

North Thoresby Primary School

High Street, North Thoresby, Grimsby, DN36 5PL

Inspection dates

28–29 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.

- All pupils, including those who need extra help, make good progress.
- Children in the Reception class do well because teaching is good and adults help children to become independent learners.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good.
- Pupils feel safe in school. The 'buddy' systems are helping them to make friends and sort out any differences.
- Attendance is above average.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and their behaviour is good.
- Relationships with parents and carers are good.
- Teaching continues to improve because leaders give teachers helpful feedback after watching them teach. They ensure that teachers are helped to develop and improve their skills through professional training.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although pupils make good progress during their time at the school, the standards they reach in reading, writing and mathematics remain similar to national averages.
- Occasionally, teachers' explanations are too long and there is not enough time for pupils to work independently in lessons.
- There is an insufficient emphasis on pupils' development of handwriting and presentation throughout the school.
- Systems for governors and for subject leaders to check the effectiveness of their actions on pupils' achievement are at an early stage.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons or parts of lessons and one assembly.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector talked with pupils, listened to them read and observed them at play.
- The school's safeguarding policies, improvement plans, governing body meeting notes and records of pupils' behaviour were reviewed. In addition, the inspector looked at the work pupils were doing in their books, and at records of their progress.
- The inspector took account of the eight responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and replies from six staff questionnaires. The views of parents and carers were sought at the start of the school day as they brought their children to school.

Inspection team

Sarah Warboys, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- North Thoresby Primary School is much smaller than the average primary school. It is part of a federation and shares various aspects of its work in partnership with another small village school. An executive headteacher leads and manages both schools in the federation.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. No ethnic origins are recorded for around a quarter of the pupils.
- The number of pupils joining and leaving the school at different times during the year is well above that normally found. The number of pupils attending the school has increased from 32 to 67 in the last two years and has led to changes to the organisation of classes.
- An average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding to the school. The funding is based on the number of children at the school in local authority care, from Forces families and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported by school action is below average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school's most recent results cannot be compared to the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress, because there were not enough pupils to make such comparisons meaningful.
- A before-school club, managed by the governing body, operates in the school from 8.00am to 8.50am each school day.
- 'Little Ducklings', a privately owned childcare, before- and after-school setting, operates on the school site. This is not managed by the governing body and so is inspected separately.
- The school is due to convert to academy status in the early part of 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics and improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that teachers use time more effectively to increase pupils' independent learning in all lessons
 - devising a whole-school approach to handwriting and encouraging pupils to take greater pride in the presentation of their work.
- Strengthen leadership by ensuring that governors and subject leaders develop robust systems to check the effectiveness of their actions, so that they are better placed to make well-informed decisions to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils who took the national tests in 2012 made good progress in Years 5 and 6 and reached standards similar to the national average in English and mathematics. This represented an improvement on previous years, when pupils' attainment in Year 6 was below average. Although most pupils are now making good progress year on year, because of better teaching, the standards they are reaching at both key stages in reading, writing and mathematics, remain broadly average.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are slightly below those expected for their age. They make good progress and their skills are above average by the time they join Year 1, especially in reading and writing. This is because children are regularly taught the links between letters and the sounds they make, and are provided with interesting ways to practise writing simple words and phrases as they play. Adults are effective in supporting children to develop independent skills and, from a very early stage, help them to make decisions about their own learning.
- The progress made by most pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is good. Small class groups allow teachers and other adults to provide all pupils with the extra help they need to achieve well. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because the work that teachers set for them is tailored to their needs and it addresses particular gaps in their knowledge and skills.
- The teaching of reading is improving because there is a more consistent approach by staff across classes. Pupils in Key Stage 1 build on the good foundations laid in Reception and are taught early reading skills systematically. Parents and carers support their children by listening to them read at home. More recently, the teaching of letters and sounds has been extended into Key Stage 2 for those pupils who find reading difficult.
- Newly arrived pupils are welcomed and well supported. Pupils can attend 'taster sessions' and are paired up with a 'buddy'. This helps them to form friendships. Assessments of pupils' skills are made at an early stage to ensure that they get the support they need. The executive headteacher contacts parents and carers to check that their children are settling in well. Most make progress similar to that of their peers.
- Additional funding received by the school to support those eligible for the pupil premium has been used to provide extra staff. This enables pupils in Key Stage 2 to be taught in two separate groups every morning. It also provides access to educational trips. Early indications are that these pupils are making progress at a faster rate and that the attainment gap that was evident in previous years is beginning to close.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching ensures that all pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, achieve well over time. Adults regularly praise pupils for their efforts and congratulate them on their good work. Good relationships between pupils make a significant contribution to their progress. Pupils assess their own work and that of others. They provide tactful and helpful advice to each other as to how they might improve.

