

Thorp Primary School

Westerdale Drive, Royton, Oldham, Greater Manchester, OL2 5TY

Inspection dates

5–6 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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

- Pupils' progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 is not yet consistently good in reading, writing and mathematics. Not enough pupils make better than the expected rate of progress across all classes.
- Not enough teaching is consistently good or better and, as a result, pupils' achievement requires improvement.
- Teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 requires improvement. Teachers do not give pupils enough time to apply their skills. They do not use information from assessing pupils' work well enough to make sure that the varying needs of all pupils are met, especially to challenge those who are more able.
- Pupils supported by pupil premium funding do not make good enough progress because the impact of how this funding is spent is not monitored effectively.
- Leaders and managers do not analyse assessment information in enough detail to have an accurate picture of the performance of different groups of pupils in the school.
- Actions taken by leaders and managers, including governors, to improve the school since its last inspection, have had a limited impact on pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. They have not been sufficiently focused or monitored closely enough to ensure previous strengths have been sustained.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school makes effective use of the support of additional adults to ensure that children achieve well.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good.
- Since September 2012, the overall proportion of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics has increased due to the actions taken by school leaders to reverse a previous decline in the school's performance.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils behave well and speak positively about the school, especially about their relationship with adults. They feel safe because they are cared for and supported effectively.
- School leaders and governors have recently undertaken appropriate training and are working effectively with partners to improve monitoring of achievement and teaching.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or part lessons, including English and mathematics small group sessions led by teaching assistants. Two lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher who was also observed reporting back to teachers on pupils' achievement and progress in lessons. An assembly was also observed.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Also taken into account were 29 responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) one written response from a parent, the most recent parental and pupil surveys undertaken by the school.
- Inspectors reviewed 21 responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including: assessment data, the school's evaluation of its work, minutes of governing body meetings, local authority and school improvement partner reports, safeguarding documentation, information about performance management, monitoring records and the school's development plan.
- Pupils read to the inspectors and they reviewed samples of their work.

