

# Thornton Primary School

Heys Street, Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancashire, FY5 4JP

## Inspection dates

5–6 February 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Since the previous inspection, pupils' standards of attainment have risen rapidly so that by the end of Year 6 they are now average.
- Pupils are taught well and all groups of pupils from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6 make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- All teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers plan lessons which make learning for pupils enjoyable.
- The quality of care is a strength of the school, particularly in supporting pupils who need help and guidance.
- Pupils say they feel safe and are well looked after. Their behaviour, relationships and attitudes to learning are good.
- Recent changes to the curriculum, including educational visits and visitors to the school have all helped to stimulate and excite pupils; this has contributed well to their improved achievement.
- All members of staff work well together in order to make an effective team that is ensuring the school continues to improve.
- The headteacher has developed other teachers skilfully to lead the school on key areas of responsibility.
- The school has a strong leadership team led by a very effective headteacher and supported by a knowledgeable governing body. Together they have ensured that over the last two years pupil achievement and the quality of teaching have improved rapidly.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not given enough time to reply to the comments which teachers write in their books.
- Pupils do not yet have the skills to check other pupils' work so that they can learn from each other.
- Pupils do not progress as rapidly in mathematics as they do in English. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in mathematics are not high enough.
- There are not enough occasions when pupils can develop their mathematical skills practically or through solving problems.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five teachers and visited nine lessons which included a joint lesson observation with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, pupils, parents, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector scrutinised pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- A range of the school's documentation was examined, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing, documents relating to monitoring and evaluation, systems for tracking pupil's progress, documents regarding safeguarding and key policies.
- The inspector took account of responses of the school's most recent questionnaire for parents alongside 20 responses from the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors analysed 20 questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Sue Sharkey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Thornton Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided for children in local authority care, for children from armed service families and for children known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school has an above average proportion of pupils who enter and leave the school at other than the usual times.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher joined the school in January 2012 and two teachers have been appointed more recently.
- Pupils are taught in five classes; the Reception year with some Year 1, Year 1 with Year 2, Year 3 with some Year 4, some Year 4 with Year 5 and then Year 6. The number in each year group can be less than ten.
- There is a breakfast club and after school club on site which is not managed by the governing body. This provision is subject to separate inspection and a separate report is available on the Ofsted website.
- The school shares the site with a children's centre which is inspected separately and its reports is also available on the Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)
- The school has achieved the Leading Parent Partnership award.

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

- Improve the proportion of outstanding teaching in order to speed up progress by:
  - developing pupils' skills in checking each other's work in order to help pupils to learn from each other
  - making sure that after teachers have marked pupils' work they are given sufficient time to respond to any comments teachers have made.
- Speed up the rate of progress in mathematics by:
  - making sure that pupils have opportunities during mathematics lessons to practice their calculation skills through practical activities
  - ensuring there are more occasions for pupils to develop a wider range of mathematical skills through real-life problem solving in subjects other than mathematics
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills and knowledge that are below what is expected for their age and often well below in reading, writing, numbers and speaking and listening.
- Since the previous inspection there have been many improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage classroom, especially in the outdoor area. Children now enjoy a wide range of exciting activities. Outdoors there are covered areas and shelters so that children can still enjoy dressing up or talking to each other as they explore shapes in the sand, when outside in wet weather. As a result, children make good progress and are well prepared to continue into Year 1.
- The good start made in the Early Years Foundation Stage is built upon well as pupils move through Key Stages 1 and 2 where all groups, including the most able pupils, continue to make good progress. Consequently, the number of pupils achieving the higher levels in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 has improved over the last two years. For example, teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 show pupils who achieved Level 3 in mathematics have more than doubled while in the 2013 national tests for Year 6 the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 in writing has rapidly improved and is now average.
- Specially tailored work means that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same good progress as all other pupils. This demonstrates the school's commitment to providing all pupils with an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Last year in the national phonics (matching letters to the sounds they make) screening check pupils achieved below average results. The school responded swiftly by introducing a new phonics scheme to help pupils throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 to improve their phonics skills. This is proving to be very successful already so that pupils who did not meet the standards in the phonics check now do.
- By the end of Year 2 standards of attainment are average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils say they enjoy reading at home as well as at school. They are developing a strong culture of reading for enjoyment. Pupils use the strategies they have been taught effectively and are prepared to have a go at reading familiar as well as less familiar words.
- By the end of Year 6 in 2013, 100% of pupils made at least expected progress in reading, with the proportion of pupils making more than expected progress from their individual starting points comparable with those who did so nationally. This is a significant improvement from previous years.
- The number of pupils making expected or better than expected progress also improved in writing and was considerably higher than the national average.
- Although pupil progress in mathematics has also improved, with the number of pupils making above expected progress in mathematics doubling by the end of Year 6 in 2013, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. It is directed towards supporting pupils so that the gap between their attainment and that of all other pupils is closing rapidly. In 2013, Year 6 pupils who were known to be eligible for free school meals did not do as well as other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the school's system for checking the progress of pupils shows that in all year groups pupils who are eligible for free school meals make good progress. Year on year, the number of pupils in year groups is too small to make comments on their standards compared to other pupils.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Systems to raise the quality of teaching have been successful so that it is now consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge as well as good relationships with pupils. Teaching assistants give expert help to pupils, working effectively with

teachers to boost the progress of pupils often working one-to-one or in small groups. Together they question pupils skilfully, checking regularly throughout lessons on how well they are learning.

