

Thornhill Junior And Infant School

Edge Lane, Thornhill, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, WF12 0QT

Inspection dates 25–26 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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.

- This is a happy, inclusive and improving school.
- The headteacher, ably assisted by the deputy headteacher, provides highly effective leadership. As a result, expectations of what pupils can achieve are rising rapidly, teaching is improving and pupils' progress is accelerating.
- Staff morale is high because the culture of the school has changed. Staff feel valued and supported. They have a whole team approach and share a vision for continuous improvement.
- Subjects and learning experiences are linked together in creative and exciting ways. These promote British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Strong relationships exist with parents and the local community.
- Governors provide rigorous challenge and support. They are fully committed to making the school the best it can be.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and feel safe. Their punctuality and attendance is improving.
- Pupils have exceptionally positive and trusting relationships with staff. Staff boost pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem very well.
- The quality of teaching is at least good.
- From their starting points, all groups of pupils make good progress. Standards across the school are rising.
- Children in the early years achieve well and sometimes outstandingly so from their different starting points.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The rate of progress in a few classes is not always rapid enough, particularly in writing.
- A small minority of teachers do not always provide tasks that sufficiently challenge pupils, particularly the most able.
- Teachers' marking is not always used to help pupils improve their work.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Not all middle leaders play a full part in driving improvements in teaching and the achievement of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed the learning of pupils in all classes across school, including the resourced provision. They also listened to some pupils read.
- The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in lessons, in a wide range of books and on display around school. They spoke often to pupils during the inspection and met groups of pupils to discuss their views of school.
- The inspectors made very careful checks on records of the progress of pupils, their behaviour and attendance.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior and middle leaders. Inspectors met governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- In addition, inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including the school's own view of its performance, plans for improvement and policies and procedures. The inspectors checked closely on the work of governors and a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents through checking the 21 responses to the online Parent View survey and the 65 responses to the school's own recent survey of parental opinion. Inspectors also spoke to parents during the inspection and considered their telephone and written communications.
- The inspectors took account of the views of staff expressed in the 49 responses to the voluntary inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Chris Maloney, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jennifer Firth	Additional Inspector
Dave Blackburne	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- There have been significant changes in staffing. Thirteen of the 23 teachers, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher, were not employed at the school at the time of the last inspection. The current headteacher was appointed in April 2012. There has also been a change in the Chair and vice chair of the Governing Body.
- Significant proportions of pupils join and leave the school other than at the normal times of transfer.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A below average, but increasing proportion of pupils are from other ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through pupil premium funding is well above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after children.
- The early years provision starts in the two Reception classes. All pupils attend full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school includes a local authority resourced provision for pupils with speech, language and communication needs. Prior to reorganisation by the local authority in April 2013, this unit was for pupils with moderate and severe learning needs. All pupils in the unit attend the school full time.
- The school works in close cooperation with the Dewsbury Learning Partnership.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, speed up the rate of pupils' progress and so raise attainment, particularly in writing, by ensuring that:
 - teachers plan work that meets the learning needs of all pupils, particularly the most able, that challenges them sufficiently
 - teachers' marking helps pupils know how to improve their work so that they are able to learn from their mistakes
 - pupils are provided with more opportunities to use and extend their writing and mathematical skills across subjects.
- Ensure all middle leaders have the skills and opportunities to check the effectiveness of their actions in improving the quality of teaching and achievement of pupils.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides highly skilled leadership. His unwavering determination to succeed has inspired the school community to work together and aim high. As a result, the culture of the school has changed. The significant decline in achievement following the previous inspection has been halted. The quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils are rapidly improving. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are also improved. This is reflected in their broadly average and improving attendance.
- The headteacher has managed the significant changes in staff since the last inspection very skilfully. He has galvanised a whole team spirit through the sharing of his drive for improvement. The renewed and rejuvenated senior leadership team know precisely how well the school is doing. They use this information extremely well to plan and deliver highly effective actions leading to improvements in teaching and achievement. This clarity of thinking and the decisive actions taken demonstrate a strong capacity for further improvement.
- The morale of staff is high because they feel valued and supported. They know exactly what is expected of them. A typical staff comment was, 'The leadership of the school is inspirational, highly supportive and genuinely has the children's interests at heart.'
- The promotion of equal opportunities is good. The school offers all pupils good quality support and equal access to an exciting and stimulating curriculum. Pupils in the resourced provision receive skilled and sensitive support and are fully integrated into school life.
- Leaders ensure there is no discrimination. Strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural education promotes relationships very well. Differences in culture and traditions are celebrated and appreciated. Staff promote British values well, including tolerance and respect for the rule of law. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Extremely close attention is paid to the progress of every pupil in school. Senior leaders meet regularly with teachers to make sure that pupils are making the progress they should. Pupils in danger of falling behind or those with particular needs are identified and given the support they require. Leaders ensure that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. The additional teachers and teaching assistants provide well targeted and skilled extra support. This results in these pupils progressing as well and sometimes better than others in school.
- High numbers of pupils join the school at different times during their primary education; most notably in the Year 6 classes for the last two years. Senior leaders ensure that they make good progress from their different starting points.
- The regular and rigorous checks on teaching made by senior leaders have significantly strengthened teaching. Staff have opportunities to observe and share their practice in school and in other schools. They have good opportunities to access training both locally and nationally.
- Middle leaders share the drive for improvement. They have high expectations and great enthusiasm. However, not all middle leaders are fully effective in checking the impact of their work on improving the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.
- School leaders have very effectively reviewed how different subjects are taught. These are often linked together in highly imaginative and creative ways. This leads to stimulating and exciting learning. However, leaders have not ensured that teachers always encourage pupils to apply their writing and mathematical skills across subjects.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of visits, visitors and residential. They also enjoy an extensive range of clubs at lunchtime and after school. Pupils have excellent opportunities to learn musical instruments, such as the Ukulele and learn languages such as French and Italian. The quality of singing is truly 'spine tingling'.
- Highly effective use has been made of the additional funding for physical education and sport. The employment of a specialist physical education teacher with two local schools has greatly improved staff confidence and competence. Pupils have increased opportunities to develop skills and participation in additional clubs and competitive sports. This is aided by the school's membership of a School Sports Partnership. There is clear evidence that pupils' well-being and healthy lifestyles are improving.
- Highly positive links exist with parents. Parents say they feel welcome and praise the work of teachers who they say are 'great'.
- The school has benefitted greatly from its membership of the Dewsbury Learning Partnership. This has led to schools sharing their practice, training and the joint employment of specialist teachers.
- The school receives highly effective support from the local authority in helping check the accuracy of school judgements and for staff and governors' training.
- The school has strong systems in place to ensure that pupils are safe. Senior leaders and governors

