based on a detailed knowledge of each individual, staff respond quickly and effectively to pupils' personal needs. Those who may be experiencing difficulties in their lives are monitored very closely and well judged support, including the involvement of outside agencies when necessary, is provided sensitively and comprehensively. Good provision in the Nurture Group helps pupils overcome barriers to learning and to make significant gains in their social and emotional development. A comprehensive range of strategies are in place to promote pupils' good attendance and the number of days lost through absence is steadily falling. Strong links with the children's centre support the school's efforts to raise attendance through early intervention. Steps taken to reduce the amount of persistent absence are proving effective and this has fallen by over a third during this academic year. The breakfast club provides pupils with a positive and settling start to the day.

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*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Led purposefully by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, staff work closely as a team to ensure pupils enjoy school and get the best from it. Following the fall in attainment in 2010, leaders and managers took careful stock of their work and made a number of well-considered changes to systems and strategies. As a result staff have a better understanding of the impact of their work and are setting challenging targets for pupils' achievements. All staff with management responsibilities contribute productively to school self-evaluation, but exactly who will do what with the information collected is not clearly defined. Consequently, there is an accumulation of information rather than a strategic evaluation of its implications. The governing body meets regularly and performs its statutory duties conscientiously. Governors scrutinise information about pupils' achievements carefully and ask challenging questions about their progress. Procedures to enable the governing body to evaluate the outcomes from school's initiatives for itself are not yet fully established.

Pupils' progress is monitored frequently and thoroughly and effective steps are taken to ensure equality of opportunity for all. As a result there is little variation in the achievement of different groups of pupils and all are included fully in the life of the school. Procedures for safeguarding pupils' welfare are thorough and effective. The required policies are in place, up to date and understood well by staff. The school enjoys a good relationship with parents and dialogue between the two has improved since the last inspection, helped by the establishment of the parent council. The school is a cohesive community and has well-established links with a wide range of groups both locally and further afield. The contribution the school makes to the local community is good, helped by the close relationship it has with the children's centre. The partnership the school has with the children's centre and with many other organisations, including other schools and the support services, has a very positive effect on pupils' welfare, well-being and achievement.



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*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Although children enter school with a wide range of knowledge and skills, their attainments are often a little below what is typical of the age group. While the progress children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, it is at its best in the Nursery where more effective provision promotes a quicker pace of learning. By the end of Reception most children are working within the targets for their age although some are still a little way short, particularly in their communication skills. While the activities staff provide are often matched carefully to the age group, too high a proportion are adult led, restricting opportunities for children to make choices and to follow their own interests. This is particularly the case in Reception where the limited space and awkward positioning of the classrooms create additional difficulties for teachers. Despite this, staff provide a colourful environment which generates much enthusiasm amongst the children. When their caterpillars were likely to turn into butterflies was the subject of one excited discussion and how many tadpoles were wriggling, the focus of a much enjoyed counting exercise. Children have regular access to the outdoor area but, in general, opportunities for learning are not as well planned as those children experience indoors. Teaching is satisfactory overall with examples of good practice in the Nursery. Relationships are good and children behave well, play happily together and share toys and equipment amicably. While some teachers and teaching assistants use observation effectively to make careful records of children's achievements, others have yet to develop this skill. Consequently, the information available to staff when planning the next steps in children's learning, is variable and, at times, lacks detail. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a clear understanding of where improvements are needed and has formulated plans to bring them about. Although some plans have still to be fully implemented, positive effects are being felt and there is clear evidence that children's progress and attainment are rising. Links with parents and carers are very positive. Those

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who spoke to inspectors were confident that their children were happy and felt they were given a, 'smashing start'.

*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

A large proportion of the parents and carers who returned the questionnaire and those who spoke to inspectors express positive views of the school and are happy with the quality of education their children receive. They are pleased that their children enjoy school and have confidence in staff to keep them safe. 'Very approachable teachers.' and 'An interesting curriculum.' are typical of the comments that accompanied the questionnaires. A small number of parents expressed concerns about the ways in which the school communicates with them, although others had positive things to say. Inspectors discussed this with the school. The headteacher and senior staff agreed that this is an appropriate time to review procedures and to ensure that all parents are happy with the information they receive and the manner in which the school communicates it to them.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Thornton 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 125 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 520 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	50	57	46	3	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	68	54	52	42	3	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	40	32	77	62	6	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	34	74	59	7	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	52	42	69	55	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	34	71	57	7	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	36	75	60	4	3	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)	41	33	74	59	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	32	71	57	7	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	37	62	50	9	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	27	66	53	9	7	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	43	34	70	56	5	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	53	42	64	51	3	2	0	0

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.**



23 May 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Thornton Primary School, Bradford, BD13 3NN**

Thank you very much for the very friendly greeting you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. Lots of you smiled and chatted to us, which made us feel comfortable and welcome. We thoroughly enjoyed finding out about the work you do, and special thanks go to those who talked with us about the school.

Thornton Primary is a satisfactory school which is showing improvement in a number of important areas. It has a pleasant, friendly atmosphere, mainly because everyone gets on so well together. Your behaviour is good and you grow into sensible and responsible young people – well done! Staff take good care of you and we know you appreciate all the help, support and guidance they provide. The curriculum is good and we were pleased to hear how much you enjoy learning.

At the current time, the progress you are making is satisfactory but we saw clear signs that it is starting to quicken. There is room for further improvement and we have pointed out a number of things we would like the school to look into. We have asked teachers to make sure they do not talk for too long at the start of a lesson and allow enough time for you to complete your own activities. Teachers ask interesting questions but sometimes start talking before you have chance to complete your answer. We have asked them to allow time for you to give full and detailed answers, but you need to make full use of these opportunities and give as full an answer as you can.

While the progress children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory we have pointed out ways that teachers can improve their learning. We have also made suggestions to help staff increase the role they play in making the school even better. Thank you once again for a very enjoyable two days and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Bardon

Lead inspector

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