

Thorpe Hesley Junior School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 106850 |
| Local authority | Rotherham |
| Inspection number | 377475 |
| Inspection dates | 26–27 June 2012 |
| Lead inspector | Ronald Cohen |

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

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|--|---|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 253 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Andrew Sowerby |
| Headteacher | Trudi Toms |
| Date of previous school inspection | 13 December 2006 |
| School address | Upper Wortley Road Thorpe Hesley Rotherham S61 2PL |
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Introduction

Inspection team

Ronald Cohen
Pauline Pitman
Jane Alexander

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 12 lessons taught by nine teachers, and talked with groups of pupils, two members of the governing body and with staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at documents associated with safeguarding procedures and self-evaluation. They examined data and other information about pupils' progress. They listened to pupils read and looked at samples of their work. Inspectors scrutinised the school's improvement plans as well as curriculum plans and teachers' planning for lessons. They also took into account the information on the 103 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, together with those completed by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This junior school is above average in size. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. This is reflected in the below average proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment. There has been significant disruption in staffing since the last inspection which is now resolved. The school has the Activemark, the Quality Mark for Basic Skills, and is an Enterprise Champion School.

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 | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 1 |
| Leadership and management | 2 |

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because teaching is not yet outstanding and does not yet raise achievement to the highest level, especially in writing. Major strengths are pupils' behaviour and the school's sense of 'family'. Pupils, parents and carers typically praise what one described as, 'this extremely caring' school.
- All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, achieve well. Across the school, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points. At the end of Year 6, attainment is above average and is stronger in reading and mathematics than in writing.
- Teaching is typically good. In the lessons judged to be good or better, teachers encourage pupils to become self-reliant learners. However, in a few lessons, where the teaching is satisfactory, the pace is not brisk enough and pupils are not always sufficiently involved in finding things out for themselves.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. The school is happy and the atmosphere congenial because pupils treat everybody with respect. They enjoy their learning and look forward to their lessons. Older pupils take particular care of the younger ones. Pupils back up their parents' and carers' views that they feel very safe in school.
- The headteacher, staff and the governing body know the school well. The headteacher's clear planning for excellence, and its robust implementation by leaders in the school, go hand-in-hand with rigorous evaluation of teaching and pupils' performance. The good curriculum, which is permeated by the school's enterprise culture, encourages all pupils to become confident in the skills of enterprise, and develop good basic core skills which they apply across all subjects in the curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, although the school does not always make the most of opportunities for a more direct involvement with other cultural and ethnic groups.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding in order to improve overall achievement further and raise attainment in writing by:
 - ensuring all lessons are sufficiently exciting and maintain pupils' interests
 - sustaining a brisk pace to learning in all lessons
 - giving pupils enough time to complete work to the best of their ability
 - ensuring that teachers provide more opportunities for all pupils to engage in independent learning activities.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire consider that their children make good progress and this matches the findings of the inspection. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year, being broadly average but lower in writing. Staffing turbulence in the past has made the pace of progress variable between years but there is now a more consistent pattern of good progress in every year. Attainment is rising and is above average overall, and in Year 6 in mathematics and reading, and average in writing. Pupils read with expression and meaning; they display maturity of understanding, not only of the texts before them, but also of the other works of the authors. Pupils' skills in writing are improving at a good pace and show good progress from lower starting points. This pattern across all subjects represents good achievement overall and is reflected in classrooms where pupils are eager to learn. Inspectors saw Year 6 pupils enjoying mathematical challenges and being keen to persevere and solve complicated problems. The good progress seen in lessons is a major reason for a rising trend in attainment with an increase in the number of pupils working at above average levels. Occasionally, when lessons are not as engaging the pace of learning slows.

The gaps in performance between groups of pupils are narrowing. Boys are closing the gap significantly with girls, and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are catching up with their peers. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, as well as pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, learn and progress as well as other pupils. This is the result of well delivered and well targeted programmes and interventions for them both in class and in the withdrawal group and in one-to-one sessions.

Quality of teaching

Good teaching ensures that, overall, pupils learn well and this was observed throughout the school. Calmness and mutual respect pervade the classrooms. Pupils rise to the challenges they are set, particularly when the work is practically based. The best lessons are well planned and teachers make it clear at the outset what pupils are going to learn. These lessons move forward smartly, with teachers circulating around the room ensuring that pupils are on the right track, while challenging them to think for themselves. Most, but not all, lessons have a buzz of

contained excitement and sustained concentration about them as pupils carry out their own research or investigations. This ensures that pupils learn very well. This was shown to good effect in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, allied to the theme of the Olympics, where pupils were asked to calculate archery scores. Pupils investigated independently and produced the best formulae to measure the results of the archers' shots into the target. Work was of a high standard including the application of algebra. Pupils clearly enjoyed working out the answers for themselves.

Occasionally, teachers talk too much, and repeat themselves, when giving explanations of tasks. By the time the pupils move to doing the task some of their initial enthusiasm has waned, and the time left to complete the task is not enough for them to discover the full answers independently. In such cases, their progress slows. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows that marking is regular and usually gives clear advice on what to do next to improve.

Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively and play a vital role in supporting different groups of pupils. This ensures that most pupils make the same good progress over time, particularly disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, or those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Focussed and strongly monitored guided reading sessions, plus an accent on reading throughout the school, results in pupils reading confidently.

All teachers use themes and topics to enrich pupils' understanding of the world beyond the school. The Olympics is the theme that is currently capturing pupils' attention. Excellent displays of pupils' work adorn the walls; they create an atmosphere which is conducive to learning. These combined activities promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. Parents and carers overwhelmingly feel that teaching is good. Inspection findings support this view.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. There is a sense of community in the school; the securely established code of behaviour where all adults and all pupils treat each other with courtesy and great respect underpins this. A very few parents and carers commented that learning was occasionally disturbed by the behaviour of a small number of children; they accepted that there were medical reasons for this. Inspectors found that these rare situations are successfully managed by the school, keeping disruption to a minimum alongside helping the very few pupils involved to improve their behaviour. The overwhelming majority of parents are very happy with behaviour in the school. One parent summarised this when she wrote, 'My child is very happy in school. He enjoys his lessons, has gained more confidence and has developed greater skills in all subjects.' Inspectors found that this view is typical of parents' and carers' views, and accurately reflects the situation in the school.

Pupils also say that behaviour is extremely good in lessons and around the school. There have been no instances of bullying, name-calling or racism. Pupils know who to go to if there were such incidents, and they are sure that it would be handled perfectly well. Pupils, parents and carers confirm this. Pupils understand clearly the different types of bullying, and how to keep themselves safe, both in and out of

school. They are aware of the dangers that can arise when using the internet, and proved to inspectors that they knew how to avoid cyber-bullying.

Pupils understand the 'Golden Rules' of behaviour, agree with their fairness and common sense nature, and are happy to abide by them. They say they, 'want to do well in class, and try their hardest to please the teachers'. Pupils of all ages thoroughly enjoy school and look forward to coming to school every day. It is not surprising that attendance is consistently above average. The school promotes the importance of regular and punctual attendance to parents and carers effectively.

Leadership and management

The clear-sighted and dynamic leadership of the headteacher underpins the good work in this school. She is well supported by the able deputy headteacher and staff and all feel part of a good team. Self-evaluation is accurate and leads to a shared ambition based on a persistent drive for improvement. Pupils' progress is closely tracked and any underachievement tackled. Success is evident in the narrowing gap between the progress of boys and girls. The monitoring of teaching is generally effective although some variations remain. Nonetheless, monitoring supports performance management, and high quality professional development is driven by school priorities. High quality staff training has been instrumental in improving the quality of teaching and accelerating progress following a period of staffing turbulence. Effective management has led the school to a more stable position and attainment is now above average overall. As a result the school has strong capacity for improvement.

Members of the governing body are active and knowledgeable. They hold the school to account with rigour for its performance and ensure the safeguarding of pupils meets requirements.

The curriculum is based on the spirit and skills of enterprise and inspires pupils' curiosity and raises their aspirations. It meets the needs of all pupils and prepares them well for the future. A wide range of enrichment activities, including trips, such as that to Filey, deepens pupils' learning, and resilience. Music, art and French all promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The school is moving towards more direct involvement with the wider minority-ethnic communities which live nearby.

Leaders promote equality of opportunity effectively for all pupils through their accurate tracking of the progress made by different groups of pupils, thus ensuring there is no significant difference in pupils' progress. There is no evidence of discrimination in this inclusive and happy school. Good partnerships with local schools, community groups and a wide range of external professionals, support learning well. These effective partnerships ensure that every individual pupil, including any whose medical and other needs make them potentially vulnerable, benefits from all that the school has to offer.

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 | 54 | 42 | 2 | 2 |
| Primary schools | 14 | 49 | 32 | 6 |
| Secondary schools | 20 | 39 | 34 | 7 |
| Special schools | 33 | 45 | 20 | 3 |
| Pupil referral units | 9 | 55 | 28 | 8 |
| All schools | 16 | 47 | 31 | 6 |

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

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| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Attendance: | the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance. |
| Behaviour: | how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Floor standards: | the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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: | inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. |
| 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. |
| Safety: | how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning. |

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.



28 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thorpe Hesley Junior School, Rotherham, S61 2PL

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. It was a pleasure to join you in lessons, to talk with many of you and to listen to some of you read. There is a very strong family feel to your school. This is what many of you, your parents and carers told me you like so much. Your good attendance at school also shows how much you and your families value your time here.

Thorpe Hesley is a good school. You learn well and make good progress because the teaching is good. You all show great respect for each other. Your behaviour is outstanding and you all get on well together at break and lunchtimes. You told us that you feel safe in school and that adults take very good care of you. We agree!

You also told us that you like lessons best where the teachers give you work to do and, 'let you get on with it'. We also think this is a good way to learn. So, we have asked the leaders of the school and your teachers to make sure that more and more lessons are outstanding by giving you more exciting opportunities to be working at a brisk pace with your classmates, or even on your own, at problems and projects.

You can help by making sure that you work as hard as you can, and that you continue to support each other in that very friendly manner, which is such an obvious part of life at your school.

Yours sincerely

Ronald Cohen
Lead Inspector

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