ensure the site is safe. All the adults who work with pupils are rigorously vetted.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors know the school well and have a good range of experience and expertise. They are well trained and as a result ask the right questions and make the right checks. Governors provide rigorous challenge and support. This has helped school leaders successfully tackle the decline in teaching and achievement following the previous inspection. Governors visit regularly and receive good quality information on the classes and subjects they are all linked to. Governors are well known in school and their photographs are on the classroom doors. They ensure they have the information they need to check on the quality of teaching and the progress of all groups of pupils. Teachers' pay progression and pay rewards are very closely linked to pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. Governors ensure that extra funding for physical education and sports and for disadvantaged pupils has the right impact on pupils. Governors make very close checks that practice reflects safeguarding policy. These are effective and meet statutory requirements. Governors keep a close eye on school finances.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite, welcoming and friendly. Pupils talk enthusiastically about school. They have positive attitudes to learning. Their enjoyment in learning is reflected in their good punctuality and in their attendance, which is broadly average and improving.
- Pupils have positive, trusting and respectful relationships with staff. Pupils were eager to say that, 'If you have a problem at home or at school, there is always someone to talk to.'
- Pupils who access the resourced provision behave well and are eager to learn.
- Many pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as being a school councillor, play leader or lunchtime 'angel', looking after younger pupils. They also relish making a difference to the lives of others through a wide range of charity fund raising. Pupils told inspectors of their work to support seriously ill children in hospital. They eagerly take part in the exciting range of clubs such as homework, Tag Rugby, Italian and construction. Pupils talked excitedly about being a member of the community choir and super singers.
- Pupils get on well together and play harmoniously. They show a clear understanding and respect for the rights of people to hold different beliefs.
- When pupils have work that excites their interests and stretches their abilities, their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and sometimes outstanding. However, when activities are not pitched at the right level, a few pupils sometimes drift off task, hindering their progress.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe and have a good understanding about how to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils have a good awareness of safety around roads, water and railways. Older pupils get good support in safe cycling. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to avoid dangers on the internet. A typical pupil comment was, 'Never talk to strangers or give them your personal details.'
- Pupils accessing the resourced provision also feel safe. They are kept safe through rigorous risk assessments and regular checks.
- Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take, such as cyber-bullying and bullying as a result of prejudice. They say that bullying seldom happens, but staff deal fairly with any that does take place.
- Parents are confident that their children feel safe and are kept safe in school. This is reflected in their positive response to the on-line Parent View and their comments to inspectors. It is also shown by their response to the school's own surveys.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers know pupils very well as individuals. This helps to build highly positive relationships. As a result, pupils are eager to learn and try their best. This contributes well to pupils' improving achievement in literacy and mathematics.
- Teachers make regular checks on pupils' learning. They use this information to plan work that suits pupils'

