

Thornton Watlass Church of England Primary School

Thornton Watlass , Ripon, North Yorkshire, HG4 4AH

Inspection dates 13 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress from year to year and this limits their attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, especially in writing.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement. Pupils are not always provided with the right level of challenge because work is sometimes too easy for some pupils and too hard for others.
- There are few good opportunities for pupils to use their skills in reading, writing and mathematics when they do work in other subjects.
- Work in books of older pupils is not generally well presented and, for some, handwriting is not well formed.
- Procedures for gaining an accurate view of how well the school is doing are not backed up by information about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. This leads to leaders and managers failing to gain an accurate picture of the school's performance.
- Leadership and management requires improvement. Leaders and managers, including governors, do not have enough knowledge and understanding of how to check on the performance of the pupils and teachers.

The school has the following strengths

- The quality of teaching is improving and, at the end of the Reception Year, children are ready to tackle Year 1 work. Attainment is rising to a level similar to the national average by the end of Year 2.
- Standards in reading are rising.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in school. They work hard at the tasks provided for them in their efforts to please their teacher.
- Good cultural opportunities enable pupils to have a wider understanding of the similarities and differences between those from different backgrounds.
- The governing body is supportive of the school and committed to its improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by two inspectors over one day. The executive headteacher spent the morning at Thornton Watlass and the afternoon with the inspection team at Snape Community Primary.
- Children from the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 were being taught on the day at Snape Community Primary School which was also being inspected by Ofsted.
- Inspectors visited two lessons or parts of lessons. They listened to pupils reading and talked with pupils. The headteacher took part in a joint observation with the lead inspector.
- Separate discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. The school's own survey of opinions from members of staff in November 2013 was also considered.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at pupils' learning journals and work books, staff planning journals, data on children's progress, planning and monitoring documentation and information relating to the welfare of children and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the results of the school's own questionnaire to parents, letters from parents and discussions with parents at the start of the first day of inspection.
- Inspectors observed pupils during lunchtime and throughout the day.

Inspection team

Kate Pringle, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sue Eland

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is smaller than average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those children in local authority care and children from service families.
- All pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school is federated with Snape Community Primary with an executive headteacher. The executive headteacher is at Thornton Watlass Primary for approximately half the week, spending the remaining part of the week at Snape Community Primary. Both schools share the same governing body.
- Pupils of all ages regularly spend a proportion of the week working with friends from Snape Community Primary either there or at Thornton Watlass.
- The school is presently being supported by Brompton-on-Swale Primary School whose headteacher is a National Leader of Education.
- The federated schools run a breakfast club and after-school club each day on one or other of the two school sites. The breakfast club was at Thornton Watlass on the day of inspection.
- Inspectors have not reported on school performance against the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics, because the size of the Year 6 cohort in 2013 was too small.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is always good or better in order to increase progress and so raise standards, especially in writing by:
 - making sure that teachers use the school's system for tracking progress to plan lessons at the right level for pupils so that work is neither too hard or too easy
 - providing greater opportunities for pupils to use their developing skills in literacy and numeracy across all subjects through work which is closely linked to their ability levels
 - raising teachers' expectations of the presentation of work, especially with regard to writing.
- Increase the impact of leadership and management, including governance, in order to quicken the rate of school improvement by:
 - ensuring that the school's procedures for judging outcomes are rigorous and accurate
 - ensuring that plans for improvement identify what needs to be done to raise the performance of the school and by what date
 - enhancing the skills of leaders and managers, including those of the governing body so that they can more robustly check the performance of the school and its pupils

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The attainment of pupils in Year 6 has been broadly average over recent years. Subject strengths vary from year to year with writing standards generally below those of reading and mathematics.
- This is a very small school and there is considerable variation in achievement between different groups from year to year. Most pupils, over time, make expected progress. However, few pupils make better than expected progress.
- Most children start school with skills that are typical for their age. They make good progress over the Reception Year and usually enter Year 1 at levels which are above average.
- The teaching of phonics (understanding how to use letters and the sounds they make) has been successful and most recent results indicate that all pupils meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Over the last three years in Key Stage 1, there have been improving standards and pupils now attain average levels at the end of Year 2, although writing is still below the standards achieved in reading and mathematics. Progress in the past has been slow but this has now quickened, particularly in reading, so that pupils now make expected rates of progress. Present school assessments show that pupils are on track to meet national averages and that the rate of pupils' progress is improving.
- The present attainment of pupils in Year 6 in reading and mathematics is in line with what is expected for their age but, in writing, standards are lower. In 2012 and 2013, the progress that pupils made between Year 2 and Year 6 declined. This is because, although most pupils made expected progress, very few made better-than-expected progress compared with other pupils nationally. The school's evidence and that from inspection for the current Year 6 indicate that this group is making expected progress from Year 2.
- Across the school, the most able pupils are making expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics which is similar to other groups of pupils in the school. Their attainment in all three subjects is in line with the levels expected for their age. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in order for them to make more rapid progress.
- Pupils with special educational needs largely make expected progress similar to other pupils. Their achievement in reading and mathematics is stronger than in writing.
- For the past three years, there have been no pupils in Year 6 who were known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium funding. This means it is not possible to determine whether the gap between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils in the school is narrowing. However, across the school, pupils known to be eligible for such support achieve standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are similar to those for other pupils of their age. Their progress at the expected rate in all subjects reflects the expected progress made by other pupils.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, for some, the work that pupils tackle is either too difficult or too easy to help them to make good progress.
- Although teaching is improving, it is not yet enabling pupils to make consistently good progress across the school. Strengths are developing in reading and mathematics but writing remains an area for improvement because teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve are too low.
- Recent work to improve pupils' knowledge and use of phonics has made a big difference in improving pupils' progress in reading at Key Stage 1.
- Books show that work is marked regularly and assessments are made about how well pupils are achieving. However, this information about pupils' developing skills and abilities is not used well

enough to plan work that provides them with the next steps in their learning. Too often, work does not build well enough on pupils' previous knowledge to ensure that they make good progress.

