

Thornton Watlass Church of England Primary School

Thornton Watlass, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 4AH

Inspection dates	17–18 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher and other leaders, including governors, have high aspirations of pupils and staff. Their leadership has been effective in improving the school since the previous inspection.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that teaching, learning and assessment are now good.
- Teaching in the early years is good. As a result, children make good progress and are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Current pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across Years 1 to 6.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability achieve well.
- The school's provision for pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, and are respectful towards one another and all of the adults.
- Pupils feel well cared for and safe. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe, particularly when using the internet, and how to lead a healthy lifestyle beyond school.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. The vast majority attend regularly and are keen to learn.
- Leaders develop well pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Staff help pupils to value people from different backgrounds, and to understand their different viewpoints.
- The many visits and visitors to school help to prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education and future lives.
- Governors are regular visitors to the school, and are confident in holding school leaders to account for how well the school is doing.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In key stage 1 some pupils' writing and mathematical skills are not as strong as their reading skills.
- Not enough teaching is of the highest quality, especially in key stage 1.
- Some teachers do not check pupils' learning carefully enough in lessons, and do not adjust the work set accordingly, especially for the most able.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, especially in key stage 1, by ensuring that:
 - teachers check pupils' learning fully in lessons and adjust the work accordingly to keep all pupils interested and challenged, especially the most able.

- Enhance pupils' outcomes in key stage 1 in writing and mathematics by:
 - providing pupils with consistent opportunities to practise their developing writing skills to the full in all subjects
 - providing pupils with opportunities to challenge themselves in using their mathematical skills to solve a range of problems.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The executive headteacher has high expectations of all pupils and staff. She has ensured that all the areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been addressed.
- Senior and middle leaders are equally ambitious for the school. They work cohesively to bring about continuous improvements in teaching and in pupils' outcomes.
- Staff indicate that they are proud to work in the school. They feel very well supported in collectively achieving the school's priorities. Morale is strong.
- Senior leaders provide staff with high-quality professional advice and guidance in school. Teachers also benefit from support from schools within the Swaledale alliance, the Bedale cluster of schools and from local authority specialists. This support has helped significantly to enhance the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders and managers at all levels are increasingly confident about making checks on the quality of teaching. Where they find that teaching is not good enough, they introduce a programme of development so that teachers make improvements in a timely manner.
- Leaders, managers and governors know the school well. Action plans appropriately set priorities to improve teaching, and pupils' outcomes in writing and mathematics.
- The executive headteacher has strengthened appraisal systems, and has linked teachers' pay rigorously to their performance, measured closely against the national teachers' standards.
- Leaders and managers ensure that they track pupils' progress carefully. This means that staff identify pupils who are not doing as well as they should. They give these pupils additional support to help them make better progress. As a result, different groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs or disability, make good progress. This shows leaders' commitment to promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Adults' willingness to address the rare instances of discriminatory or prejudiced behaviour robustly demonstrates their commitment to the school's strong sense of community.
- The curriculum is effective in developing pupils' overall reading, writing and mathematical skills. Interesting topics, such as 'Crime and Punishment' and 'Living Things and Their Habitats' forge good links between subjects.
- Visits and visitors to the school enrich pupils' experiences further. They help to bring learning alive. For example, pupils say how much they enjoy learning about the natural lives of animals and plants through their work in the local forest; of the lifestyles and beliefs of the Gurkha community in the local army camp; and of the history of the Yorkshire Dales through their visits to local castles and places of interest.
- Staff develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well. Pupils learn about the importance of remembrance as part of their work on the Second World War. They enthusiastically participate in a wide array of sporting teams and competitions, and take pleasure in learning French.
- Pupils are made aware of British values through, for example, their involvement in the democratic process of electing members of the school council. They help to develop their own school 'code of conduct' and write prayers to share with their class friends at the start of lunch. Such approaches help to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The school's effective use of the primary physical education and sport premium has increased the range of sporting opportunities available to pupils, and has enhanced staff confidence in teaching aspects of physical education.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that they spend the pupil premium effectively. Disadvantaged pupils now make similar progress to all other pupils across the school. They benefit from targeted support in reading, writing and mathematics, both in and beyond the classroom. They also benefit from extra resources, where necessary, to boost their self-esteem.
- All parents and staff responding to Ofsted's online questionnaires indicate that the school is well led and managed.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have improved their working arrangements since the previous inspection. Membership of the governing body has been reviewed and committees reorganised.
 - Governors are regular visitors to the school, and ensure they share their findings directly with the relevant committees.

