

# Thorne Green Top Primary School

Middlebrook Lane, Thorne, Doncaster, DN8 5LB

**Inspection dates** 12–13 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- While many pupils make expected progress in mathematics too few do better than this. Although results in mathematics are improving, by the end of Year 6, attainment is below average and of a lower standard than seen in reading and writing.
- There is a wider gap between the performance of all pupils and those eligible for the pupil premium or supported through school action in mathematics compared to English.
- There is not enough good teaching of mathematics to ensure pupils learn effectively and make good progress. There is some shortfall in the skills for teaching mathematics, with the result that assessment is not always used effectively to plan appropriately challenging lessons.
- Leaders' improvements to the teaching of mathematics and pupils' achievement in the subject have lagged behind the advances they have made in English. The steps taken to make mathematics good are at an early stage of implementation but are having a positive impact on the learning and progress of the youngest pupils.
- Governors are not sufficiently robust in pursuing the causes of known shortcomings and remedies, though they are kept well informed about pupils' progress, the use of the pupil premium and the quality of teaching.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school is achieving good results in reading and writing. In 2012, the proportion of pupils making expected progress and more than this was above average in reading and broadly average in writing.
- There is a consistency of good teaching in English and in the Nursery Year, which ensures children make a good start with literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well. They benefit significantly from the care and support staff provide. They feel safe, gain self-confidence and enjoy school.
- There is a strong partnership with parents. Their views of the school are positive as increasingly they appreciate the improvements leaders are making.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons which involved all 10 teachers.
- Meetings took place with senior leaders, pupils, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- A wide range of school documentation was scrutinised such as the policy and procedures for keeping pupils safe, data on pupils' attainment and progress and the school's evaluation of its work. Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at a sample of their workbooks in English, mathematics and other subjects.
- Account was taken of the views of 23 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in addition to discussion with parents and those who had written to the inspectors. Questionnaires completed by 27 staff were also taken into account.

## Inspection team

Alan Lemon, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynne Davies	Additional Inspector
Victoria Johnson	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher was appointed since the last inspection of the school and took up the post in January 2012.

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

- Improve the teaching of mathematics by:
  - providing further intensive training for teachers aimed at developing their knowledge of the subject to enable them to be confident teaching the concepts and skills pupils should learn
  - ensuring teachers use a thorough assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do in mathematics to plan lessons precisely so that different groups of pupils have work that builds systematically on what they have already learnt
  - planning carefully the work of teaching assistants in lessons so they have a sharply focused role in supporting teaching and learning
  - raising teachers' expectations of pupils to set out their work methodically and neatly.
- Improve the leadership and management of mathematics by:
  - intensifying the checks made on teaching, pupils' work and their progress so teachers are given sharply focused actions aimed at improving their teaching, raising pupils' achievement and narrowing the gap between pupils eligible for pupil premium or supported through school action and all others in the school
  - developing the mathematics curriculum to provide pupils with work and activities that help them apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to solving challenging problems.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- By the end of Year 6, too few pupils have developed a good level of knowledge, skills and understanding in mathematics and attainment is below average. However, most pupils make the progress expected from their starting points, although the proportion making good progress is below average.
- By the time they reach Year 6, many pupils lack experience in using mathematics and solving problems. Currently, many pupils in Years 5 and 6 have to spend time developing mental calculation skills and learning multiplication and division facts that they should have acquired earlier.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium have performed less well in mathematics with 73% making expected progress compared to 89% for all pupils in the school. However, for pupils whose starting points were low and those supported through school action the gap is much wider even though many made expected progress.
- As a result of improvements in teaching the shortfalls in pupils' basic mathematical skills are being tackled and closed. There is a good rate of progress in Years 1 and 2 and increasingly in Years 3 and 4. In 2012, pupils' attainment in mathematics by the end of Year 2 was broadly average, rising sharply from the previous year's results which were significantly below average.
- Improvements in the curriculum and teaching of reading and writing have had significant impact on raising standards and increasing pupils' progress across the school. In 2012, the proportion of pupils making expected progress was above average and that making more than expected progress in reading and writing well was above average. Pupils supported through the pupil premium are performing as well as others in English. All of these pupils made expected progress and in reading their achievement was better compared to all pupils in the school.
- In the Nursery, children make a good start to developing literacy and numeracy as a result of sharply focused teaching and a wide variety of well-planned activities. The good pace of progress initiated here is not maintained through the Reception Year because expectations are not as high for what children should achieve.
- Interest and enjoyment of reading across the school have been boosted effectively, particularly amongst boys. Pupil premium money has been well spent on new reading books and better provision for pupils to take books home. The school has been successful at encouraging parents to help with their children's reading. More pupil premium money has enabled good individual support for pupils who find reading more difficult than most and this has contributed to the overall improvement in reading standards.
- The good opportunities for writing and developing writing skills in English and other subjects mean pupils learn effectively to write for a variety of purposes. A much enjoyed visit to a folk museum led to lively written records of the visit, evaluations of the museum and letters.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Although improving, consistently good teaching of mathematics is hindered by some teachers' limited knowledge of the subject, although this is beginning to be improved. Teachers are not all confident in dealing with the subject matter or perceptive about how well pupils are learning. Questioning is not probing enough and explanations are not comprehensive enough to ensure all pupils have understood a key point.
- The assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do is largely accurate in English and mathematics. Just occasionally, teachers assume pupils know more about mathematics than actually they do, such as some times tables.
- Where mathematics is taught well, assessment is used effectively to match work closely to pupils' abilities and ensures they make progress. A well-planned, problem-solving approach in a Year 5 lesson, challenged pupils' mental calculation skills and knowledge of prime numbers.

