

Thorner Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Kirkhills, Thorner, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS14 3JD

Inspection dates 17–18 July 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | 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

- Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 has not been rising rapidly enough.
- Too few pupils in Year 3 to Year 5 make better than expected progress in English and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- In some lessons teachers can take too long explaining a task. As a result, pupils are not always given enough time to work things out for themselves.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent and pupils are not always given the opportunity to respond to the guidance they receive.
- Leaders have not ensured all teaching is at least good.
- The role of those teachers who have responsibility for leading improvements in curriculum subjects is underdeveloped.
- Leaders and staff do not make good enough use of assessment information to keep a careful watch on the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Early Years Foundation Stage provision has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection. Children now make outstanding progress and are very well prepared to start Year 1.
- Pupils make good progress across Key Stage 1 and attainment by the end of Year 2, which has improved year on year, is now above average.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They behave well and enjoy coming to this warm and friendly school. As a result, their attendance is above average.
- The school has recently received a 'Gold Sing Up' award. Pupils benefit from many opportunities in the performing arts to develop their confidence and self-esteem.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons or small-group activities, of which three were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior leaders, school staff and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their work in lessons, looked at books, listened to pupils read and met with a group of pupils from Key Stage 2.
- Inspectors took account of the 49 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and a recent school survey, and received a number of letters and phone calls from parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of the 13 questionnaires returned by members of the school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work, looked at progress data, performance management information and records relating to behaviour and safety, as well as documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Jim Alexander, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Paul Spray

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided for children in local authority care, those from armed service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Almost all teachers have been appointed since the time of the last inspection and the school has grown in size.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it is consistently good or better, by:
 - making sure teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and use pupils' responses in lessons to refocus activities when necessary so that all make good progress
 - increasing the time available for pupils to work independently on tasks pitched at the right level for their interests and needs
 - improving the quality of marking so that all pupils receive clear guidance about how to improve their work and then respond quickly to the development points identified by the teachers.
- Raise attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 by:
 - ensuring more pupils make better than expected progress in Year 3 to Year 5
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to undertake open-ended problem-solving activities in mathematics
 - extending opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to develop their reading comprehension skills
 - consolidating recent improvements to the quality of writing.
- Improve the quality of leadership by:
 - developing the role of middle leaders so that all play an increased part in driving forward improvements
 - using achievement data more robustly to monitor pupils' progress, so as to respond quickly if pupils are not making rapid progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because the proportion of pupils making good progress is not high enough across Key Stage 2. Leaders recognise that, while a high proportion of pupils in Year 3 to Year 5 make expected progress, too few make rapid gains in their learning.
- Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally in line with those typically expected. They now make outstanding progress developing their reading, writing and number skills and are very well prepared to start Year 1.
- Pupils who did not read as well as expected by the end of Year 1 have been given additional support this year. All have now caught up and regularly use what they know of letters and sounds to help them read tricky words.
- Attainment by the end of Year 2 has been improving every year and is now above average in reading, writing and mathematics. A greater proportion of pupils reach the higher levels in all subjects than do so nationally. This represents good progress from their starting points.
- By the end of Year 6 attainment has also been improving, but not as quickly as in Key Stage 1. As a result, attainment in 2012 was broadly average in English and above average in mathematics. This did not represent good enough progress from these pupils' starting points.
- In mathematics the school has ensured that pupils' knowledge of number facts and core skills of calculation are secure. However, pupils are not always able to apply these skills successfully when asked to solve problems or carry out open-ended investigations.
- The school has focused on improving the quality of writing this year and is seeing some success. More pupils are now making better progress than previously and initiatives such as the 'pirate fortnight' are proving an effective way of stimulating writing. These improvements, however, have not yet been consolidated to ensure they result in raising attainment by the end of Key Stage 2.
- The school encourages older pupils to read regularly, but opportunities are missed to develop their comprehension skills across the wider curriculum.
- The progress made by pupils who are disabled or who have special education needs is similar to that of others in the school and can vary from class to class.
- The pupil premium funding is used in a variety of ways, for example to provide small-group activities or one-to-one support. This is helping the majority of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals to make good progress and, as a result, their attainment is the same as that of their peers. This is one example of the school's commitment to tackling discrimination.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching is getting better, it is still judged to require improvement because it is not consistently good enough in every class to ensure all pupils make rapid progress from their starting points.
- In lessons that require improvement teachers can often take too long explaining what they want pupils to do. This leaves little time for pupils to get on independently with their work and so limits progress.
- In other lessons teachers' expectations are not always high enough and all pupils are expected to complete the same task, regardless of their individual ability. This means that some pupils find the work too hard and struggle to keep up, while the more-able pupils finish quickly and then wait for others to catch up.
- The quality of marking has improved and there are some good examples of where pupils are quickly following up on the guidance offered by their teachers. However, this improvement is not consistent and some marking does not provide enough guidance for pupils to know how to