- Governors check the information that they receive from the school’s leaders against reports received from external consultants from other schools and local authority personnel to make sure it is accurate.
- Governors are confident in their understanding of how well the school is doing, and in holding senior leaders to account for the school’s performance and its safeguarding arrangements.
- Governors keep a close watch on how leaders spend additional funding, such as the pupil premium, to meet priorities, and check whether this is having the desired impact.
- Governors have a clear appreciation of the quality of teaching and its impact on outcomes for pupils. Governors know about the management of teachers’ performance and the links between this and teachers’ pay progression. They have adopted rigorous arrangements for evaluating the headteacher’s annual performance.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders, governors and staff work closely with the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and with a range of external agencies and individual families, to ensure that they keep pupils safe. All staff receive regular training on safeguarding. They know how to identify whether pupils are at risk and how to report any concerns. Safeguarding arrangements in the early years are secure. All parents responding to Parent View indicate that their children feel safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is good**

- The executive headteacher and governors have successfully dealt with weaknesses in teaching that were identified during the previous inspection. As a result, the quality of teaching is now good and ensures that pupils make increasingly good progress.
- A regular feature of teaching is the purposeful atmosphere for learning, with teachers and teaching assistants establishing positive working relationships with the pupils.
- Most adults have high expectations of pupils, and the vast majority of pupils show a willingness to give of their best. For example, in a mixed Year 3 and 4 literacy lesson, pupils persevered well to find examples from the story by David Walliams, *Billionaire Boy*, to support their views about the development of individual characters. They confidently looked for clues beneath the obvious plot, making inferences about key events and actions. Similarly, pupils in Years 3 to 6 concentrated well in a science lesson to consider the helpful and harmful effects of different microbes, including viruses, fungi and bacteria.
- Most teachers ignite pupils’ curiosity because they make learning interesting and appropriately demanding. Teachers are knowledgeable about what they teach. They generate a desire to succeed on the part of most pupils, from whatever their starting points.
- Most teachers use assessment information effectively to plan lessons that are appropriate to the needs of the different groups of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, or who have special educational needs or disability. Pupils who fall behind are spotted quickly. Teachers provide additional work and time so that they successfully meet their needs.
- The teaching of the most-able pupils is generally good. Across key stage 2, teachers provide the most able with activities that frequently test their thinking. For example, they encourage pupils to make comparisons with contemporary affairs when studying historical events, and to question everyday issues, such as how magnets work, and how electricity is generated.
- However, some teachers are inconsistent in the demands they make of some of the most-able pupils. This is particularly so in Years 1 and 2, where sometimes the work is not demanding enough. On occasions, some teachers do not adapt activities sufficiently in lessons. As a result, the most able sometimes find the work too easy, and are not made to think hard.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Staff plan for effective daily reading sessions in which adults listen to pupils read, and teach them techniques to make sense of unfamiliar words and phrases. Phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is taught with increasing effectiveness across the school, and helps pupils to read fluently and with good understanding.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers furnish pupils with a good range of calculation skills and mathematical vocabulary. Most pupils enjoy regular opportunities to solve mathematical problems. This is not always the case in key stage 1, where too often pupils complete calculations correctly, without being sufficiently stretched to apply their learning in real-life contexts and investigations.
- The teaching of writing is good. The handwriting of most pupils is of a good quality, and most take care in the presentation of their written work. Most teachers pay good attention to showing pupils how to develop ideas, vary the use of language and punctuation, and spell accurately.
- Many teachers provide well-planned opportunities for pupils to hone their mathematical and writing skills, across different subjects, to good effect. Good examples were seen in key stage 2 history, geography and

science, where pupils wrote in detail about the various forms of crime and punishment in years gone by, the water cycle, and the effects of light and sound on people's daily lives. Fewer examples were found in key stage 1 subjects.