- The comments teachers make in their marking of pupils' work let pupils know when they have achieved well. Pupils understand the levels at which they are working but are less clear about how to move onto their next challenge and so quicken their progress.
- Teachers do not encourage pupils to take pride in their work. Presentation of work in pupils' books requires improvement. Handwriting, in particular, is not well developed and the poor formation of letters by a number of pupils adds to untidiness.
- Teachers make good use of strong links with other schools to develop cultural understanding and opportunities for pupils' creative skills. The links with the federated school at Snape and another at the nearby barracks enable pupils to meet with children from different backgrounds and cultures which further their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- When activities interest and capture pupils' imaginations, this increases pupils' enjoyment of learning and helps them to do better.. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils were extremely industrious as they attempted to 'mummify' tomatoes as part of their work learning about Egyptians.
- Although the curriculum offers some opportunities for pupils to practise skills from mathematics and writing across other subjects, teachers do not expect the same levels of skill in writing and problem solving of which pupils are capable in English and mathematics. As a result, pupils are not challenged as well as they should be.
- The school has recently adopted a new system for teaching creative writing but this is still in its early stages. Pupils' writing skills are not yet clearly improving as a result of this initiative.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are encouraged to consider their actions, be thoughtful and care for others. They are aware of how to keep themselves safe and show growing levels of responsibility by Key Stage 2.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are taught well to understand dangers such as those of traffic and water and understand they have a growing responsibility to keep themselves safe as they get older.
- Pupils enjoy school and happily work and play together. They have good relationships with their teachers and show positive attitudes to work. They believe that their school is a safe place to be. The vast majority of parents support this view and recommend the school to others.
- The behaviour of pupils is good in lessons and as they move about the school. They are polite and well mannered. Pupils believe that behaviour is good but most can remember incidents last year when this was not the case. They believe that the actions taken by staff were successful in addressing the problems.
- The school's survey of parents also reflects that behaviour in the past has been less than good at times. However, parents spoken to on the day of the inspection felt that behaviour was good in the school and well managed; this is reflected in findings from the school's most recent survey. An incident raised by letter, fully investigated by the inspection team, was found to have been handled appropriately by leaders and managers.
- Pupils are aware of the different forms that bullying can take. They were aware of some instances last year but say that bullying is no longer a concern.
- Attendance is average. There has been a reduction in persistent absenteeism which is also in line with the national average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The judgements of leaders and managers about the effectiveness of the school are too

generous. Plans for school improvement do not take sufficient account of the need to improve pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching. Measures by which leaders and managers can determine the success of actions are not sharp enough as they do not indicate exactly what needs to be achieved and the time by which improvements should be in place. Leaders' checks on the performance of the school are not rigorous enough.

- Although the school has a lot of information about pupils' attainment and progress, this is not used well enough to be a help to teachers in planning lessons for their pupils. Standards are not rising quickly enough because the focus is on pupils making expected progress, rather than on them making better-than-expected progress.
- Arrangements to check the performance of teachers are established and there is a clear link between teachers' performance and pay progression. There has been successful action to improve the quality of teaching. Changes in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are starting to speed up the rates of pupils' progress. As yet, these improvements are not assuring consistently good or better teaching across the school. This is indicated in that most pupils make expected progress but not better than that.
- Support to improve the quality of teaching is in hand. The school is receiving good support from Brompton-on-Swale Primary School. The teaching of phonics has improved and this has led to pupils making better progress in reading and in acquiring higher reading skills. A scheme to help pupils improve their creative writing has recently been introduced throughout the school.
- The school receives a small amount of pupil premium funding. This has been used to support eligible pupils through, for instance, the funding of a teaching assistant for small group and one-to-one work and specific learning resources. Consequently, these pupils reach similar standards of attainment as other pupils.
- Sports funding has been delegated to support additional lunchtime activities and train teachers in physical education. This is leading to greater opportunities for pupils to engage in a wider range of sporting activities.
- The curriculum has interesting opportunities which pupils enjoy including learning outdoors and ways to develop sporting skills. Links with a nearby army camp school provide very good opportunities to extend pupils' understanding of different cultures, particularly with the Ghurkha children. The school places a central role within the local community and church. Together, these links play a very successful part in developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority supports the school and is helping in a review of teaching and achievement. Its view of the school's performance is similar to that found by inspectors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly supportive of the school; governors are regular visitors. They know how the primary school sport and pupil premium funding are allocated but are less sure about their impact upon pupils' achievements. They ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding, including the training of staff to keep pupils safe from harm. Governors do not challenge the leadership well enough to ensure that improvement gains momentum and direction. Governors rely too heavily upon the headteacher to evaluate the school's effectiveness, including pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. Governors are very committed to their responsibilities and want the school to improve. They are presently unsure of what they need to understand in order to challenge the school more effectively.

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	121521
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	440855

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	23
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gareth Jones
Headteacher	Carol Brotherton
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2012
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