

# Thorner Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Kirkhills, Thorner, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS14 3JD

**Inspection dates** 22–23 April 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The strong leadership from the headteacher together with senior leaders' constant drive for improvement have led to better teaching and pupils making faster progress. Pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics have also improved.
- The governing body supports the school well and has a good awareness of its strengths and weaknesses.
- The early years is outstanding. This is because high-quality teaching develops children's skills and understanding very effectively.
- Pupils behave well, are polite to adults and treat one another with respect.
- Pupils enjoy being at school and feel safe and well looked after. They behave well and have good attitudes to learning.
- The quality of teaching is good. Lessons engage pupils in their learning. Pupils participate readily in lessons and benefit from good-quality questioning.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well. By the time they leave Year 6 they have exceeded expected levels of progress in reading and writing.
- Skilled teaching assistants provide valuable support for pupils within the classroom, in small groups or one-to-one.
- The school is very successful at helping pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. This is enhanced through strong links with the church and local community.
- Attendance is consistently above average.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The progress of some pupils in mathematics is not as strong as it is in reading and writing. Teachers do not always give pupils tasks to do to develop their skills and enable them to make better progress.
- The presentation of pupils' work is erratic.
- Teachers' marking and feedback do not always help pupils to correct mistakes and to improve their progress.
- The checking on the quality of teaching by all managers and governors is not fully in place.
- Mathematics is not promoted widely across the school through displays of pupils' work.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited several lessons or parts of lessons, some of which were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. They looked at a range of pupils' work and also listened to a number of pupils from Years 2 and 6 read.
- Meetings took place with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors also met the Chair, and other members, of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's data on pupils' progress and records relating to pupils' behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspection team observed movement around the school at playtime and at lunch breaks. Displays around school and also in classrooms were scrutinised.
- Inspectors took into account the 65 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as the results of the most recent questionnaire carried out by the school.
- The 13 responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered.

## Inspection team

Christine Millett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynda Florence

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Thorner is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Reception-aged children attend on a full-time basis.
- The very large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is well-below average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding the school receives to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since the school was last inspected in 2012 there have been considerable changes in staffing including the appointment of a new headteacher.
- A nursery and a daily breakfast and after-school club are offered on school premises by a private provider. These were not inspected at the same time as the school. Inspection reports for these providers can be found on the Ofsted website.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding, particularly in mathematics, in order to speed up pupils' progress by:
  - ensuring the quality of marking is consistent across the school
  - giving pupils detailed advice and examples to help them correct and improve their work, then giving them time to act upon the recommendations made
  - improving the presentation of pupils' work and ensuring the spelling of key mathematical vocabulary is accurate
  - ensuring pupils are given tasks that fully extend their mathematical skills
  - including examples of pupils' work in mathematics in displays throughout the school.
- Continue to develop the rigorous approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning to include all managers and governors.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The determined ambition of the senior leadership team, driven by the strong partnership between headteacher and deputy headteacher, has brought about rapid improvement in many areas of the school. Staff are committed to raising pupils' achievement.
- The roles of middle leaders have been more firmly established since the previous inspection. Their responsibilities have increased and they are now starting to play a fuller role in evaluating the success of the school. They meet with colleagues from other schools and attend nationally recognised training programmes. However, their impact upon improving outcomes is not fully evident.
- The drive to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement has been successful and they are improving rapidly. Almost all inconsistencies in progress have been addressed and pupils overall are making good progress. Weak teaching has been dealt with and the quality of teaching is good.
- Rigorous checks on teachers' performance are helping to improve teachers' skills. Staff are held to account for the progress of pupils in their class. The use of information from regular checks on teaching by the headteacher and leaders has improved. Observations are cross-referenced with work scrutinies in order to develop teachers' skills and improve teaching. However, over time not all managers and governors have been fully involved in this.
- The school now has an accurate understanding of how well it is doing and where further improvements can be made.
- The school's rich curriculum engages pupils' interests and pupils enjoy their learning. They speak enthusiastically of the topics they have studied and the visits they have been on. They benefit from the teaching of French and the quality of singing is high.
- The school provides opportunities for parents to find out how well their children are doing. The school actively encourages parental involvement through parents' information evenings as well as attendance at class assemblies and services. Meetings to discuss pupils' progress are held regularly.
- Leaders are totally committed to fostering good relations and ensuring there is equality of opportunity for all pupils. Discrimination is not accepted. There is a strong Christian ethos in the school but pupils also learn about other faiths and are encouraged to respect the views of others. This contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepares them for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have a good understanding of British values. For example, pupils see democracy in action through the election of the school council. Pupils understand the need for rules.
- The small numbers of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium are well supported. Pupils are identified, their needs assessed and funds are used to enrich their experiences and ensure that they have the same opportunities as other pupils in the school.
- The primary school sports funding is used effectively to increase teachers' expertise by working with physical education specialists to develop their skills. There is now a much wider range of sporting opportunities and inter-school competitions.
- The school has drawn upon effective support from the local authority, which has a good relationship with the school. Help and advice are available. For example, the school has taken advantage of specific training to improve achievement in mathematics and support for the governing body. The School Improvement Partner visits regularly. Links with other schools are providing valuable opportunities for discussion and teamwork.
- The school has good working relationships with the nursery and secondary schools, which ensure smooth transitions from one school to another.
- Safeguarding and safer recruitment are taken seriously and procedures meet statutory requirements and are effective. Staff have received training in matters of safety and ensure that all pupils are safe and well-cared for. Safeguarding policies are in place and procedures are followed carefully to ensure pupils are kept safe at all times.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The effectiveness of governance is good. The governing body has been reconstituted recently and governors have carried out an audit of their skills, which revealed a wide range of expertise that is used to support the school effectively. They are part way through a review of their effectiveness.
  - Governors are aware of the quality of teaching and of the comparisons to be made between their school and other similar schools. Governors have a sound grasp of information on pupil progress and how it is being used to set targets. Governors ensure that the management of teachers' pay is effective and that teachers are rewarded for teaching well. The governing body is also aware of the procedures to be followed if teachers do not meet performance targets. However, governors are not fully involved in the