- Pupils' books show that their work is marked regularly. Teachers add useful comments so that pupils know what they have to do to improve their work. Pupils, however, do not always have enough time allocated to them to be able to learn from their comments fully and to respond.
- Good teaching provides pupils with regular opportunities to write across different topics and subjects. They are able to explore different styles and write at length which builds up their confidence and contributes to their good progress in a variety of subjects.
- In mathematics, pupils cover a wide range of work. However, progress in the development of calculation and problem solving skills sometimes slows. This is when pupils do not have regular opportunities to practise their number skills through practical activities during mathematics lessons or to be involved in tackling real-life problem solving activities in a range of subjects.
- The good mix of teacher-led activities, pupils working together in groups, in pairs or as individuals develops a wide range of learning and thinking skills. In a Year 3/4 lesson, a group of pupils enjoyed being characters in a play. They read their parts eagerly while following the script, showing respect for each other as they took turns. The teacher praised pupils for the way they read their part using punctuation to raise or lower their voices to embrace the role of the character. Consequently they had a clear understanding of how well they were doing.
- Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to work with, and challenge, each other and they do this well. However, there are not many occasions when they can look at and check each other's work so that they learn from each other.

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

- Pupils are polite, considerate and respectful. They get on well with each other and with all the adults in school.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and outside is good. Pupils of all ages for the most part work hard and learn well, independently. They take pride in their work and talk happily about it. There are times though when a few pupils lose concentration during lessons and fiddle unnecessarily with things on the table or are boisterous in the playground.
- Parents are confident that the school looks after their children well and that they are happy and safe in school. The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say bullying is rare and if they have any problems they can talk with any adult in school who will help them quickly. They know about different types of bullying including cyber-bullying and name calling, as a result of effective teaching and special anti-bullying weeks.
- Pupils volunteer to represent their classes on the school council. The chairperson, secretary and treasurer have been trained in how to do their job well and they are proud of their role.
- The school council's current project is to raise funds to improve the playground. They agree that the playground facilities need improving so pupils happily make cakes at home to sell in school in order to buy benches where they can talk with friends at break time.
- Some pupils have recently been trained to become peer mentors. They say this is a very important role and are pleased to be able to help other pupils if they have a problem and to encourage pupils to have confidence and 'believe in themselves'.
- Attendance is average. The school's learning mentor works closely with parents many of whom use the school's well established 'Walking Bus' which she leads. This also provides a good opportunity for school staff and pupils to catch-up and 'have a good chat' on the way to school.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher provides the energy and drive which has secured a strong team approach to leadership and management. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher, special needs

co-ordinator, staff and governors. As a result of actions taken, teaching, achievement and the roles of subject leaders have improved since the previous inspection.

- Marked improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where the outdoor area has been developed, now provides the same good quality of education that is provided indoors. These actions along with the school's accurate view of its performance show that the school has good capacity for continued improvement.
- Staff feel included in the leadership and management process and are keen to play their part in improving the school. Their responses to the staff questionnaire were very positive.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out using a wide range of activities including lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and regular checks on the progress pupils are making. As a result, the headteacher is able to secure any improvements needed in teaching often through whole staff training in school which is linked to teachers' performance management. Targets for improvement are linked to pupils' progress. Recent training has focused on improving pupils' spelling which has already had a positive impact on pupils' work.
- Supportive links with other schools, parents and different agencies including the adjacent children's centre, show how well the school uses partnerships to help improve pupil's progress.
- The school has worked in close partnership with the local authority. It has supported the headteacher and worked with her to carry out monitoring and staff training but now offers a 'light touch' support.
- Changes to the curriculum have already ensured that English and mathematics continue to improve. Through a whole school theme pupils have a say in how they would like to develop learning in their class. This has enabled them to improve their independent learning skills when writing a travel brochure or using clay to design a sculpture. Visits to a textile mill, a windmill as well as the local church and residential visits to the Lake District all contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school uses the primary school's sports funding to ensure that pupils experience a wider range of sporting activities for example gymnastics, tennis and dodge-ball and is pleased that this is already having a positive effect on pupils' enjoyment and well-being.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body keeps a close eye on the school's finance. It contributes to discussions about how additional funds such as the pupil premium and the primary school's sports funding should be spent and checks that it has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Governors keep up to date through regular training. Visits to classrooms and discussions with staff complement the effective monitoring of the school's work. The governing body has clear understanding of how pupils are doing compared with others nationally. Governors know the quality of teaching and make sure there are strong links between teaching and salary progression through performance management. They ensure safeguarding procedures are secure so that pupils and staff feel safe in school.

## 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>	119148
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	430971

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	127
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Eric Winston
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachel Clements
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 May 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01253 821128
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