

Thornton Dale CofE (VC) Primary School

Castle Close, Thornton Dale, Pickering, YO18 7TW

Inspection dates 12–13 November 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 achieve well in English and mathematics from their individual starting points. Standards of attainment are above average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in reading in Key Stage 2. They read with keen interest. This helps them to make good progress in other subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school. Lessons are interesting, lively and fun. Pupils have good relationships with their teachers.
- Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe. They are attentive in lessons and keen to learn. Older pupils are good role models for younger ones.
- The curriculum is well thought out to interest pupils. A notable strength is the range of opportunities pupils have to use their literacy and mathematical skills in other subjects.
- The leadership of teaching is very good. As a result, the school's performance has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Governors are well placed to support and challenge the school. They visit regularly and know what is going on because they talk to staff and pupils regularly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Reception children and average-attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 make slow progress initially in reading. The most-able pupils in Years 3 to 5 do not always do hard enough work in mathematics.
- Senior leaders have more to do to ensure that all parents understand how important it is that their children attend school regularly. A small minority of pupils have below-average attendance.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons taught by six teachers.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and three governors, a representative from the local authority and a group of pupils from Year 6.
- The inspection took into account the 31 responses in the online questionnaire (Parent View). The inspector also talked to Reception parents informally after a phonics (how letters and sounds link together to form words) information session.

Inspection team

Lesley Clark, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is low. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Nearly half the teaching staff and half the teaching assistants have changed in the last two years.
- 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?

- In order to move the teaching from good to outstanding, teachers should:
 - ensure that Reception children and pupils in Key Stage 1 have a secure understanding of phonics so that average-attaining pupils make faster progress in reading
 - give the most-able pupils in Years 3 to 5 suitably different and challenging work in mathematics
 - let the most-able pupils start on tasks as soon as they are ready to do so.
- Leaders and managers should work with parents to ensure that they all understand the importance of regular attendance and the impact it has on their children's progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well from individual starting points that are generally in line with expected levels. The majority reach a good stage of development by the end of the Reception Year.
- Reception children make good progress. They develop enquiring minds because they learn through investigation and discovery, especially outdoors in activities such as den-making or the 'mud kitchen'.
- Comparatively few Reception children reach a good level of development in reading. The school has recently introduced phonics sessions but these have yet to have full impact.
- Pupils make good progress overall in Key Stage 1. Standards of attainment are above average in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. This is because pupils use their writing and mathematical skills in most of their tasks.
- Attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 is broadly average. Lower-attaining pupils make good progress because they are given extra help and the most-able pupils read well. However, average-attaining pupils do not have a secure understanding of phonics, which slows their progress. Results in the Year 1 phonics screening check are below average, and so it takes pupils time to catch up.
- However, in Key Stage 2, pupils make outstanding progress in reading. Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 are significantly above average, with 70% of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age. Pupils read exceptionally well because they study challenging books and read widely for pleasure. They skim read competently to glean information quickly. This helps them to make good progress in other subjects.
- Pupils write well. In the 2013 national tests at the end of Year 6, a significant proportion of pupils exceeded expected levels. Pupils' writing shows they have a good grasp of sentence construction, punctuation and grammar. They clearly enjoy playing with words, as in this extract from a poem entitled 'Freaky fractions': 'What's that coming up the hill? Is it a dreaded decimal?'
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics. Following the school's firm focus on mathematics, standards of attainment have rocketed. The results in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2013 are significantly above average. Pupils make outstanding progress in mathematics in Year 6. In Years 3 to 5, progress in mathematics is good rather than outstanding because sometimes the most-able pupils' progress slows when the work is too easy.
- Pupils who are supported through school action, school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs make good progress. Most reach the level expected for their age by the end of Year 6. This is because they learn alongside others and have extra help as and when they need it. As a result, they turn into confident, independent learners.
- The pupil premium funding is used well to support individual pupils. They make as good progress as others in school. Year by year, the numbers of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are so small that any comparison between their attainment and that of other pupils in the school would be statistically meaningless. The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination successfully.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge. This means that they teach confidently and know how to make learning interesting. Pupils say, 'Teachers make learning fun!'
- Most lessons involve pupils in learning actively and collaboratively. Pupils know how well they are doing because they contribute throughout the lesson to the 'top tips for success' and check whether they are following them.
- Teaching ensures that pupils have ample opportunities to use and apply their literacy and mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, in a Year 6 geography lesson, pupils used the

square mileage of different countries to determine where to allocate them on a map of Europe.