Inspection team

Clare Daniel, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jim Alexander

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a slightly smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (funding to help raise the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children of service families and children who are looked after by the local authority) is well below average.
- A below average proportion of pupils are supported by school action.
- A below average proportion of pupils are supported by school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- There have been significant staff changes and long-term absences since the previous inspection, that have disrupted the learning and progress of some classes and groups of pupils.
- The school has gained the Eco School Green Flag award, the Healthy School status, the Fair Trade School and the Basic Skills awards.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 to be consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that pupils have more time to apply their skills and lessons meet the needs of all pupils, especially those who are more able
 - ensuring that lessons are sufficiently interesting to sustain pupils' interest throughout the lesson
 - accelerating the pace of learning and making better use of information from assessing pupils skills to check that work is always at the correct level to challenge pupils, especially the more able
 - ensuring that all marking evaluates learning and helps pupils understand how to improve their work.
- Improve achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
 - ensuring teachers have an accurate view of pupils' levels of attainment so they can provide suitably challenging lessons
 - ensuring that funding provided to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium is used effectively and that the outcomes are evaluated to increase the progress of these pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2
 - increasing the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress, especially in reading and mathematics across all classes.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, and governance by:
 - monitoring the quality of teaching more rigorously to ensure that it is consistently good or better
 - making better use of assessment information to accurately track and check the achievement of all groups of pupils
 - ensuring that the interventions delivered to specific groups, for example pupils who are supported by pupil premium, are having the intended impact
 - ensuring that governors make better use of pupils' progress data in order to hold the school more thoroughly to account for pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 do not consistently make good progress. There have been considerable changes and disturbances in staffing since the previous inspection, leading to pupils having gaps in their knowledge and a decline in standards reached across the school. There is some improvement evident in pupils' progress due to more stable staffing but pupils' overall achievement requires improvement.
- Children join the Nursery class with skills that are below those expected for their age, particularly in aspects of communication and language development and mathematics. Children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Teachers and teaching assistants make good use of assessment information to plan activities that improve children's language and mathematical skills at a good rate, particularly in their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make. Children leave the Reception class with skills that are generally in line with those expected for their age.
- The results of the national assessment in reading in Year 1 in 2012 were well above the national average, reflecting effective teaching and good progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants in Year 1 have adopted the same strategies for teaching phonics that exist in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This consistency of approach ensures that pupils continue to make good progress in reading. However, this is not reflected in their progress in writing, which is slower because pupils do not yet apply their knowledge of letters and sounds in their writing as well as they do in reading.
- Attainment in reading is broadly average. In Year 2, pupils are growing in confidence to use their knowledge of letters and sounds to tackle new words. In Year 6, many enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about the books they have read and share their book reviews with others.
- Since the time of the last inspection, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has declined and is now broadly average.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has also declined since the last inspection, and is now broadly average. Most are working at the level expected in reading, writing and mathematics but few achieve beyond this level. In writing, pupils have gaps in their basic skills from previously disrupted learning. In mathematics, pupils lack the confidence to apply their skills or to solve mathematical problems.
- Progress for pupils across Key Stage 2 has varied with the change of teachers and overall, requires improvement. However, the rate of progress for pupils has recently improved and many more are making good progress than previously, but inconsistencies still remain and too many pupils have not made good progress over time.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because their learning is monitored closely and teaching meets their needs in most lessons.
- The achievement in English and mathematics of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is good in Key Stage 1. However, Key Stage 2 pupils, who are known to be eligible for free school meals do not make the progress expected of them and achieve standards below those expected. There were no pupils who were known to be eligible for free school meals in the 2012 Year 6 year group.
- The school has recently reviewed how it uses the pupil premium funding and has made some changes to how that funding provides support for those pupils who are eligible. However, the impact of these changes is not yet evident in the performance of this group of pupils in Key Stage 2.
- The school does not yet ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed, because progress still varies between groups of pupils.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because not enough is of a consistently good quality. Consequently, too few pupils make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Although there are some examples of good teaching, not enough teachers use the information they have about pupils' attainment to provide work at the right level. In some lessons, pupils do not make as much progress as they should because they do not have sufficient time to be active, explore concepts, practise new skills or to work things out for themselves.
- More-able pupils are often given work that is not hard enough, often at the same level of difficulty as other pupils. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson about the use of standard weights, middle and more-able pupils were set tasks using work-books and an internet-based programme with no differences in the level of challenge for pupils. The length of the explanation the teacher gave and the time taken for pupils to settle and access the internet significantly slowed their progress and pupils achieved little in the time available.
- Where teaching is not yet good, tasks do not hold pupils' attention and the pace of the lesson is too slow. In some lessons, too much time is spent explaining the task or checking that pupils understand what they need to do, which reduces the time that they have to complete their activities. Sometimes activities teachers plan do not capture pupils' attention fully and so they do not settle to the task with enthusiasm.
- By contrast, where teaching is good or better, pupils are enthusiastic and fully involved in their learning. They are given opportunities to discuss and challenge ideas, and both teachers and teaching assistants use questioning skilfully to check pupils' understanding and ensure that learning is progressing well. For example, in a Reception lesson children were discussing why people living in Australia often lived in bungalows. Discussion continued about the design of bungalows so that children had support and time to amend and evaluate their designs.
- There are examples of well-planned activities that match closely the needs of all learners. In these lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge and have a clear expectation of what is to be achieved to ensure that pupils' make good progress. In a Year 5 science lesson, the teacher gave outstanding guidance to pupils and used sharply focused questioning to probe and challenge their understanding.
- Marking is not always effectively used to evaluate learning or to give pupils advice about how to improve. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to respond to comments in their books and, as a result, mistakes and misconceptions in understanding occur again in later pieces of work.
- Guided reading sessions are organised effectively and raising pupils' enthusiasm for reading. The focus on learning letters and sounds is starting to improve attainment in Key Stage 1.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good in classrooms and around the school. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good. Pupils interviewed during the inspection spoke confidently about the care and support that they felt all staff offered them.
- Pupils generally have good attitudes to learning and are keen to participate. When given the opportunity they collaborate well with each other, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where a group of children were observed working together to construct a range of vehicles. When activities fail to capture pupils' enthusiasm, a few start to get restless.
- Most parents who completed the on-line questionnaire or spoke to inspectors said that their children felt safe at school and that the school ensured that children behaved well.
- The majority of parents said that they thought the school dealt well with bullying, and inspectors found that leaders and managers had worked diligently to address perceptions of bullying with parents and children. The school has produced an information leaflet about bullying which they share with parents when any concerns are raised. Inspectors collected and reviewed evidence about poor behaviour or bullying and found that incidents were rare and any had been dealt

with effectively.