Learning was made more effective with the opportunity for pupils to work together on problems. However, assessment is not always used as well as this to plan learning, which means that for some pupils there is a lack of challenge.

- Teachers' expectations regarding how pupils set out their work and its general neatness are in some cases too low and marking is sometimes not thorough enough to help pupils improve. The lack of detailed planning also means that an effective role for teaching assistants is not given careful consideration resulting in these staff not being used well to support learning.
- There is a balance of good teaching and that which requires improvement although, as a result of the recent improvements to teaching, the balance is shifting in favour of more effective, sharply focused learning and progress.
- Over the past year teachers have sharpened their focus on assessing pupils' learning more thoroughly and being accountable for them making the progress needed to achieve challenging targets. This has raised standards in reading and writing.
- Good teaching provides pupils with lively, enjoyable challenges and experiences and this comes from raised expectations. These lessons are well planned and careful consideration is given to building on what pupils already know and can do. There are good opportunities for pupils to manage their own learning by having time during lessons to work together, discuss ideas and assess how well they have learnt. In one English lesson pupils were given a checklist to assess their writing by which they found out very effectively what they did well and what could be improved.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils enjoy school, feel safe and know they are well cared for by staff. Over the past year attendance has increased and is now broadly average. Punctuality is good and improved for the few pupils who have often been late. The breakfast and after-school clubs are popular for the wide choice of activities they provide.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and the school takes effective action to develop these in the cases of pupils lacking confidence and the motivation to learn. They settle quickly at the start of lessons, listen carefully and actively contribute thoughts and ideas. Pupils work together on tasks enthusiastically and can be left alone to get on with these as they persevere well and are not easily distracted.
- Pupils get along well with each other and this means the risk of bullying is greatly reduced. The school has a member of staff dedicated to promoting pupils' emotional well-being and they willingly bring their concerns to this staff member. Pupils greatly value the opportunity to share any worries they have, confident that these will receive a quick and effective response. When a conflict arises between pupils they are brought together and helped to talk it through and reach a happy resolution. This teaches an understanding of right and wrong very effectively and promotes positive regard for others.
- Pupils see that behaviour has improved and this is reflected in parents' views. The school raised its expectations for good behaviour and promotes this with the effective implementation of consistent systems for managing behaviour. Pupils are clear about the rewards and sanctions and appreciate that these are administered fairly.
- The school is well regarded for meeting the needs of pupils whose behaviour is challenging. It has taken pupils at risk of exclusion from other schools and been successful in improving their behaviour.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- Leaders are sharply focused and work resolutely on improving the school. The stubborn trend of low attainment in English and mathematics that has dogged the school for many years is now

being more effectively tackled. This has given parents confidence and they are increasingly happy with the school, particularly as it now promotes to a better extent equality of opportunity for all pupils to learn and achieve.

- The staff are fully behind this and expectations have been raised. There has been some significant progress since the arrival of the headteacher, increasing the school's effectiveness and leading to positive impact on some key outcomes for pupils. The local authority provides light-touch support to this improving school and is rightly confident of the effectiveness of its leadership.
  - Good headway has been made in English as it has benefitted from several years of development driven largely by middle leaders. This has resulted in a marked and continuing improvement in reading and writing. Improvement in mathematics is just beginning, so impact on standards is less obvious overall but is apparent, particularly at Key Stage 1.
  - The school has designed a curriculum which offers pupils a wide range of new experiences, especially beyond school. This contributes well to their interest in learning and the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Work and activities in school planned around interesting and enjoyable themes engage pupils, especially boys. This is having most impact on reading and writing. Mathematics lacks the same creative, imaginative approaches to learning.
  - In the last year leaders have improved the rigour of checking and reviewing pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. While leaders have a precise understanding of the school's effectiveness the impact of this is yet to have a full impact on mathematics. The evaluation of teachers' performance, salary progression and continued professional development are firmly linked to improving pupils' achievement and the school's improvement priorities.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Members of the governing body possess a range of expertise useful to fulfilling duties and responsibilities. They are kept fully informed about the performance of teachers and pupils' results. Governors understand the priorities for improvement and what is being done to tackle these. This is dependent on the steer given by leaders, their estimations of what needs improvement and their decisions on how this will be done. Governors are not trained sufficiently to the point where they are confident to take matters into their own hands and challenge leaders robustly in areas where the school is not yet good.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	130293
<b>Local authority</b>	Doncaster
<b>Inspection number</b>	406374

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

<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>	320
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Best
<b>Headteacher</b>	Neil Butler
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01405 813181
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