- The best learning happens when teachers have high expectations of learning and of behaviour. They plan activities that build on what pupils already know. Teachers' use of film clips help to maintain pupils' interest and enable them to use their English skills when learning about other subjects. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 lesson, pupils keenly compared the differences in lighting, clothing, furniture and modes of transport between the past and the present as they learned about the life of Beatrix Potter.
- Teachers use assessment information carefully to plan work for pupils that is closely matched to their needs and abilities. They use questions well to find out what pupils already know and understand. Teachers demonstrate tasks so that pupils are clear about what is expected of them and how they will know when they have been successful. Occasionally, teachers' explanations take too long. On these occasions, pupils do not have sufficient time to work by themselves.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work provides them with clear guidance about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Where they have made errors, they are provided with opportunities to put them right. In all year groups, pupils' handwriting is variable. Some do not take enough pride in their work because the school does not have a consistent approach to handwriting and presentation of written work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Parents and carers say their children are happy to come to school and are well cared for. Those who completed the online questionnaire and who spoke to the inspector say that staff are approachable and supportive in dealing with any issues they raise. The school works well with outside agencies to help pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable and who need additional support.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality have improved to above average because of consistently applied policies and procedures. No pupils are persistently absent from school. Pupils at the breakfast club enjoy the range of activities organised for them. They develop good social skills as they chat to each other and to adults around the breakfast table, play computer games and make Christmas cards and decorations.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that there is no bullying, only very occasional and isolated incidents of name-calling and 'rough play'. They are confident that all staff will take their concerns seriously and deal with them swiftly. Pupils speak highly of the 'peer mediators' that take it in turns to be on duty at break times and who are specially trained to help other pupils in sorting out minor problems.
- Typically, pupils are polite and helpful as they move in and around the school. Teachers help children to adopt safe practices, such as keeping themselves safe in the dark, in the sun and on the internet. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of the rewards and sanctions of school's system for promoting good behaviour and say that it works well. The vast majority of pupils show positive attitudes to learning in lessons. On some occasions, and usually linked with the length of teachers' lesson introductions, a very small minority of pupils become restless and show low-level, disruptive behaviour, which slows their learning and that of others.

The leadership and management

are good

- Led by a determined executive headteacher, the school has made good progress on the areas

identified by the previous inspection. Her drive and ambition is sharply focused on school improvement and she has secured a committed staff team across the federation of two schools. The executive headteacher is empowering leaders to develop their skills and, as a result, the school has a good capacity to secure further improvement.

- Senior leaders have taken deliberate action to maintain very small class sizes. This means that the youngest children can more fully experience activities and learning opportunities appropriate for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The separation of Key Stage 2 pupils into two teaching groups every morning has enabled teachers to plan more precisely to develop pupils' skills in English and mathematics.
- The executive headteacher and, increasingly, subject leaders watch teachers teach and discuss how their skills could be improved. They are set precise goals so that they know how they can improve their effectiveness, and they are provided with professional training opportunities. The federation arrangements allow staff across the two schools to share more widely the most effective practice. Leaders and governors ensure that those teachers who achieve their targets are awarded pay increases.
- Leaders are fully committed to equality of opportunity and take prompt action to tackle discrimination. Staff meet regularly to identify pupils who are not making enough progress and make arrangements for them to get extra help. Subject leaders lead staff training and work alongside colleagues to develop their skills. However, they, and governors, are not yet fully involved in observing learning in lessons and evaluating whether or not their actions have been successful in improving teaching and accelerating pupils' progress.
- The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and is enhanced by visits, visitors and trips. Pupils are encouraged to bring in pets from home, and others show good levels of curiosity in asking questions about how they are cared for. Joint federation projects provide a range of experiences which expand pupils' horizons and allow greater opportunities to meet pupils from a different school.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the leadership of the school. In particular, it has successfully supported the development of the Early Years Foundation Stage and supported the executive headteacher in making decisions about school organisation and the management of the federation.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have contributed well to the leadership of the federation of schools. They have managed the finances effectively to ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of the children. Specifically, they have supported the executive headteacher in deciding to use additional funding to maintain small classes so that all pupils, including those who are entitled to support from the pupil premium, are helped to achieve well. Governors are not afraid to take decisive action to tackle weaknesses in staff performance. They have been instrumental in supporting the executive headteacher in improving the quality of teaching and securing improvement in pupils' achievement. Members of the governing body are undertaking training so that they are better placed to hold school's leaders to account for their performance. They do their best to ensure that, where it is possible, staff are given financial incentives to take on additional responsibilities. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements fully meet statutory requirements. Governors know the school well. They are increasingly visible in the school community and are clear about what the school does well and which aspects need to improve. This includes their decision to become more involved in working with staff to check more thoroughly how well the organisation of classes is working and that it is leading to an increase in the progress made by all pupils.

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	120470
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	400377

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jacqui Wells
Headteacher	Sarah Hall (Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2010
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