- Pupils know how to act safely in and around the school and demonstrated particularly well-informed strategies for using the internet and keeping themselves safe online.
- Pupils enjoy the many responsibilities given to them and talked about how their leadership skills were developed, particularly in Key Stage 2. Many pupils in Key Stage 2 have positions of responsibility on councils and committees.
- Most pupils are punctual at the start of the school day and attendance is above average.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Although leaders have identified the right priorities for improvement, the focus has not been linked closely enough to raising pupils' achievement and improving the quality of teaching. There is an emerging picture of improvement but until recently, the pace had been too slow and leaders had not been rigorous enough in monitoring improvements. Consequently, the school's view of its own performance has been too generous.
- School leaders and governors have now identified professional development and opportunities to work with the local authority and other improvement partners to address areas for development in teaching and achievement. As a result there is clear evidence of an improvement in the proportion of pupils making good progress. This demonstrates the positive impact of school leaders in starting to reverse the previous decline in performance.
- The headteacher and senior leaders are working with a consultant to improve the quality of teaching through joint lesson observations and feedback. This has improved the accuracy of judgements made by the school about the quality of teaching, and has provided teachers with clear guidance on how to improve.
- The monitoring of pupils' progress is becoming more thorough. Some staff now use this information well to plan work that matches pupils' ability but this is not yet consistent enough. Leaders use information about progress well to identify some specific groups that need help, such as disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They ensure that the support offered is effective and as a result, these pupils make good progress. However, the tracking and support provided for other groups is not always fully effective, especially for those supported by pupil premium funding in Key Stage 2.
- Teachers are set targets based on their performance and pupils' progress. In the past, targets have not always focused enough on pupils' progress, making it difficult to hold teachers to account for the achievement of their pupils. This is improving with meetings held regularly between teachers and leaders to monitor pupils' progress.
- Monitoring of teaching is in place, but has been hampered by the absences of subject leaders who are involved in this process. Although the quality of teaching has been affected by staffing changes, monitoring has not been rigorous enough to sustain good teaching and too much teaching requires improvement to ensure pupils make consistently good progress.
- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The leader has an accurate picture of the children's attainment and progress and has put effective strategies in place to support improvements in identified areas of weakness.
- Safeguarding requirements are met.
- External support recently offered by the local authority has helped to identify some of the areas for development in achievement and teaching and offer guidance on how it can be improved.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and is enriched with clubs, visits and visitors. The curriculum provides pupils with a range of opportunities for learning both inside and outside the classroom.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very supportive of the work of the school but has, until recently, lacked sufficient understanding of information about pupils' achievement or the quality of teaching to enable it to challenge the school. In the past, it has not held the school to account well enough especially as attainment has declined since the previous inspection. This is starting to

improve as governors have attended training on how to review and interpret data showing how well the school is performing in comparison to others. They now recognise the variation in the performance of groups of pupils. They have established an annual cycle of review which has ensured that their monitoring of achievement and teaching happen more regularly and are more thorough. As a result, governors now have a more accurate picture of the school's performance and are in a position to hold it to account more effectively. They visit school and review information about teaching, but are not well informed about how to use teachers' performance targets to raise the overall quality of teaching. Governors manage the school budget generally effectively. They check that pupil premium funding is being spent on the correct pupils but do not follow up on the effect of the spending and are unaware that the pupils supported by this funding do not make consistently good progress. Governors have recently put in place an annual cycle of review of performance; however it is too soon for any impact of this to be evident.

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	105674
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	412303

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	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Malcolmson
Headteacher	Stuart Bennett
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2008
Telephone number	0161 770 5475
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	info@thorp.oldham.sch.uk

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