

Thornton Watlass Church of England Primary School

Thornton Watlass, Ripon, North Yorkshire , HG4 4AH

Inspection dates

15 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The many changes the school has undergone since the last inspection have been led and managed extremely well and improvement has been rapid.
- Teachers provide interesting lessons, carefully matched to the wide range of abilities in each class. Pupils agree that they find the work challenging but achievable and are proud of the good progress they make.
- Most pupils attend regularly, enjoy school and show an enthusiasm for learning. They know what the school expects of them and appreciate how good behaviour benefits everyone.
- How well pupils are taught and the effect it is having on their progress are checked regularly and very thoroughly. Clear areas for development and regular training ensure that the quality of teaching is constantly improving.
- Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, staff from the two federated schools work well as a team, sharing their skills and expertise to the benefit of the pupils.
- Leaders, managers and governors keep a close check on how well the federation is working and are constantly looking for ways to make further improvements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in mathematics is a little uneven and some pupils have gaps in their understanding of how to make accurate calculations.
- A small minority of older pupils do not read fluently because they cannot identify unfamiliar words by linking sounds and letters (phonics).
- In some lessons teachers give too many instructions and do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to work things out for themselves.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five lessons of which three were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils from Years 2 to 6, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and school staff with management responsibilities.
- The inspector took account of the 11 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the five staff questionnaires.
- He observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records in relation to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Keith Bardon, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Thornton Watlass is a much smaller than average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes; Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 in Class 1 and Years 3 to 6 in Class 2.
- Since it was last inspected the school has federated with Snape Community Primary, a nearby school of similar size. An executive headteacher who has been in post since September 2011 manages both schools and they share the same governing body. There have been several other changes of staff, both teaching and non-teaching.
- All pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. These pupils experience a range of difficulties including specific learning and behaviour, emotional and social.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school other than at the start of Reception is higher than normal.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics by the end of Year 6 by:
 - ensuring that what pupils learn in Class 2 builds smoothly and systematically on what they have learned in Class 1
 - helping older pupils repair any gaps they may have in their knowledge and skills in order to make accurate calculations.
- Improving fluency in reading for the small minority of older pupils who struggle to identify unfamiliar words by linking sounds and letters.
- Move the teaching towards outstanding by building more opportunities for pupils to work things out for themselves in lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start school with skills that are typically expected for their age, although in some years this varies widely. The activities provided for Early Years Foundation Stage children in Class 1 are well matched to their age and abilities and they make good progress. Good teaching ensures this rate of progress continues in both classes and pupils of all ages learn quickly.
- Taking a broad view, pupils' attainment in recent years has been average. Over the last three years most pupils reached nationally expected standards in their tests at the end of Year 6. Now that the school is stable, the quality of teaching has improved, pupils' attainment is rising and they are achieving well.
- Although lower ability pupils lack the fluency others show, by Year 2 most pupils are reading stories and other texts with accuracy and understanding, and tackling new words confidently by linking sounds and letters.
- By Year 6 many pupils read well and select novels by a favourite author or particular content. They are able to explain clearly the influence different characters are having on the story. A small minority of older pupils are unable to use their knowledge of sounds and letters effectively to identify unfamiliar words. Therefore, they struggle to gain the full meaning of what they are reading.
- In the last two years all pupils made expected or better progress in mathematics by the end of Year 6. However, a small number of the pupils currently in Class 2 have missed a few steps in their learning and do not know all the methods they could use when making calculations.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding, who need further help with literacy or numeracy, receive well judged additional teaching which helps them close the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils. A similar effective approach is used to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. As a result, they make good progress in their learning.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers frequently check how well pupils are doing. The tasks teachers set often have a common theme. Exactly what different groups of pupils have to learn by the end of lessons is carefully planned to ensure all pupils do as well as they can. In a mathematics lesson in Class 1, the teacher dropped counters into a tin box. Reception children were asked to count and record how many sounds they had heard, while Year 2 pupils constructed multiplication and division number sentences using the same numbers. All listened very carefully and worked hard to achieve success.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils are given interesting things to do. Teachers set sharp time targets in which work has to be completed. As a result, lessons flow smoothly and teachers are able to give the help and guidance pupils need to learn quickly.
- Well planned problem solving activities form part of many lessons. This helps pupils to extend and develop their skills and to see the importance of what they are learning to their everyday lives.
- On occasions, pupils spend too much time following teachers' instructions and do not have the chance to think things through for themselves.
- By asking well considered questions and using a wide range of methods to stimulate discussion, teachers encourage pupils to share what they know and understand with others. In a well taught introduction to a Class 2 science lesson about forces, the teacher projected three photographs onto a screen and asked pupils which was the odd one out. As there were no right or wrong answers pupils were made to consider different possibilities and to think carefully about the answers other members of the class were offering.

