

Thornaby-on-Tees Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Baysdale Road, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees, County Durham, TS17 9DB

Inspection dates 10–11 October 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.

- Pupils make good progress and by the time they leave Year 6 their attainment in English and mathematics is above the national average.
- Teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and teachers have high expectations of pupils.
- Pupils are well behaved in lessons and they have a very positive attitude towards their school work.
- The effectiveness of the school leaders and governors is good because the school has improved the quality of teaching, as well as the achievement of pupils, since the previous inspection.
- The governing body has a good understanding of this improving school, including areas that need still further improvement.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They feel confident that their teachers, whom they trust, will look after them.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are not enough lessons where teaching is outstanding.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length in their lessons and so further improve their literacy skills.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is slower in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2.
- The numbers of pupils persistently absent has fallen but the overall attendance is below average. Some pupils miss too much school and this reduces their learning time.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 19 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 15 different teachers.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about how much reading they do as well as looking at their work in class.
- Discussions took place with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and two meetings were held with representatives of the local authority.
- Documents were examined, including those relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan, and records of its checks on teaching and learning, as well as the school's own assessment data.
- There were too few parental responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) for them to be taken into account. The school's own questionnaire, which surveyed 96 parents, was studied. One letter from parents was considered and inspectors spoke to eight parents at the start of the school day.
- Questionnaires about their views of the school were also completed by 19 staff.

Inspection team

Frank Cain, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Derek Sleightholme	Additional Inspector
John Pattinson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Thornaby Church of England Primary School, is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, children from families in the armed forces , and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is slightly above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is slightly below average, as is the proportion at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school has a breakfast club.
- The school meets the government’s current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen links with parents whose children are often absent so that their children’s attendance improves and so helps them to make better progress.

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work together through practical, investigative activities, especially in mathematics in Key Stage 1
 - giving pupils dedicated time in lessons to write at length.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When children enter the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, they have skills below those typically expected for their age. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average, which represents good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils leave the school about a term ahead of pupils nationally.
- Progress from pupils' individual starting points is particularly strong in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2, where adults take every opportunity to ask pupils to explain things so that they develop good communication skills. For example, one child in the Reception class clearly explained that an elephant uses its trunk to get water to drink as well as food for eating.
- Key Stage 1 pupils, historically, have made less progress, particularly in mathematics. This is improving and their progress is similar to the rest of the school although, in mathematics, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to apply their skills through investigations.
- A greater proportion of the most-able pupils are reaching above average attainment in all areas because effective teaching helps them to make good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported and closely monitored by staff.
- There is no significant difference between the progress of those known to be eligible for the pupil premium and that of other pupils. The attainment gap between pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and others is narrowing. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals make similar, and sometimes better, progress than others. This reflects the school's commitment to making sure that all pupils have an equality of opportunity to do well.
- Pupils' understanding of the sounds that letters make (phonics) is improving. In the Nursery class, staff used songs to help the children to learn the sounds more effectively. Children start to use these skills well in their early reading and writing.
- Pupils' literacy skills are good. Pupils' writing is well presented, although they do not always have enough opportunities to apply their skills in longer pieces of work. Pupils' reading skills are strong and encouraged across the school. In Year 2, pupils keep excellent quality diaries to record their reading, which are also used by parents to communicate with the school about how well their children are doing. By Year 6, attainment in reading is above average and pupils are very keen and competent readers. Reading is, 'like opening a door into an imaginary world', as voiced by one pupil.
- Parents feel welcome in school and the vast majority are happy with the achievement of their children.
- The outdoor area in Early Years Foundation Stage helps children's early physical development and the extra Primary School Sport funding is providing new activities, such as basketball, and is enthusing pupils who normally do not participate in sporting activities.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good because lessons are planned to cater for the different abilities of pupils. Pupils' books from the previous year were analysed during the inspection and these show that teaching over time is good, because pupils make good progress.
- Teachers use a wide range of techniques to improve pupils' learning and make lessons enjoyable. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, the teacher introduced good literacy skills by encouraging the pupils to act out the role of travel agents.
- Pupils see their teachers as 'experts', because of their good subject knowledge on different topics, and appreciate how they help them to learn. Questions are challenging and encourage pupils to think.

