

Thorne Brooke Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130289
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	381258
Inspection dates	20–21 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Derek Pattinson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ivor Ridgill
Headteacher	Sally Kimber
Date of previous school inspection	02 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons taught by 16 different teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including the school improvement plan, the most recent data on pupils' attainment and progress, safeguarding policies and records, the latest attendance figures and pupils' work in some classes. The 80 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed, as were those 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.

- The impact of the school's tracking system on pupils' learning.
- The extent to which teaching across the school is consistently good and the extent to which weaknesses may be holding pupils back.
- The impact the school's developing curriculum has on pupils' learning, attitudes and motivation.
- How effectively leaders and managers drive improvement and evaluate the school's work.

Information about the school

This is an above average-sized primary school. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average as is the percentage who speaks English as an additional language. There has been a significant recent rise in pupil numbers. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The percentage who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also broadly average. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The school has achieved an Activemark for physical education, a Basic Skills Award (for the fourth time), Artsmark Gold, Healthy School Status and the Charter Mark for Inclusion. There have been many staffing changes since the last inspection, including members of the leadership team.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good and steadily improving school. Determined and dedicated leadership by the excellent headteacher strongly influences all aspects of its work. The good care, guidance and support the school provides for pupils are strengths which show why parents and carers hold the school in high regard. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins the school's work. As a result, the school is a cohesive and harmonious community, which runs very smoothly. Pupils' knowledge of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle is outstanding. The school is developing its good curriculum well and ensures that the interests of pupils are incorporated into its good planning to help motivate them and promote their learning. Pupils like school because of these positive features. A small minority of parents and carers are not responsive to the school's efforts to encourage regular attendance. As a result, attendance remains broadly average. The Early Years Foundation Stage classes provide children with a good start to their school life. The school is rigorous in keeping pupils safe and works well with other agencies to ensure their welfare.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage from a variety of starting points but with skills that are mostly below those typical for their age. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress well as they move through the school. As a result, attainment is average in English and mathematics by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6. This good progress is due to the impact of regular assessment, rigorous tracking and improved academic guidance which are helping to narrow gaps in pupils' performance. The continuing focus on rigorously pursuing strategies to drive up standards has paid dividends this year with pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 reaching average levels for the first time since 2008. The quality of teaching is good overall. However, sometimes pupils do not have enough time to practise their skills in lessons or to share what they have learnt. The work is not always carefully enough matched to their precise needs, especially for the more able, which slows progress.

Capacity for improvement is good. The headteacher constantly seeks to pursue excellence; the many staff changes in recent years have been managed very effectively. The headteacher is increasingly well supported by senior leaders and the governing body. Professional development is given very strong emphasis and is highly successful in supporting further school development. Self-evaluation grounded in accurate analysis identifies the right priorities to drive up attainment and these are

rigorously pursued. Issues from the last inspection have been tackled decisively. Evidence from embedded and well-understood tracking systems, and the setting, achieving and exceeding of increasingly challenging targets, indicate that the rising trend in pupils' performance is set to continue. Morale is high and teamwork is very strong. Governance has improved since the last inspection and is now good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to further accelerate progress and raise attainment in English and mathematics, ensure that all teaching is at least good, by:
 - injecting greater pace into some lessons and restricting teachers' talk so that pupils have enough time to practise their skills and apply their knowledge
 - checking that work given to pupils is always at the right level, especially the more-able in mathematics
 - ensuring pupils always have opportunities to share what they have learnt and to let teachers know how challenging they found their work to be, in order to inform teachers' planning for the next lesson.

