

# Thornhill Lees Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant and Nursery School

Slaithwaite Road, Thornhill Lees, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, WF12 9DL

## Inspection dates

6–7 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are well prepared for their future learning. They are keen to learn, happy and inquisitive.
- Pupils of all abilities, including those with English as an additional language, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well. They respond well to skilled support carefully targeted to their needs.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. It is sometimes outstanding. Teachers make good use of teaching assistants to tailor work closely to pupils' individual learning needs.
- Pupils are well behaved and say they feel safe. They enjoy learning and take their responsibilities, such as school councillors, seriously.
- Links with parents are excellent and this contributes to pupils' good achievement and personal development. Pupils' health and emotional well-being are strongly promoted through a wide range of good quality sporting and cultural clubs and activities.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher drive the school forward through clear and rigorous leadership. They are supported well by capable subject leaders and a knowledgeable governing body. As a result, the school is well placed to continue to improve.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always use good visual resources that fully engage and inform pupils.
- Teachers do not always check on pupils' progress during the lesson and adjust the teaching to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Although teachers ask good questions, they do not always ensure that all pupils have the chance to answer and develop their speaking skills further.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 lessons including three joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. The inspectors also made a number of shorter visits to classrooms.
- Discussions were held with a group of pupils, the Chair and other members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and members of staff including senior leaders and other leaders with particular responsibilities. Inspectors also heard pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of 14 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), the outcomes from the school's consultations and several discussions with parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including information on pupils' current progress, the school's plans for improvement, the management of teachers' performance, the use of pupil premium funding, and documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour and safety.

## Inspection team

Andrew Clark, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lesley Bowyer

Additional Inspector

Barbara Martin

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and receive the pupil premium is 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 children that are looked after.
- The large majority of pupils are from minority ethnic families, largely of Indian or Pakistani heritage. A small but increasing number of pupils are from Eastern European families.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The headteacher was appointed to the school after the last inspection.

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

- Further improve pupils' achievement through increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - making good use of clear and vivid resources to further motivate and inform pupils
  - regularly checking pupils' progress during the lesson and adjusting the teaching to fully meet their needs
  - ensuring that teachers encourage and enable all pupils to respond to the questions they ask.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding which are generally well below those typical for their age. They make at least good progress in all areas of learning. The development of their early speaking, reading, writing and number skills is particularly effective and leaves them well placed for their future learning. As a result, children are curious about the world around them and eager to learn.
- Throughout Key Stage 1 pupils continue to make good progress. They reach at least average standards in reading, writing and mathematics which is generally reflected in national assessments by the end of Year 2. An increasing proportion of pupils are making outstanding progress, especially in writing.
- Pupils acquire good independent learning and thinking skills which contribute to the achievement of all groups of pupils, especially the most-able.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and supported by pupil premium funding make at least good progress. Many of these pupils work at standards which are similar to those of other pupils through school and the gap between them is narrowing.
- Disabled pupils and those supported at school action and school action plus who have special educational needs progress well. They sometimes make outstanding progress. They acquire effective reading and writing skills which enable them to tackle a wide range of subjects because of the good support they receive.
- Pupils with English as an additional language, including the few pupils from Eastern Europe, make good progress. The focus on basic skills and opportunities to apply them contribute to successful achievement.
- The effective promotion of equality of opportunity is reflected in the good progress made by the many different groups of pupils represented through school.
- Pupils' speaking skills are good and have improved well since the last inspection. They speak pertinently about their work and explain their thinking well to others.
- Pupils' reading skills are good. They tackle new and unfamiliar words well because they have a good understanding of letters and their sounds to help them. This is reflected in above average results in national assessments for these skills. They enjoy reading a wide range of fiction and non-fiction to inform their learning in different subjects.
- Pupils' writing skills are particularly well developed and progress is sometimes outstanding. The large majority of pupils are productive and write legibly at length. By Year 2, pupils of all abilities, especially the more-able, write with imagination in carefully structured paragraphs for many different reasons such as letters, poems, biographical and historical accounts.
- The pupils' progress in mathematics is also good. Their counting and mental calculation skills are well developed and they apply them well in solving mathematical problems. They often use their mathematical skills, particularly data handling, in different subjects.
- There are many examples of good standards of work in art, design and technology, information and communication technology, history and science around school.
- Although the achievement of all groups of pupils is at least good, they sometimes do not make the very best progress they can because the quality of teaching is not consistently outstanding.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Reading and writing skills are taught well through sharply focused lessons with a strong concentration on basic skills and good opportunities to apply them. For example, teachers and teaching assistants skilfully model how letters are written and how sounds blend together to make new words. The school makes good use of systematic reading schemes and a well stocked

library to further promote good progress.