different learning needs. Teachers and teaching assistants use their good subject knowledge to question pupils and deepen their understanding. However, a few teachers sometimes plan tasks that are not matched closely enough to the different abilities of pupils. As a result, some pupils, particularly the most able, do not make the progress they should.

- Staff encourage pupils to assess their own and their partners learning. This helps pupils to cooperate and identify ways of making improvements.
- Staff demonstrate high expectations of the behaviour and attitudes of pupils. They apply the school behaviour policy well. This reflects that all staff are now taking greater responsibility for ensuring pupils behave well and stay on task.
- Pupils often receive clear and helpful advice through teachers' marking on how to improve their work and are given time to respond. This is reflective of the good guidance to teachers from senior leaders. However, not all marking consistently reflects the school's marking policy. This hinders the progress of some pupils.
- Reading is taught well by teachers and teaching assistants. They ensure that reading skills are taught systematically. As a result, pupils become more confident readers as they successfully build up their skills and understanding as they move through school. Pupils in danger of underachieving receive regular additional support from highly skilled teaching assistants. Exciting class novels, World Book Day events and visiting authors help pupils develop a love of reading.
- Teachers provide some exciting opportunities for pupils to write. They give pupils lots of opportunities to talk about their writing, share their ideas and identify improvements. They also ensure that there is greater focus on strengthening pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar. As a result, the quality of writing is improving.
- Teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to have fun in mathematics. They enliven lessons with interesting calculations and practical problem solving. This helps to build basic skills and develop an increasing mastery of mathematical concepts.
- When teachers capture pupils' interests and stretch their abilities they make at least good progress. This was evident in a Year 3 English lesson. Pupils were captivated by a short animated video clip. They eagerly responded to the teacher's guidance on creating suspense. Pupils produced good quality writing such as, 'He peeked through the door. Out of nowhere, a light flickered.'

The achievement of pupils is good

- The decisive actions and unrelenting drive by the headteacher since his appointment have successfully addressed the decline in achievement following the last inspection. As a result, the progress of pupils is improving rapidly and an increasing number are attaining the higher levels. Standards overall by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have been rising. This trend is set to continue in 2015.
- Inspection evidence and the school's own data show that the progress of pupils in most classes last year was good from their different starting points. This includes those pupils in Year 6 with significant special educational needs. Despite the small amount of variability still evident, the progress of current pupils in all classes is rapidly improving. It is already at a faster rate of improvement than for the whole of last year. This is why attainment across the school is rising.
- All groups of pupils are making at least good progress from their starting points. The proportions of pupils exceeding the progress expected of them is increasing rapidly. This is particularly so for current Year 2 pupils and also Year 6. Much higher proportions of pupils are now working at the higher levels in reading and mathematics and especially in writing.
- The focus throughout school on improving the teaching of writing has been successful. The creation of more opportunities for pupils to talk about their ideas and choice of language has improved the quality of writing. Pupils often re-draft their work with better use of grammar and punctuation. They enjoy choosing more powerful descriptions to enhance their work. As a result, despite variance between different classes, pupils' overall progress in writing is good.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is improving due to skilled systematic teaching of skills throughout school. Highly skilled additional staff provide regular targeted support to help pupils catch up. In 2014, the results in the Year 1 national screening check on reading improved on 2013. The Year 2 checks were broadly average. This reflected pupils' increasing understanding of the sounds that letters make. Pupils continue to make good progress from their starting points as they move through school. Pupils' love of reading was clearly evident during the inspection.
- Leaders have focused strongly on improving achievement in mathematics. Pupils demonstrate increasing confidence in their basic skills and ways of making efficient calculations. Their mastery of mathematical