- While teachers in the two classes regularly share information, exactly what they are teaching pupils in mathematics is not discussed in enough detail to ensure that learning is continued effectively from Class 1 to Class 2.
- Teaching assistants play a full role in lessons, often teaching small groups of pupils or providing individual tuition with confidence and skill.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Parents, pupils, staff and governors share the same, positive views of pupils' behaviour. There is general agreement that behaviour has improved in recent times because pupils are enjoying their lessons far more and rising to the challenge that work is now providing.
- They readily answer the questions teachers put to them and willingly have a second attempt if their first answer is wrong. Pupils show respect for the views and ideas of others. Class discussions are often lively events with well considered points presented and listened to carefully.
- Pupils work well together, sharing ideas and helping each other over any difficulties. Two very able Year 6 pupils bounced ideas between them while solving a complex number problem and eventually recognised a key pattern which gave them immense pleasure.
- Pupils have no concerns about bullying and have full confidence in staff to care for them and keep them safe. They understand the different forms bullying can take and know how to protect themselves from harm when using the internet.
- Pupils are reflective and thoughtful. In an assembly led by the local rector, a discussion about the symbolism of candles invoked many responses, some of which showed a surprising depth of thought for such young pupils. They talk enthusiastically about a recent visit to a school which serves the families of Ghurkha soldiers and how much they had enjoyed visiting the temple in which they worshipped.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a very clear view of what has been achieved since the two schools federated and what, with further development, the school can aspire to in the future. Decisive changes of staff and careful appointments have increased the school's effectiveness and pupils are learning more.
- The quality of teaching is checked regularly using a combination of lesson observations, discussions with staff and pupils, analysis of assessments and checks of pupils' work. Teachers are encouraged to be reflective and to consider carefully how well their lessons have gone and what could have been done to improve them. This constant focus on making things even better for pupils ensures a good pace of improvement.
- Teachers are set clear performance targets which they are expected to meet before a rise in salary can be considered.
- Staff from across the federation are increasingly working in both schools to share their expertise and ensure that the best use is made of their time. While the role of the subject coordinators is not yet fully developed, huge strides forward have been made and teachers are relishing the opportunities the new arrangements provide.
- New and more effective ways of planning the curriculum and measuring how well pupils are learning have emerged and are becoming firmly established. Checks to ensure pupils' learning in mathematics in Class 2, builds smoothly on what they learned in Class 1, are not yet fully in place.
- The curriculum stresses the importance of literacy and numeracy but provides pupils with a wide range of interesting opportunities to learn. Pupils often name art and physical education amongst their favourite subjects and speak fondly of the many enjoyable visits they are taken

on. Strong emphasis is placed on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The visit to meet Ghurkha soldiers and their families is a good example of how the school helps pupils appreciate the multi cultural society in which they are growing up.

- Staff keep a careful watch over pupils' progress and development. This, and the good relationships they enjoy, ensures all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and none are discriminated against.
- The local authority has helped the two schools to successfully federate. It correctly regards Thornton Watlass as a good school and currently provides it with light touch support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body plays a full and active role in the management of the school. Governors are in regular contact with staff and use a range of well considered methods to check how well the school is performing. The funding the school receives is spent carefully. For example, the pupil premium funding has provided additional teaching assistant time so that the pupils who are eligible for this funding can receive the support they need to catch up with other pupils. Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures are firmly in place and that current requirements are comprehensively met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121521
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	406033

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	30
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liz Smith-Dodsworth
Headteacher	Carol Brotherton
Date of previous school inspection	14 December 2010
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