- Mathematical skills are also taught well, particularly through brief and challenging mental and oral activities carefully matched to the needs of different groups. Pupils then apply these skills in problem-solving situations.
- Teachers' expectations are high. They set challenging targets for all pupils and are quick to intervene if achievement looks like it might fall below this standard.
- Activities indoors and out in the Early Years Foundation Stage are carefully matched to the needs of children of all abilities to promote independent learning and systematic progress in speaking, reading, writing and number skills.
- The use of marking and feedback to involve pupils in assessing and improving their own work is a strong feature of their learning in many subjects. It is a good improvement since the last inspection and contributes well to pupils' achievement, especially for the more-able.
- Teachers make good use of points of reference and key information for further learning in literacy and numeracy. For example, pupils make good use of number lines and number squares to embed mathematical facts and attractive dictionary cards for their reading and spelling work.
- Teaching assistants and other adults, including students and volunteers, are deployed well to support all pupils. They are particularly skilful in encouraging disabled pupils and those with a special educational need to be increasingly independent in their learning. They make a good contribution to the learning of pupils with English as an additional language, including support in their heritage language.
- Outstanding links with parents contribute to the effective use of homework to improve pupils' basic skills and their learning in other subjects such as design and technology and science.
- Occasionally, the visual resources teachers use, particularly during the introduction to lessons, are not clear and vivid enough to fully engage and inform all pupils.
- Sometimes, particularly when the teacher is working closely with a group of pupils, they do not check regularly on the progress all pupils are making to ensure that all are consistently achieving the best they are capable of.
- Although teachers ask well chosen questions to improve pupils' learning, they sometimes take responses only from those who volunteer to answer, rather than encouraging all learners to participate.

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

- Children settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the extremely good care and support they receive from all adults. Home visits by Nursery and Reception staff contribute to children's strong sense of security and belonging and their effective personal development.
- Pupils are well behaved, polite and considerate. They establish excellent relationships with adults and other pupils and, as a result, their behaviour is sometimes exemplary.
- Pupils say they feel safe because they are well cared for by teachers and other adults. They say that bullying seldom happens and school records confirm this. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including appropriate Internet safety. If bullying takes place, pupils are confident it will be quickly dealt with by staff.
- Pupils enjoy school. They have positive attitudes to work and want to do well. Parents and staff express very positive views on their children's behaviour and the very positive relationships throughout the school. As a result, pupils are punctual and attendance is average and improving.
- Children take their roles as school councillors seriously. They have been involved in planning the exciting playtime resources which contribute strongly to pupils' health and well-being.
- Pupils' behaviour is not outstanding because, very occasionally, the quality of teaching does not inspire pupils to be passionate and enthusiastic enough about their learning.

## The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's clear vision and ambition for the school is fully shared by all staff, governing body and parents. There is a continuous pursuit of high standards in every aspect of the school's work. This is very evident in the constantly improving environment for learning and good quality policies, procedures and communication to parents and pupils.
- Rigorous assessment systems underpin the good and improving quality of teaching and learning and support the systematic role of senior leaders and the governing body in all aspects of school improvement. As a result, self-evaluation is accurate and the school is aware that the few inconsistencies in the quality of teaching are yet to be fully addressed to improve achievement further.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior staff provide good role models to their colleagues and are skilled in assessing the quality of teaching and setting challenging targets for teachers to aspire to. Subject leaders, some of whom are new to their roles, provide increasingly effective leadership.
- The school receives appropriate support and challenge from the local authority. The school's assessment and tracking procedures and aspects of curriculum development are used as examples of good practice by the local authority.
- Staff are held accountable for the progress their pupils make and have to meet stringent criteria in order to achieve the next salary level.
- A key factor in improving learning is the development of the curriculum. Carefully planned projects have significantly boosted pupils' speaking skills since the last inspection. Initiatives to provide intensive support for pupils whose reading or mathematics work falls below expected levels is helping drive up standards. The development of the achievement of the Silver Science Quality Mark is reflected in the good development of pupils' investigative and independent learning skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly promoted. There are many sporting, artistic and musical events and clubs for all pupils to participate in and these enrich their health and well-being. A clear policy for effective use of new sports development funding to broaden these experiences and develop teachers' skills is in place, although it is too soon to measure its impact.
- The school tackles any very rare issues of discrimination well and promotes equality of opportunity.
- The school works very closely with parents and keeps them very well informed through the website, increasingly regular blogs and many opportunities to participate in the life of the school. This gives a strong boost to their children's achievement and attendance.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is led and organised well. The governing body initiated and undertook a thorough and objective review of its effectiveness in order to ensure that it meets the school's needs. It is well informed through detailed headteacher's reports, its own increasingly systematic checks on the school's work and detailed analysis of pupils' progress. It appropriately decides whether teachers and staff should be rewarded with salary increases and review targets for the headteacher. They manage the finances well by, for example, carefully scrutinising the use made of pupil premium funding and its impact on learning. The governing body ensures that policies for safeguarding meet requirements and are supported by extremely robust record keeping.

## 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>	107705
<b>Local authority</b>	Kirklees
<b>Inspection number</b>	425918

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	319
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tony Longstaff
<b>Headteacher</b>	Margaret Hissett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 November 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01924 325340
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