concepts is improving. This is due to a much more rigorous approach to regular revision and consolidation and making learning fun. Pupils have lots of opportunities to apply their skills in solving practical problems.

- The much higher than average proportion of least able pupils in Year 6 in 2013 and 2014, meant that overall attainment in English and mathematics was lower than average at the end of Key Stage 2. Despite this all pupils made good progress from their starting points.
- Across the school, the attainment of pupils is rising. Most teachers make sure the most able pupils are given more demanding work. This challenges their abilities and makes them think hard, deepening their understanding. As a result, the progress of the most able pupils is good and improving. However, this approach to supporting the most able is not yet consistent across school, especially in writing.
- Pupils enjoy using information and communication technology resources. Pupils use these very effectively to support their work.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language make good progress from their starting points. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good and sometimes outstanding progress. This is due to timely checks and the highly skilled and extremely sensitive extra support they receive.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 was slightly behind other pupils in the school in writing and mathematics, and just over a term behind in reading. Compared to other pupils nationally, pupils were two and a half terms behind in reading, three and a half behind in writing and four and a half terms behind in mathematics. The progress of disadvantaged pupils was below other pupils nationally in mathematics and writing and similar in reading. However, inspection evidence shows that the gaps in attainment between current disadvantaged pupils and others in school are narrowing rapidly. They are now achieving as well and sometimes better than others in class.
- Pupils who access the resourced provision make good progress from their different starting points because of effective teaching and support.

The early years provision

is good

- When they start in Reception class, most children have weaknesses in their language, communication and literacy skills. They settle quickly due to well established routines, strong links with parents and pre-school settings and very caring staff. This helps children to thrive and grow in confidence.
- All children, including the most able and those with special educational needs make good and sometimes outstanding progress from their different starting points. This is because of high expectations, a very nurturing approach and strong teaching. As a result, most children are prepared well for Year 1.
- Staff demonstrate a firm grasp of how children learn. They use this very well to capture and extend children's interests and learning. They ensure there is a good range of learning activities that children choose for themselves or those led by adults. Staff make regular and skilled checks on how well children are learning. This information is regularly shared with parents. Parents can also contribute information electronically from home. This helps staff follow up children's interests and celebrate their achievements.
- Children enthusiastically follow their interests and demonstrate clear enjoyment in their learning both inside and outside. Children are encouraged to learn together and from each other, such as when talking about the Easter story.
- Children behave well. They listen carefully and respond quickly to adults. They know how to stay safe such as when using outdoor equipment. They play harmoniously together and share toys and equipment sensibly.
- The development of children's reading and writing skills are well promoted. Staff encourage children to write their names, ideas and words reflecting letters they have been learning about. Children enjoy writing for specific reasons, such as Easter cards.
- Children receive skilled teaching of the sounds individual and combinations of letters make. They learn to identify words containing sounds made by letter combinations such as 'ar'. Children enjoy writing these words to show how accurate they can be.
- Staff develop children's mathematical skills well. They help children build their understanding of such things as shapes and capacity. Children demonstrate confidence in counting and sequencing numbers.
- Children have good opportunities to explore their learning on a wide range of visits. They particularly enjoyed visits to the park, the local garden centre and the library.
- The early years leader provides strong and thoughtful leadership. She ensures high expectations and a strong commitment to the development of every child. Children are kept safe through rigorous risk assessments and well trained staff. The leader has a very clear understanding of what is working well and

what needs to improve further. Staff share the vision for continuous improvement and team working.

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	107616
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	448355

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	382
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	William Chambers
Headteacher	Michael Rowland
Date of previous school inspection	30 September 2009
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