- Improve pupils' attendance by:
 - working further with parents and carers to promote understanding of the importance of good attendance on learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils are happy, confident and courteous. They enjoy school and make friends easily. They respect the rights of others and learn together in harmony. Behaviour is good overall and sometimes outstanding, underpinning pupils' learning and play. As a result, pupils have good attitudes to their work and show interest and concentration, especially when activities engage and excite them; for example, when Year 6 pupils identified the main features of a journalist's newspaper report and Year 5 pupils engaged in role play to help them understand their feelings when confronted with something new. Pupils use effectively information and communication technology (ICT), such as when Year 2 pupils learned to change the style and size of font and logged on and off when using computers. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good support they receive. However, some more-able pupils do not make best possible progress to reach the higher levels for their age. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is average. This represents good achievement for most pupils from starting points which are below those typical for their age when they start school. Projections based on the school's rigorous tracking show that the rate of progress of Key Stage 2 pupils is increasing and performance is set to rise as it has already done at the end of Key Stage 1.

Pupils are very aware of the benefits of exercise and what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. This is enhanced through the high profile given to sport, the use of professional coaches, the healthy tuck shop run by pupils and the many fitness initiatives. Pupils feel safe and secure in school, as shown in their understanding of

internet safety, their knowledge of fire drills and what to do if visitors in school are not wearing badges. Pupils have a strong voice through the work of the school council, house captains, assembly monitors and 'bike-it' crew. Their contributions to the local community, through their support for senior citizens, charitable collections and assistance with the design of their local park, help them develop an awareness of citizenship. Their enjoyment of learning, knowledge of right and wrong and willingness to work with others help to explain pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' confidence and competence using ICT and good progress in basic skills help to equip them well for the next stage of their learning. However, despite the school's proactive approach to the promotion of good attendance, such as by giving certificates and rewards, attendance is average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Strengths in teaching significantly outweigh areas for development. Lessons are typified by warm relationships and much use of encouragement and praise which provide a successful platform for effective learning. Thorough planning ensures that most work is matched to pupils' varying needs, although occasionally, for example in mathematics, more-able pupils are not challenged enough. Resources are used well to help engage pupils' interest and extend their learning. Support staff are deployed sensitively and effectively to aid pupils' progress. However, at the end of lessons, teachers do not always give pupils the opportunity to share what they have learnt or to say how challenging they found their work to be – aspects that help to inform teachers' planning. Nevertheless, good questioning during the lesson provokes discussion and enables teachers to check pupils' understanding. As a result, many pupils know how well they are doing in relation to their targets. Marking increasingly helps pupils to improve as well as celebrating what they have achieved. In a few lessons, teachers talk for too long, leaving too little time for pupils to practise and apply their skills independently.

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

The school’s good and developing curriculum, in which art, sport and ICT feature strongly, provides pupils with a wide range of interesting activities. These promote enjoyment and often excitement in learning, and contribute well to pupils’ personal development. Planning ensures all subjects are appropriately represented and that barriers between subjects are broken down so that pupils gain a well-rounded understanding of the themes they study. Pupils’ interests are being steadily incorporated into planned themes to ensure that they ‘have a say’ in what is taught, to increase motivation and aid learning. Visits, including residential visits to Castleton and the Lake District for older pupils, and visitors such as hand bell groups, fire officers and a chef, extend pupils’ learning. A wide range of popular after-school clubs, as in sport and music, further enriches pupils’ experiences.

Providing good quality care, guidance and support is at the heart of the school’s work. Every pupil and his/her circumstances are known well to all staff. All adults work closely together to provide each individual with well-organised and carefully-targeted support. For example, the school has established strong partnerships with outside agencies, which helps to ensure that pupils whose circumstances make them likely to be vulnerable have the support they need to make good progress, both personally and academically. The school goes out of its way to establish effective partnerships with parents and carers, for example, to encourage and enable them to help their children to continue learning at home. However, a few parents and carers do not fully understand the impact of regular attendance on pupils’ progress. Pupils are prepared well for transition to different stages of their education, ensuring a smooth and seamless move.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Key features of the headteacher’s very effective leadership include the ability to enthuse others, to establish and sustain high morale, to support professional development and to manage change. The senior leadership team spearheads the drive to improve teaching and learning and uses increasingly effective systems to monitor provision and outcomes. For example, systems to track pupils’ academic achievement are thorough, help to highlight any difficulties pupils may be having and pinpoint priorities for improvement. New staff are quickly brought ‘up to speed’; newly qualified staff are well supported to ensure that the momentum of school improvement does not falter. Subject leaders and recently reviewed leadership teams are becoming increasingly involved in rigorous and regular monitoring to give them the clearest possible view of what works well and what needs doing. The school improvement plan sets a clear and effective steer for the school’s work and priorities are well-judged and rigorously pursued.