improve their work.

- There are examples of good teaching. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson no time was wasted and pupils quickly settled to interesting and challenging number work, pitched at just the right level. Pupils relished the challenge and enjoyed their success.
- Teaching is outstanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Activities are carefully planned to cover all areas of learning, both indoors and outside. Children are helped to become confident and happily respond well to the many opportunities provided. Staff are skilled in ensuring no opportunity is missed to encourage children to make the best possible progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently positive, even when lessons fail to capture their imagination or where teachers take too long explaining a task. It is to their credit that they remain focused and encourage one another to do their best.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from positive relationships with adults and make outstanding progress developing their personal and social skills. The pupils respond well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural guidance they receive.
- Pupils are happy to come to this improving school and their attendance is above average.
- Around school pupils are polite and courteous. Playtimes and lunchtimes are happy occasions and relationships are positive.
- Pupils say they get on well together and are well informed about various types of bullying. They explain that teachers help them to quickly resolve their differences. Records show that incidents of bullying are rare and dealt with effectively.
- The overwhelming majority of parents say their children are kept safe and are happy at school.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leaders have secured improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and also in attainment by the end of Key Stage 1, but, overall, are still judged to require improvement because the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is inconsistent. Consequently, not enough pupils in Year 3 to Year 5 are making really rapid progress.
- The new system for tracking pupils' progress and measuring their attainment is not fully embedded or used well enough by all staff. As a result, some pupils do not always receive highly challenging work which stretches their abilities robustly enough.
- The role of the English and mathematics subject leaders is underdeveloped and not yet impacting on the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress across Key Stage 2.
- Leaders recognise what is working and what still needs to improve. As a result, school improvement plans are focused on the correct priorities, although self-evaluation is sometimes overgenerous.
- Senior leaders are showing the necessary determination and are taking decisive action to accelerate a drive for improvements, for example the improvement since the time of the last inspection in the Early Years Foundation Stage and also the recent drive to improve the quality of pupils' writing. This underpins the school's commitment to provide equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Staff share an eager desire that this improving school once again becomes good.
- The school appreciates the support offered by the local authority, for example in providing training for the newly appointed teacher responsible for leading special educational needs provision.
- The headteacher ensures that there is an effective link between teachers' pay and their performance in class.
- The school provides a range of residential visits, trips out and visitors to school. Pupils also appreciate the growing number of clubs that are now available after school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are committed and passionate about supporting leaders to ensure the school improves. They are aware that, while some teaching is good, some needs to be better still. They make sure that pay awards are given when teachers' performance merits reward. They are informed about how the pupil premium funds are being spent but have not established robust procedures to monitor the difference this expenditure is making on pupils' achievement. A number of new governors have recently been elected. They bring a wide range of appropriate skills and experience, which is further strengthening the challenge and support provided to leaders. Governors ensure safeguarding requirements are met.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 107994 |
| Local authority | Leeds |
| Inspection number | 413140 |

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 | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 180 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mark Harrison |
| Headteacher | Alison Wrigglesworth |
| Date of previous school inspection | 15 October 2008 |
| Telephone number | 0113 289 2541 |
| Fax number | 0113 289 2991 |
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