- Teaching is good in Reception and Key Stage 1, with considerable strengths in the way children and pupils learn individually on personalised tasks. This is more successful for writing and mathematics than reading, where, until recently, teaching phonics has been less systematic.
- A strength in mathematics teaching across the school is the way that pupils are taught to work systematically and methodically. Teachers expect pupils to think for themselves and to explain how they have arrived at their answers.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding in mathematics because teachers in Years 3 to 5 miss opportunities to extend the learning of the most-able pupils. Sometimes, the most-able pupils are ready to start sooner than others because they grasp new concepts quickly. They do not always undertake suitably different and challenging tasks.
- In Key Stage 2, teachers expect the most from pupils in literacy lessons. They question well, prompting pupils to clarify their views and to use appropriate terminology. For instance, Year 5 pupils explained that using rhetorical questions and ellipsis made a good start to a story.
- In all classes, teaching assistants are used well to support pupils' learning. This aids pupils' good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons. They listen attentively and discuss ideas constructively. They are keen to learn and thoroughly enjoy pitting their wits against thorny problems.
- Pupils gain in confidence as they grow older, becoming increasingly self-reliant. Older pupils are good role models for younger ones and help them to develop more mature social skills.
- They have a good understanding of pupils with behavioural problems, explaining, 'Some people find it hard at first to moderate their language and behaviour but it's not their fault.'
- By Year 6, pupils are articulate, trustworthy young people. They all have responsibilities which they take seriously. The school prepares them well for their future lives.
- The school council plays a leading role in the school. Councillors run meetings and allocate specific jobs according to aptitude, such as fund-raising.
- Pupils are very sure that there is 'no true bullying, just people being a bit silly sometimes'. They know about different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and know how to deal with problems should they arise. They feel safe at school and are confident that staff will help them if they have any concerns.
- Attendance rates are average. While few pupils are persistent absentees, a small minority have below-average attendance.
- A lot of pupils take part in sport activities. This makes a good contribution to pupils' physical and emotional well-being. Their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has improved considerably since the last inspection. Teaching is consistently good with outstanding practice in Year 6. Using and applying literacy and mathematical skills in other subjects is now a notable strength.
- This has been achieved by very effective leadership of teaching. Weak teaching is tackled uncompromisingly. Regular checks on teaching quality and helpful suggestions to improve are reflected in teachers' confident practice. Coaching is used especially well to support less experienced teachers.
- Performance management and appraisal are used effectively to reward excellent teaching and to set suitable targets to ensure that teaching is consistently good. Teachers who underperform do not pass the pay threshold until their teaching is shown to secure good rates of progress for the pupils they teach.

- Regular meetings to discuss individual pupils' progress mean that teachers are fully accountable for their pupils' achievements.
- Staff have a strong sense of teamwork. They work together well to ensure that pupils in the same year group have similar learning experiences. They share ideas and try out different teaching methods. This is strengthened by good quality professional development.
- The headteacher has a very clear view of how successful the school can be. Her aim to create 'a school without walls, an outward-looking school' is evident in the lively curriculum, extensive educational visits and local and international community links.
- The new Primary School Sport funding is used to employ a specialist sports teacher to teach alongside staff, run school clubs and establish a play leader course for older pupils. The impact is seen in pupils' keen interest in sport as they strive to reach higher standards.
- The school has good relationships with parents and keeps them closely informed in frequent newsletters. Senior leaders are less successful in working with parents to improve the attendance rates of a small minority of pupils.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements. The systems to ensure that pupils and staff are safe are rigorous.
- The local authority gives light-touch support to the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are knowledgeable, well organised and better placed to challenge and support the school than at the time of the last inspection. They know how well pupils, including those supported through the pupil premium funding, are progressing. They check on pupils' progress and teaching effectiveness regularly through analysing data, visiting the school and talking to pupils. From this, they understand how well teaching is led. Governors are closely involved in the management of staff and have tackled staffing issues competently.

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	121520
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	425839

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	145
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Marshall
Headteacher	Mrs L Karetnyk
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2011
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