

Armthorpe Southfield Primary School

Tranmoor Lane, Armthorpe, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN3 3BN

Inspection dates 24–25 September 2013

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.

- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 is above average. Pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Teaching throughout the school is consistently good, and at times, outstanding.
- Pupils have good attitudes to school. They work hard and behave well. They feel safe in school and their attendance is above average.
- Leaders have improved standards and teaching quality in the school significantly since the previous inspection.
- Teachers' performance is managed very well and this accounts for pupils' good achievement.
- The governing body knows how well the school performs and plays a significant part in its continuing improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to think things out for themselves.
- The roles of teaching assistants could be improved in order to help raise teaching quality to outstanding.
- There is still work to be done to ensure more boys reach their full potential in writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons and parts of lessons.
- Discussions took place with members of staff, members of the governing body, a parent group, pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- Also taken into account were 42 responses from parents via Ofsted’s online questionnaire Parent View.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and examined a wide range of documentation including: national assessment data and the school’s own assessments; leaders’ view of the school’s work; external reports; curriculum information; minutes from governing body meetings; safeguarding information and samples of pupils’ work.

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jan Lomas

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school in which almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those that are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets current floor standards, which are the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- A breakfast club is provided during term time. This is not managed by the governing body and was not part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching in the school and raise pupils' achievement further by:
 - improving pupils' ability to think things out for themselves by involving them more in the planning of what they learn, how they will learn, the checking of their learning and planning what to do next
 - use the teaching skills of classroom assistants, as well as their supporting roles, to maximum effect in helping groups of pupils to make the best use of time and make the best progress they can in lessons
 - improving pupils' achievement in English by making sure that all boys who have the potential to reach a higher level in writing are fully challenged to do so.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start in the Nursery with skills that are below those typically expected for their age, especially in language and communication and personal, social and emotional development. They get off to a good start and make good progress. Most reach a good level of development and some are more advanced by the end of Reception. They are confident and ready for Year 1 when their time comes.
- Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2 and, consequently, pupils achieve well. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 are above average. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.
- At Key Stage 2, also, pupils' achievement has improved rapidly since the previous inspection when standards were below average. They are now above average overall in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Assessment information and pupils' work confirm that they make good progress from their starting points. National test results for 2012 and unvalidated results for 2013 show that all pupils reached at least the expected standards for their age at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. Many did better than that. Nevertheless, the school is far from complacent and has recognised the potential to raise achievement further by challenging more boys to do better in their writing.
- Pupils in Year 2 are enthusiastic readers. They use their phonics skills (knowledge of letters and sounds) well to help them sort out unfamiliar words, and enjoy talking about books. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction and they are good at working out what might happen next in a story. By the end of Year 6 pupils read fluently and accurately, using expression and punctuation well. They select their reading from a reasonable range and different sources such as the public library or electronically. They know the names and styles of some past and present authors and are clear about the kinds of books they like to read.
- Care and support for all pupils who may be considered potentially vulnerable because of their circumstances are a particular strength in the school. Consequently, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported sensitively and taught well. They make good and sometimes more rapid progress from their relative starting points.
- More-able pupils are also well provided for. Expectations set for those pupils are suitably high. As a result, the numbers of pupils who achieve Level 3 at Key Stage 1 and Level 5 or beyond at Key Stage 2 have increased over the past two years.
- Those who are supported by pupil premium funding make similarly good progress to others. They are effectively taught through additional individual tuition. A noticeable gap in English in 2012 has been closed and currently in the school there are no significant gaps between their achievement and that of others in the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching throughout the school consistently challenges pupils and brings the best out of them. Teachers make lessons fun and pupils say, 'We learn something new every day'.
- Teachers' planning is good and they use resources well to help pupils learn. Good use is made of technology such as electronic whiteboards. Laptops and ipads are used routinely in lessons. Some pupils made particularly good use of a whiteboard, for example, to find out and discuss features of ancient Egyptian artefacts while other searched for information about Tudors and planned how to share it with the class.
- In the best lessons there is always new learning to capture pupils' interest and lots of activity. For example, a group of Nursery children being introduced to first letter sounds had to dig in the sand to find a picture then practise the initial letter sound using a mirror to see how they made it. They found this great fun and were more than ready to begin writing letters with chalk by the

end of the session.

- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and lessons always take account of pupils' different abilities to set work at the right level. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well integrated and challenged. Assessment is used well by teachers to plan work for pupils. They question pupils well during lessons to check their learning and provide helpful guidance through marking so pupils know how well they are doing and what to do next.
- Literacy and numeracy are taught well. There is a particular focus currently on writing, especially for boys. In one lesson a group of Year 1 boys were working very hard with ipads to type sentences about what makes them happy because the idea was appealing to them. Writing is also developed well in other subjects and there is some good work in pupils' topic books. Despite this focused approach to writing, teachers could expect even more from some boys who need that extra push towards the next level.
- Teaching assistants make a crucial contribution to pupils' learning. They work very effectively in partnership with teachers, know pupils well and provide skilful support. However, the role they have in teaching as opposed to supporting pupils is sometimes not fully recognised. At times, for example, groups of pupils spend time unnecessarily on the carpet when they could be getting on with practical work.
- Relationships in lessons are very good. Pupils are confident that their efforts are valued by teachers so they work more willingly. Pupils are given opportunities to work in groups with less supervision. Nevertheless, the tasks they are given are usually directed by their teacher. This lessens the chances pupils have to contribute to their own planning and ways of learning and decide for themselves what their next steps should be.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy school and show good attitudes towards learning. Many name mathematics as their favourite but they are equally enthusiastic about art, writing and physical education. Pupils enjoy the range of club activities after school. Sports clubs are becoming increasingly popular since the school began to promote sport more strongly. Pupils are now proud that they have begun to win trophies in competitions against other schools.
- In lessons, pupils behave well. They pay attention to their teachers, are very respectful and work hard in the classroom. Relationships are good and pupils enjoy working together.
- Behaviour around the school is good. On some occasions it is exemplary, such as when they attend assemblies. Pupils are always polite and well mannered.
- Pupils share trusting relationships with the adults in school. This contributes to their strong feeling of being safe. Although they occasionally dispute football decisions among themselves in the playground, they are adamant that there is no bullying or name-calling to hurt others' feelings. Pupils are aware of the potential dangers linked to use of the internet and know how to avoid dangerous situations outside of school. Parents agree that their children are safe and well cared for in school.
- A flourishing allotment and the chance to look after a flock of chickens help pupils to develop sensible attitudes about healthy lifestyles and a sense of responsibility. They also contribute well to the life of the school through their work on the school council, for example, or the 'health and safety squad' who do a weekly check around the school.
- Pupils' typically above average attendance is an important factor in their good achievement and their good preparation for the next stages of their education.

The leadership and management are good

- The strong driving force of the headteacher and deputy headteacher has guided leaders at all levels through a period of rapid improvement since the previous inspection. All staff and the governing body work determinedly towards achieving the school's aims of providing equality of

opportunity and the best start for all pupils.

- Leaders responded vigorously to previous issues. Consultation with local authority advisers quickly set the school on the right track. The local authority recognised the capacity of leaders to bring improvement and has offered light-touch support as a result. The track record of improvement in achievement, teaching and management has justified the local authority's confidence in the school's leadership.
- Central to the school's improvement has been the leadership and management of teaching. Robust systems for checking the quality of what happens in the classroom and focusing on improved performance have been rewarding. No teaching is less than good but the mindset of leaders is that their work is not over until it all becomes outstanding. All teachers acknowledge that expectations are fully underpinned by the Teachers Standards and that salary increases are linked to their classroom performance.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. It provides rich opportunities for pupils to enjoy their learning, both in and outside of the classroom, and achieve well across the range of subjects. It promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their physical well-being effectively and prepares them well for their next schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows how good the school is and how good it can become. It actively checks the school's progress and questions school leaders about how it can improve. Governors have a good understanding of how important it is to maintain and improve teaching quality and how teaching is led and managed in school. They understand how performances and salaries are linked. Statutory responsibilities are carried out efficiently, including financial management. Governors know how the pupil premium is spent and its impact on pupils' achievement. Improvement in physical education was already prioritised by governors and recent funding is a timely boost by allowing the school to bring in specialist sports instructors to improve teachers' knowledge and skills as well as raise pupils' standards in the subject. Safeguarding measures are well in hand and meet all requirements.

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	106723
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	425735

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	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Lynes
Headteacher	Sarah Cairns
Date of previous school inspection	8 September 2011
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