- Reading is taught well and encouraged across the curriculum. In a Year 6 lesson about the Victorians, pupils used their research skills to find out how people lived at that time. This enabled them to gain good experience for the future; they were working to a deadline, which gave them a sense of productive urgency.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and writing and basic skills are taught well. However, not enough time is available for pupils to practise their skills in longer pieces of work.
- Teachers have a good understanding of teaching different methods in mathematics although not enough opportunities are provided for Key Stage 1 pupils' to learn through practical activities.
- The curriculum is effectively employed to capture pupils' interests with fascinating topics, such as 'space', in the Reception class, where children are asked to find interesting words to describe aliens from other planets.
- When teachers mark pupils' work, they use different coloured pens to indicate what pupils must do to improve their literacy and numeracy work. This helps pupils to check and improve their work.
- Teachers regularly share good ideas with their colleagues and there is good support to help teachers improve their practice by the provision of training in order to develop their skills further.
- All staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. They use group work to help to foster pupils' good social skills and also to stress the importance of good manners and behaviour in class.
- Teaching assistants play an important part in improving learning for pupils, both in class and in small group work. They encourage pupils to find things out for themselves and to explain their discoveries to adults. This requires them to think hard and to reflect on their learning and progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The importance of good behaviour is emphasised from the start of children's time in school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, all children are made aware of the consequences of misbehaviour. Much use is also made of positive rewards and praise for good behaviour.
- Pupils in the Reception class react quickly when a teacher wants their attention. All children stop what they are doing and wiggle their fingers to show that they are listening.
- Pupils are well behaved as they move around the school. They are considerate towards their fellow pupils and are polite to visitors. Older children take on responsibilities, for example, in the school's daily act of worship, looking after computers and projectors, and delivering the assembly's message or theme.
- On the playground, some staff join in with the pupils in their games and, during this inspection, pupils were observed playing happily together.
- In most lessons, behaviour is good and the vast majority of pupils settle to their work quickly without fuss.
- There are few recorded incidents of poor behaviour and pupils say there is very little bullying or name calling, but any incidents that are reported to staff are dealt with promptly.
- The vast majority of parents think that their children are safe in school. Pupils agree with this and they are very aware of how to keep themselves safe when using computers. Inspection evidence supports this view.
- The school works diligently to improve overall attendance, although at present it is below average. The school's leaders recognise that more work can be done with parents to impress on them how repeated absence slows their children's progress. Leaders and managers have had considerable success in reducing long-term absence rates and in improving pupils' punctuality.
- The school hosts a very popular breakfast club, which both parents and pupils appreciate. This helps to foster good relationships between the pupils of all ages.

The leadership and management are good

- The senior leaders, as well as the governing body, are very ambitious for the school.
- The senior leaders, including those with key subject responsibilities, check carefully on how well pupils are achieving and how the quality of teaching is improving. As a result, the school's overall performance has improved from satisfactory to good since the last inspection.
- Pupils' progress is tracked carefully by staff, so any pupils who are in danger of falling behind, as well as those who have special educational needs, are given timely help to make good progress.
- Teaching has improved because of professional development and advice based on close monitoring of teachers' work. The teaching of writing and mathematics has improved, although aspects requiring improvement remain. Teachers are set targets based on their performance and salary awards are closely linked to these.
- The curriculum is good. Pupils enthuse about their weekly 'enrichment hour' when they are allowed to choose activities, such as art and craft, for example, from a selection offered by teachers.
- The school has good relationships with parents, but could do more to improve contact with a very small number of parents to ensure that their children attend well and so make faster progress.
- The pupils contribute towards their own wider development by their involvement in an eco-council that is concerned with their environment and in raising money for charity. There are annual productions by the school drama club and many pupils compete for the school in sporting events.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet current requirements.
- The local authority has provided the school with good support, for example, to check on the quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair of the Governing Body is extremely knowledgeable about the school, including information on the performance of pupils. Governors are aware of how much progress is being made across the school, because they review data. They are aware of the quality of teaching and accurately pinpoint areas which the school's leaders need to improve further. Governors are clear about the significance of making sure that staff are well managed. They are, therefore, able to hold the school robustly to account. They are acutely aware of the importance of performance management in helping teachers to improve their skills and ensure that any increases in salaries are linked to teachers' performance. The governing body realise the impact that the extra funding has made to the achievement of those eligible for pupil premium funding. Governors also check that the new Primary School Sport funding, to promote physical education and pupils' physical well-being, is enhancing teachers' skills and adding richness to pupils' experiences.

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	111669
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	425796

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hilary Askin
Headteacher	Elaine Hughes-Narborough
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2011
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