

Thorne Green Top Primary School

Middlebrook Lane, Thorne, Doncaster, DN8 5LB

Inspection dates 25–26 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher's leadership has effectively brought about good school improvement over the past two years.
- Some aspects of leadership such as the school's work to support the most vulnerable pupils and the work done to engage with parents are outstanding.
- The leadership and management of teaching and learning by school leaders and governors is highly effective. Teaching quality has significantly improved over the past two years generally, and there has been further rapid improvement in the teaching of mathematics since the previous inspection. This has had a very strong impact on pupils' good achievement.
- Governors' response to issues raised in the previous inspection has been impressive. They have first-class knowledge of the school and of their role in driving improvements.
- Pupils' behaviour and their safety are outstanding. Pupils show excellent attitudes to learning. They are invariably polite and respectful towards others and they feel entirely safe in school.
- The quality of teaching is good. Some teaching is outstanding. Lessons are planned well so that pupils' varying abilities are well catered for.
- Pupils make good progress overall from below expected starting points and achieve well by the time they leave the school. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics match the national average at the end of Year 6.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start and make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in writing is not as rapid as it should be for pupils in Key Stage 1 and for the most able pupils by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons, two of which were observed jointly with senior staff members.
- Meetings were held with parents, pupils, members of the governing body, representatives from the local authority and staff members.
- Also taken into account were the views of 32 parents who responded via Ofsted’s online questionnaire (Parent View), as well as questionnaires completed by members of staff and an internal survey of parents’ views carried out by the school.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and examined a wide range of documentation that included: national assessment data and the school’s own assessments of pupils’ progress; samples of pupils’ work; local authority reports on the school; minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding documents.

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Matthews	Additional Inspector
Susan Davis	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average.
- Provision for children in the Nursery is part time. There is full time provision for children in Reception classes.
- The school meets current government floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- A breakfast club is provided by the school during term time.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2012. He is a Local Leader of Education and provides occasional support for other local authority schools.
- There have been some changes in teaching staff since the previous inspection.
- The school has recently gained the Leading Parent Partnership award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in writing so that more pupils achieve Level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1, and at least Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2, by:
 - making sure that there are always the highest expectations and sufficient challenge in writing tasks
 - helping pupils to use the specific vocabulary for different subjects, accurately in their writing
 - ensuring that feedback from teachers consistently focuses well on how writing across all subjects can be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's clear vision for the school's success, and the expectations and aspirations he has set for staff and pupils, underpin the school's rapid improvement. There is a strong sense of ownership within the school community to which all sections contribute. Consequently, pupils' achievement is good and improving and their personal development thrives.
- The school has very successfully dealt with the issues raised at the previous inspection, resulting in rapid improvements in mathematics and in the ways in which the governors fulfil their role.
- Leaders have embraced the support offered by the local authority very effectively to establish a strong climate of improvement. The capacity of the school's leadership to continue to manage rapid improvement is secure.
- Excellent management of teaching and learning since the headteacher's appointment has been central to the school's current success. Significant shortfalls in teaching quality were confronted without delay. Changes in leadership responsibilities, new appointments, and very well managed professional training for staff has raised the quality of teaching to good or better. Staff fully accept the challenge of being accountable for pupils' progress, and work collectively to ensure its improvement.
- Highly committed and skilled senior leaders make a vital contribution to the school's improvement. They provide strong guidance for colleagues as role models for best classroom practice and professional relationships in the school. A rigorous schedule for checking teaching quality and its impact on learning is followed. This enables senior leaders to gain an accurate view of the school's work and to contribute to planning for more improvements.
- Middle leaders provide good leadership of different subjects. They have worked successfully to adapt the new primary school's curriculum to the needs of pupils. A particularly successful aspect of their work is the way that they encourage pupils to contribute their ideas about what they want to learn. This contributes to a good curriculum with some exciting learning for pupils, which increases their enjoyment because of the part they play in its planning. Leaders recognise the need to capitalise even more on pupils' enthusiasm in order to challenge the most able pupils' writing skills to the full. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well and ensures that they are well prepared socially and culturally for life in modern Britain.
- The promotion of sports and physical education (PE) has been enriched well by the school's effective use of sports funding. Additional staff with particular expertise in sports skills are employed to coach teachers and pupils in order to raise standards and the quality of teaching in PE lessons. The school has a tradition of success in sporting tournaments.
- The pupil premium is used effectively to challenge any discrimination by helping disadvantaged pupils to fulfil their potential both academically and socially. For example, some pupils are targeted to take up a particular after-school activity in order to improve their confidence and well-being. This helps to secure equality of opportunity, which is promoted well.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are kept safe in school. All statutory requirements are met in full and procedures and staff training for safeguarding are reviewed regularly.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very knowledgeable about all aspects of the school's work. They check the school's academic progress and quality of teaching thoroughly, by visiting the school and sharing information with school leaders. Since the last inspection they have undertaken some intensive training to improve their skills of governance. The wide range of professional expertise throughout the governing body enables governors to provide good challenge and support, in equal measure, and strongly hold the school to account. They are fully aware of the impact of teachers' performance management, and are well equipped with the necessary understanding to settle issues linked to teachers' salary awards. Financial management is efficient and governors are watchful over the impact that the pupil premium and sports funding have on pupils' achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are extremely keen to learn. They are fully attentive and hard-working in lessons. Pupils are always keen to answer questions and to test their ideas out with others.