The school successfully draws upon the expertise of outside agencies to best benefit pupils. It promotes positive links with parents and carers. Equal opportunities are embedded in the school’s way of life; the school places very strong emphasis on including all pupils and attainment is rising. Discrimination is not tolerated and pupils are helped very well to understand how to treat others with respect. Good arrangements to safeguard pupils, for example, by collaborating particularly well with key agencies to reduce the risk of harm to pupils, mean that parents and carers have every confidence in the school to keep their children safe. The school acts promptly on any issue brought to its attention. An audit to consider the effectiveness of community cohesion has led to much involvement at a local level, such as with local businesses, although international links are not extensive. The effective governing body has close links with the school and is becoming increasingly involved in leading the school’s direction, monitoring its work and holding it to account.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is successful in laying down secure foundations for future learning. Very good induction arrangements ensure that children, including those most likely to be vulnerable, settle quickly into well-established routines. Teamwork is strong and relationships between adults and children are warm and friendly. As a result, children are happy, feel safe, behave well, are increasingly confident with visitors and are keen to learn. They cooperate well and are proud of what they achieve. Children make good progress in all areas of learning, from levels often below what is typical for their age, because of the good leadership and provision. As a result, they make up some lost ground, although some are still below expected levels when they move to Year 1. The curriculum interests and often excites children through the provision of creative activities. For example, children use mirrors to study their faces, mix paint to produce simple paintings and chalk letters on the playground. Most teaching is good. A stimulating range of activities both in and, increasingly, out-of-doors despite restricted space, capture children’s interest, encourage them to make choices and help them learn. There are some missed opportunities to extend the learning of more-able children through activities children choose for themselves. Regular and thorough assessment arrangements of children’s development and learning needs inform planning and ensure that most learning is

well matched to children’s needs. Parents and carers appreciate the welcoming, safe and stimulating environment and communication with them is regular and productive.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the way their children are educated and nurtured in school. Negative responses were few. Inspectors found no evidence to support the views of a very small number of parents and carers that the school does not deal with unacceptable behaviour effectively, that it does not meet their children’s particular needs nor takes account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors found much evidence to support the view of all parents and carers who returned the questionnaire that the school keeps their children safe and that the teaching is good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Thorne Brooke 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 **80** completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 417 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	63	28	35	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	54	68	26	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	38	47	59	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	49	36	45	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	53	66	25	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	59	29	36	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	49	40	50	1	1	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)	49	61	25	31	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	53	30	38	4	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	45	35	44	7	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	40	40	50	5	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	36	45	39	49	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	53	66	23	29	2	3	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



22 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thorne Brooke Primary School, Doncaster, DN8 5PQ

Thank you for your friendly welcome and for sharing your views of the school by talking to the inspectors and returning the questionnaires. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit. You told us that you go to a good school, and we agree with you! Here are some of the positive things about your school.

- Most of you make good progress.
- You enjoy your lessons and behave well
- You know a great deal about keeping healthy.
- The curriculum is good with many interesting activities for you to do.
- Teaching is good. Your teachers provide interesting lessons.
- All staff provide really good care so that you are safe and happy in school.
- Your headteacher and other school leaders know well how to make your school even better.

To ensure that you all make even faster progress and help standards in English and mathematics rise further by the time you leave Year 6, we are asking your headteacher, teachers and the governing body to:

- ensure all lessons are good by making sure that teachers give you enough time to work on your own and give you work that always challenges you, especially for those of you who work more quickly. Also, that you have opportunities to share with your teacher how hard or easy you find your work
- talk to your parents and carers about ways to make sure all of you attend school regularly.

Well done everyone! I wish you all the very best and hope you continue to try hard and continue to enjoy learning.

Yours sincerely

Derek Pattinson
Lead inspector

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