

# Thirsk Community Primary School

Hambleton Place, Thirsk, North Yorkshire, YO7 1SL

## Inspection dates

4–5 February 2014

<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.

- Effective teaching gets children off to a good start in Nursery and Reception. They make good progress during their time there.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress from their starting points.
- Teachers are eager for pupils to do well. They make learning interesting and expect pupils to work hard. Teaching is particularly strong in Key Stage 2.
- Although attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been below average for several years, it is now rising, particularly in reading. This is because pupils' progress is improving quickly.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, staff place a very good emphasis on developing children's speaking and listening skills. This accelerates all aspects of their learning.
- Behaviour is good because staff have good expectations of pupils and manage their behaviour well.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school. Good pastoral care means that adults know pupils well and are alert to their individual needs. Parents who responded to the Ofsted inspection questionnaire agreed that their children are safe in school.
- Leadership and management, including governance, are good. Leaders have successfully managed challenges related to staffing. They have improved teaching and raised attainment in mathematics in Key Stage 2.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils in Key Stage 1 do not always spend an appropriate amount of time on topics to help them make consistently good progress in English and mathematics.
- The work of senior leaders has been extended in the last year, as they have taken on the shared role of leading improvements in mathematics. Checks on the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 do not yet happen regularly enough.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 18 lessons or parts of lessons. Two of these were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the Chair and other members of the governing body, senior leaders, staff, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, assessment information and the school's development plan. Work in pupils' books was examined, and the inspectors listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- There were 20 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) which were taken into account when carrying out the inspection.

## Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christopher Jeffrey Young

Additional Inspector

Steve Rigby

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Thirsk Community Primary is an average-sized primary school.
- There is an above-average proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium. The pupil premium provides additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children supported by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage; there is a below-average proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has a higher-than-average number of pupils joining after the start of the school year.
- The school has experienced a higher-than-usual number of staffing changes in recent years.

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

- Improve progress and raise pupils' attainment further in Key Stage 1 by:
  - improving teachers' planning to ensure that pupils have sufficient time to consolidate their learning in each topic, especially in writing and mathematics, before moving on to new work
  - improving teachers' skills of judging when pupils are ready to move on to more challenging work, especially in writing and mathematics
  - ensuring that pupils have time to respond to comments in teachers' marking and advice given on how to improve their work.
- Further improve leadership and management by:
  - establishing more regular checks on pupils' work in Key Stage 1 classes to ensure that pupils of all abilities are challenged and supported to do their best

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter Nursery with skills that are generally below those typical for their age. They make good progress during their time in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been below average for several years. The impact of unavoidable changes in staffing in Key Stage 1 has been a significant factor in this.
- Inspection evidence shows that progress at Key Stage 1 is improving quickly because staffing is now stable and teaching is more effective. Good teaching of reading has already resulted in higher standards. This is evident, for example, in the results achieved in the Year 1 check of pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds where the percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard rose from being in line with the national average in 2012 to above the national average in 2013.
- Pupils' progress accelerates in Key Stage 2 and pupils gain ground quickly. For example, the proportion of pupils making expected progress, and the proportion making more than expected progress, in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6, was similar to national figures in 2013.
- Pupils read confidently, fluently and with good expression. Early reading skills are taught well, so that pupils have a good base from which to develop writing skills from an early age. Small-group sessions provide additional reading support for pupils who need it.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs make good progress because of the well-targeted support they receive. Those who join the school after the usual time, or speak English as an additional language, receive similar levels of effective support and this helps them to achieve well.
- The most able pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2, because the work they are given usually stretches them to achieve as well as they can. This good progress is reflected in the proportion of pupils who exceeded the expected level in reading and mathematics in national tests in 2013.
- Funding for pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium has been used well to narrow the gap in attainment between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils in the school. Their attainment by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics is currently about one term behind that of other groups.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers ensure that lessons start promptly. They explain ideas clearly and, in most lessons, check how well pupils are following instructions by asking carefully directed questions. They make sure that pupils know what they need to do to achieve success in lessons.
- Teachers' questioning is used effectively to find out what pupils know and to extend their thinking and the development of their own ideas. For example, the teacher's skilful questioning in one Years 3/4 English lesson enabled pupils to identify the features of a play script and how these were different from a story text. Pupils went on to create their own play scripts successfully by applying their new knowledge.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils' learning in lessons. They are particularly effective in promoting the learning of pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties. They have been trained well by the special educational needs coordinator to respond appropriately to the individual needs of these pupils and to maintain their focus on learning.
- Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is based on good knowledge of children's needs and a good understanding of how young children learn. Teachers and adults help children to play productively by working alongside them and talking with them about what they are doing. This quickly engages children in activities, as well as developing their listening and

speaking skills at a good rate.