monitoring of the quality of teaching.

- Governors review the school's finances to ensure the budget is managed effectively. They check to ensure that grants such as the pupil premium and the additional funding for sport are well used and measure the impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Governors take safeguarding very seriously and see that the relevant policies are up to date and reviewed regularly. A designated governor carries out health and safety checks of the school building and grounds.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The majority of pupils show enthusiasm for learning. They participate well in lessons and want to do their best. They use words such as 'fun', 'friendly', 'safe' and 'joyful' to describe their school.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards adults. Very positive relationships exist between adults and pupils who are polite and respectful. Older pupils pride themselves on being good role models for younger children and pupils when walking with them to church or listening to them read.
- Pupils have been involved in discussions about the school's behaviour policy and were able to explain the systems clearly to inspectors. They know what is expected of them and strive to achieve this. One pupil commented that the new warning system has 'made people buck up their ideas'.
- The pastoral care of pupils is a strength of the school. There is effective provision in place to support the most vulnerable pupils and the small number who find managing their own behaviour difficult.
- Pupils are given first-hand experiences that promote British values well. For example, the school council is democratically elected, listens to the views of all pupils and works with staff to improve the learning environment for all. For example, replacing of taps in one of the cloakrooms and concerns about the bike shelter came about after discussions with the school council.
- Movement around school is orderly and the new lunchtime system gives pupils of all ages the chance to have lunch together with the older pupils acting as servers.
- Attendance is above average.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils feel safe and valued as members of the school community. Pupils, parents and staff all agree that the school is a safe place in which to learn.
- Pupils fully understand that there are different forms of bullying, such as cyber bullying and racist name calling. Peer mediators successfully help sort out the occasional playground dispute.
- Pupils report that everyone in school is treated fairly. They know to whom they can turn if they have a problem and have confidence in the adults to help them if necessary. Pupils also have 'bubble time' when they can talk to a teacher about any worries they may have and know adults will listen.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in various situations, including e-safety, and acknowledge the contribution to this aspect of their well-being from external visitors such as the police, fire service and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

## The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved rapidly and is now good. This is because of effective action by senior leaders to improve teaching practice and raise expectations of what is acceptable. As a result pupils' progress is improving.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge well and confidently teach lessons that engage, motivate and interest pupils. Most use challenging questioning effectively to develop pupils' thinking skills.
- Teachers work well with teaching assistants who provide a good level of support for pupils. This effective and caring support contributes well to the effective learning of the most vulnerable pupils and enables them to achieve as well as their peers.
- Good relationships are a strong feature of all lessons. Pupils work well together and listen attentively to

adults. Very little time is wasted and no learning time lost through inappropriate behaviour.