- Pupils check their own progress so they always know how well they are doing, and respond to teachers' comments by carefully doing their corrections. The work in their books is presented neatly.
- Behaviour around the school is exemplary. Pupils are extremely polite and cheerful. They show the greatest respect for adults and one another. They know how to behave in different situations, such as during assemblies or when enjoying some social time together in the dining room. Pupils listen to, and respect, others' feelings during times for class reflection.
- The curriculum gives pupils a very good understanding of others' faiths and cultural lifestyles, and highlights the importance of being tolerant of other people and their different circumstances.
- Pupils' contribution to the everyday life of the school is excellent. They arrive punctually and smartly turned out in their school uniforms. Many pupils arrive early to attend the popular breakfast club. Parents greatly appreciate the additional care and safety that this provides for their children.
- The school council makes sure that pupils' views are taken into account. They raise money for library books and choose the ones that pupils want. Playground improvements and a trim-trail to help pupils keep active are also the results of their work. School council members also interview candidates for teaching posts, and they have worked with parent groups to make them aware of bullying and the forms it takes. Pupils have recently won the gold award for an anti-bullying magazine that they produced for a local competition.
- Other pupils willingly take on responsibilities as play leaders, road safety or recycling officers as well as daily duties to help the school run smoothly. All have successfully contributed to ideas for the school's quadrangle which is now an impressive and well used 'learning zone'.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school because they know that grown-ups will help them. They also state that there is no bullying or offensive name-calling.
- Pupils are fully aware of the risks when using the internet and know how to keep themselves safe from harm.
- They are positive about their own behaviour because they have written the rules for the school themselves.
- Parents agree unanimously that their children are cared for extremely well.
- The safety and well-being of those pupils considered to be potentially most vulnerable are given very high priority. These pupils receive excellent emotional support in school and productive work with other support agencies and parents helps them to learn and achieve well, alongside others.
- The links that the school has with parents through family learning sessions, workshops, and regular meetings foster excellent relationships, and add to pupils' feelings of security in school.
- These excellent relationships have a positive effect on attendance which has improved considerably in the last two years. School records show that attendance was slightly above average in the last school year and is securely above average so far in the current year. This is due to the rigorous way that absences are followed up and also reflects pupils' real enthusiasm for school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Staff have responded very well to the training they have undertaken, and also the increased expectations and responsibilities that changes in leadership have brought about.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are an effective team. As such, they ensure that pupils' differing needs are generally well provided for, and that pupils make good progress from their relative starting points. Good use of resources and teachers' imaginative approaches to learning for all groups of pupils are not uncommon.
- Learning in mathematics is especially effective due to the whole-school's determination to improve provision following the previous inspection. Strong subject knowledge enables creative planning that allows pupils to use their mathematics skills in different, purposeful ways. In one class, for example, their mathematics problem solving was linked to the war-time rationing they were learning about in history lessons. Another task challenged pupils' understanding of perimeters exceptionally well, when they had to design a new interior for Willie Wonka's chocolate factory, linked to the class novel they are currently reading.
- Literacy lessons start with a focus on developing pupils' knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling, so pupils learn new skills at a good pace. There is also time for pupils to correct previous mistakes in their writing to keep up the pace of improvement. Discussion is a feature of lessons, so pupils can rehearse

language and ideas they might use. There are good opportunities for pupils to write across a variety of subjects. However, their books show that there is scope, in some writing, for better use of specific vocabulary linked to the subject they write about, to make writing more precise and raise its quality. Support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well matched to their needs, but greater challenge for pupils with the most potential, is not always clearly demonstrated.