- Since the previous inspection, teachers have improved their marking of pupils' work. They now give clear advice on what to improve in most books and, when pupils are given opportunities to make corrections, their understanding and progress improve well.
- However, this conscientious marking does not always have the intended outcome, because not all teachers allow pupils enough time to make improvements to their work. This is sometimes the case with mathematics, especially in Key Stage 1 where pupils do not routinely check teachers' comments and are not given opportunity to respond to them.
- In Key Stage 1, improvements in teaching are leading to better learning and stronger performance by pupils, particularly in reading and writing. However, pupils sometimes either do not spend enough time on some topics to allow them to consolidate their learning securely, or they spend too much time on other topics without moving on quickly enough to more challenging work.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are considerate and supportive of each other in lessons, which helps them to concentrate on their work. Occasional disruption from a tiny minority of pupils is managed skilfully by teachers and teaching assistants so that the learning of others is not affected.
- In lessons, pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They listen carefully to teachers' explanations and most are confident enough to offer answers to teachers' questions. When explanations are occasionally too complicated, some pupils lose interest and their progress slows.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school. Those parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire overwhelmingly agree. This is because behaviour is managed well in and out of the classroom and levels of supervision are good. Older pupils say occasional bullying is dealt with effectively by staff and they are taught to recognise the different forms of bullying.
- Pupils are taught well to identify potential dangers to their well-being, for example, those associated with roads, waterways and the use of the internet. Pupils are clear about what to do if approached by a stranger.
- Pupils whose circumstances might put them at risk of becoming vulnerable are monitored and supported well to achieve as well as others. They and their families are supported very well to manage difficulties by the good levels of pastoral care provided by all staff.
- Older pupils willingly take on responsibilities to help with the smooth running of the school. They enjoy their roles as lunchtime monitors and playground buddies, and in helping younger pupils with their reading.

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

- Leadership, including governance, is ambitious and determined in its drive to improve the school. This is reflected in further improvements to teaching, for example, in marking and feedback to pupils to help them improve, in attainment at Key Stage 2 and better rates of progress, especially in reading and writing at Key Stage 1.
- Senior leaders have managed a high level of staff movement in recent years but this situation has contributed to the slower progress made by some pupils during Key Stage 1 in the past. Although much training has been provided for teachers in these classes, the expertise acquired has then been lost as these teachers have left and moved on. A more stable staffing situation now exists and there is clear evidence that pupils' achievement is improving as a result.
- Staff performance is managed well. School records of teaching show there is a clear link between the performance of teachers, the achievement of pupils, and teachers' salary

progression.

- Subject leadership is good in English, where the impact is seen in particular in the development of reading in Key Stage 1 and in writing at Key Stage 2. Achieving improvements in mathematics are a priority for the school this year, with senior leaders assuming the role of mathematics leader until a suitable appointment is made. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, ensuring that provision helps younger children make good progress and prepare well for Year 1.
- The curriculum takes good account of pupils' interests and talents although provision to use and develop basic skills is better planned in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. The school does much to promote equality for different ability groups of pupils. Its current effective work to ensure improved achievement for pupils in Key Stage 1 is clear evidence of this commitment.
- Teachers promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development well by encouraging them to be curious about the world around them and arranging visits to extend pupils' knowledge of their local world. Pupils' social and moral development is fostered well through opportunities to work together harmoniously.
- The school uses the new primary sport funding well to improve the quality and breadth of physical education and sport provision. The range of after-school clubs has been extended, for example, with a new gym club for Key Stage 1 pupils. Pupils' participation in sporting activities is increasing well.
- The local authority is now providing effective support for the school.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school on all measures. Parents of children with additional needs value highly the sustained, good quality support provided by the special needs coordinator and support staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and areas of planned improvement, including data on the school's performance. It ensures safeguarding requirements are met and pupils are safe. Governors take part in a wide range of training to maintain their effectiveness. They are fully involved in driving improvement, for example, in the skilful management of finances to provide smaller classes to improve the achievement of all pupils, especially those in receipt of the pupil premium. They ensure that the school gets good value from spending decisions by comparing data on the progress of these pupils with others in the school. Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. They know how school leaders deal with performance management, check on how well staff are improving their expertise, reward good teaching, and tackle any underperformance.

## 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>	121365
<b>Local authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	440852

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	279
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Elders
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Wild
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 May 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01845 524349
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