- The teaching of reading is good overall. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to reading and are keen to read. This they do with confidence and fluency. Pupils use a range of methods to work out the pronunciation and meaning of unfamiliar words. They have access to a wide range of reading materials in classrooms and the library.
- Writing skills are of a high standard. Pupils are encouraged to write well and their skills develop progressively as they move through the school. In one lesson pupils were observed using emotive language very effectively to describe the plight of an abandoned dog. High levels of collaboration took place as they discussed vocabulary choices in groups and added to their knowledge through the skilful use of thesauruses.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved and is now good. However, because of weaknesses in teaching in recent years, a number of older pupils have gaps in their learning, particularly in basic skills such as times tables. The school accurately identified aspects which could be improved and has invested in new resources and additional training for staff, which are starting to have an impact upon pupils' progress. While good emphasis is placed upon developing mathematical vocabulary it is not always spelt correctly. In discussion, some pupils said that the work they are given is not always hard enough. As a result pupils' mathematical ability is not always put to the test.
- Pupils' work is regularly and accurately marked. Teachers usually provide written comments to help pupils improve their work. However, the school's policy on marking is not applied consistently across all classes. Pupils' progress is sometimes limited because marking comments do not always show clearly how work can be improved, nor is there an expectation that pupils will correct their work as insufficient time is allowed for this.
- The work that pupils have completed in their books is not always carefully written or neatly presented because teachers' expectations are not high enough. This has been recognised by the school and work is being done to improve handwriting.
- Attractive displays are on view throughout all public areas as well as in classrooms and so pupils' achievements are valued and celebrated. However, there is little evidence around school of mathematics being promoted and good work in the subject being shared.

### **The achievement of pupils is good**

- The school's leaders have taken decisive and effective action to deal with areas of past underachievement and pockets of weak teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2. Detailed school records show that pupils from all ability groups have made good progress in developing their key skills.
- In 2014 the results of the Year 1 national screening check for phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) were in line with the national average. In addition, almost all pupils who did not meet the standard in 2013 had done so by the end of Year 2 and were starting to apply their skills in phonics to improve their reading and writing. The most recent assessments show that the current Year 1 pupils are working at a higher level than in previous years.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 are rising. In 2014, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were above the national average. The proportions of pupils reaching the highest levels were also above average. Current data, supported by inspection evidence from observing learning in lessons and the work in pupils' books, show an improvement in all areas with an even higher proportion now achieving the higher levels.
- The results of the national tests taken in 2014 at the end of Year 6 show that attainment in reading and writing was similar to the national average but below in mathematics. The proportion of pupils that made the progress expected of them in reading and writing was well above the national average but only similar to the national average in mathematics. However, during their time in school this year group had experienced periods of weak teaching and inaccurate assessment, which had hindered progress. Senior leaders acted promptly to improve the quality of teaching and learning for these pupils. Past underachievement held these pupils back and their test results were below average in mathematics.
- Overall, the most able pupils achieve well during their time in school. In 2014 a higher proportion of the most able pupils reached the highest levels in tests than in previous years. The most able pupils currently in Year 6 are working at higher standards than their most able peers last year. This is supported by evidence in pupils' books and the most recent data collected by the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs varies from class to class, as does the complexity of their needs. The school quickly identifies individual needs and provides good systems of support that are carefully monitored. From their starting points, these pupils make similar

levels of progress to their classmates.

- In 2014 there were too few disadvantaged pupils in the Year 6 class to make statistically valid or meaningful comparisons with other pupils nationally or in the school. School data, supported by inspection evidence, show that, currently, the actions introduced by the school to narrow any gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others are starting to have the desired impact.
- Good-quality teaching is having a significant impact on achievement for all pupils throughout the school. Work in pupils' books and the school's own assessment records show that progress in reading, writing and mathematics in all classes is continuing to improve with the large majority of pupils now making at least good progress.
- Pupils are confident about moving to secondary school and feel that they have been prepared well both socially and academically.

### The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children make sustained progress from their starting points, which leads to high achievement. The large majority of children start school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are typical for their age. By the end of the Reception Year, all children have made rapid progress from their starting points across all areas of learning and the proportion reaching a good level of development is well above the national average. Consequently, children are very well prepared for Year 1.
- Exceptionally strong links with the nursery and parents mean children settle and are happy at school. High expectations and the constant reinforcement of daily routines in a happy and caring environment establish a firm base for children's excellent behaviour. They learn to share when playing together.
- Staff know the children particularly well. Teachers use this knowledge alongside assessment very effectively to check progress and ensure individual needs are being met. As a result early reading, writing and number skills develop quickly. During the inspection inspectors saw children making excellent use of their knowledge of phonics to write, without help, lengthy and accurately punctuated stories. Successes are recorded in 'learning journeys', which are shared with parents. Sometimes the marking of these does not make next steps in learning sufficiently clear.
- Highly effective leadership of the early years ensures that adults work closely together to ensure teaching is of a consistently high standard. Staff provide children with a stimulating range of learning activities both indoors and out. There is a balance between those that are led by adults and those chosen by the children themselves.
- Safety and well-being are promoted strongly. Staff provide high levels of supervision. They ensure that all safety and safeguarding requirements are in place. As a result all children feel safe in school.
- Parents are encouraged to share in their children's learning through research projects as part of homework or special events such as the class assembly where all children performed a delightful interpretation of 'The Ugly Bug Ball'.

## 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>	107994
<b>Local authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	462243

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	176
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dawn Scargill
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ian Holmes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 July 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	0113 289 2541
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