- There is good learning in other subjects. Art and music have high profiles. There are first class examples of pupils' drawing and use of shade and colour on display, and the school choir is very active in the community. Pupils succeed at sports. Good investigation in science was seen when pupils used bread-making to learn that some changes in materials cannot be reversed and a new material is formed.
- Assessment is used effectively. Learning is planned well on what pupils have done previously, and adults check progress continually in lessons, to ensure that pupils are working towards their next steps. Next steps in literacy and numeracy are clear to pupils because leaders have put new systems in place, by which they can check their own learning and move it on. While there is generally good feedback for pupils about their writing, there are pockets of inconsistency where teachers' guidance does not always show clearly how pupils can improve their work.
- Pupils' learning and behaviour are managed exceptionally well. The climate of mutual respect and the feeling among pupils that they are valued has a very significant impact on their own eagerness to learn and their appreciation of others' achievements.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children's abilities on entering Nursery are below those typically expected for age. They make good progress as they move through the school and achieve well by the end of Year 6.
- Good progress in Year 1 resulted in most pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics (knowledge of letters and their sounds). The proportion who did so in 2014 was equal to the national average.
- Progress in Year 2 is gathering pace after being hindered previously by less effective teaching, which affected the standards pupils reached at the end of Key Stage 1. The situation has been resolved and over the past two years there has been a rise in reading standards, and good improvement in mathematics. Writing, however, has lagged behind. The school's assessments for pupils currently in Year 2 show that rates of progress are increasing, and that more pupils are on track to reach expected standards as well as the higher Level 3. This includes standards in writing but they still remain behind those in other subjects and are an area for improvement.
- The successful work of leaders over the past two years is showing positive results in Years 3 to 6. Measures taken to increase the rate of progress are taking hold and pupils' current work shows clearly that progress is gathering good pace. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly average. There was a particularly good performance in mathematics. Currently, high proportions of pupils in Year 6 are on track to make at least expected progress, and more pupils are on track to reach higher levels of attainment. Nevertheless, attainment in writing, particularly for the most able pupils, is recognised as an aspect to improve.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. Throughout the school, literature is promoted very well. Books are very visible in displays and there is an ample selection from which pupils can choose. Pupils have a say in which books go into the library, and often write reviews and attach them to the books they have read as a guide for others.
- Pupils in Year 2 use their phonics skills confidently to help them make sense of their reading. Those needing an extra boost to their confidence are well supported through additional individual help. By the end of Year 6 pupils read fluently with very good understanding and high levels of enjoyment. They understand the importance of reading well and are very clear about the authors they like.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well. Important changes to the way that pupils are provided for have been made and more staff have been trained to give the right kind of support. Pupils' learning is very carefully planned with clear targets for them to achieve.
- The school is increasingly aware of the needs of the most able pupils and in 2014 there was some success in the small numbers of those pupils who achieved the highest Level 6 in mathematics and English. Higher targets have been set for the current year, but leaders are aware that writing, particularly, is a focus for the most able pupils at both key stages. The proportion of pupils who gained Level 3 in writing at Key Stage was below average in 2014.
- The pupil premium is used effectively to narrow any gaps in attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils across the school. Currently, school data show that the attainment of both groups is very similar. National (unvalidated) data for 2014 shows that disadvantaged pupils' overall attainment was

a little below that of all pupils nationally. The same data show that there were similar gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school in reading and writing. Attainment in mathematics was the same for both groups. In terms of progress made, disadvantaged pupils were between one and two terms behind others in the school and nationally in reading and writing. School data indicates that these gaps are closing and leaders are vigorously promoting equality of opportunity.

The early years provision

is good

- Most children join the Nursery with below typical abilities, especially in the areas of communication and personal and social skills. They make good progress and by the end of the Reception Year most, but not all, achieve expected a good level of development and are suitably prepared to move into Year 1.
- Teaching in the early years is good overall. There is a good balance of activities between those led by adults, and those which children choose for themselves. Children have good opportunities to explore and be creative in their thinking and language development, such as when 'digging for treasure' or making spiders' webs with string. Adults question children well to extend their speech and their ability to think through problems.
- Children feel safe because adults are sensitive to their needs and create positive relationships. Adults care about children's well-being and safety. They promote good behaviour and other social skills so that children learn to cooperate with others, in different activities. Consequently, children become interested and keen to learn.
- Leadership and management of the early years is good. Previously weaker aspects of teaching have been addressed, and there is very effective team work in the staff drive for improvement. The early years leader has a clear understanding of what good provision is and supports colleagues well in their planning and practice.

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	130293
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	453704

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	365
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Dewsnap
Headteacher	Neil Butler
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2013
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