- Teachers in all classes provide pupils with regular guidance on how to improve their work, resulting in notable improvements.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and participate fully in the many extra-curricular activities. At all times, the vast majority of pupils are respectful and caring of each other and of all the adults.
- Pupils generally work and play happily together. They are particularly keen to welcome visitors to school.
- Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do their best. They value the rewards they receive for their good work, and openly celebrate the achievements of their peers in 'good work' assemblies.
- Pupils enjoy the different responsibilities they are given, including being members of the school council, helping in the dining hall, and supporting younger children in the early years.
- Pupils have a good awareness of different types of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying and cyber bullying. Pupils say that bullying is rare in school.
- Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for. They confirm that they can easily approach a member of staff if they have any worries. They are confident that staff will always make the time to listen to their views, and not tolerate any language or actions that may be offensive.
- Staff teach pupils well about how to keep themselves safe. They know, for example, about road and fire safety, and how to keep safe when using the internet and mobile phones.
- The many sporting opportunities, together with work in science about the human body, enhance pupils' understanding about the importance of hygiene and living a healthy lifestyle.
- Regular visits and visitors to school enrich pupils' all-round spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The pre-school 'wake up, shake up!' sessions, as well as after-school clubs, boost pupils' appreciation of the importance of exercise and working collaboratively at all times.
- Daily assemblies emphasise life's 'secrets of success', and encourage pupils to be considerate and tolerant of people from different backgrounds.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school's code of conduct makes clear the school's expectations of how everyone should behave, and most pupils adhere readily to the code.
- Most pupils are polite and friendly. Relationships in the playground, in the dining room, and during pre- and after-school activities are supportive and considerate.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They appreciate the rewards they get for positive attitudes, and understand that there are consequences for unacceptable behaviour.
- The school's leaders work hard to encourage pupils to attend school regularly. As a result, attendance is rising and at the national average. Far fewer pupils frequently miss school than at the time of the previous inspection.
- In lessons, the vast majority of pupils are eager to learn and concentrate well. Occasionally, some pupils are inattentive and do not persevere with their work, especially if they are not sufficiently challenged. As a result, their progress slows.
- Most pupils, parents and staff responding to the Ofsted online questionnaires agree that pupils' behaviour is good.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' overall outcomes have risen since the previous inspection and are now good. Improvements in teaching are resulting in sustained good overall rates of progress by current pupils across all year groups. This is confirmed by the good progress seen in pupils' books, and in visits to classes in different year groups.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 in 2015 was broadly in line with the national average. These outcomes represented good progress, given that the starting points of some of these pupils were below average at the beginning of Year 1.
- Pupils make increasingly good progress across key stage 2. In 2015, end of Year 6 outcomes were above national averages, and well above average in mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability, as well as those who have fallen behind and need to catch up in their learning, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because teachers track their progress carefully and make sure that they receive effective care and support.
- The very small numbers of disadvantaged pupils also make good progress, and the gaps in attainment with their classmates have closed in all subjects. In 2015, there were no disadvantaged pupils in Year 6.
- The most-able pupils are largely well challenged in lessons, and the school's information confirms that the vast majority make increasingly good progress across the year groups. Work in books indicates that many have already reached their age-related expectations in writing and mathematics, and have the potential to exceed them.
- Pupils' outcomes in reading are strong. By the end of key stage 1, all pupils achieve the expected national standard in phonics. Across the school, the vast majority of pupils read fluently and with good understanding. This is because they enjoy the daily reading opportunities, and read often at home.
- Outcomes in writing are improving, because teachers encourage pupils to consider carefully how they form individual sentences, to vary the language they use, and to spell accurately common and specialist words. However, outcomes in writing for some key stage 1 pupils are not as high as in reading. This is because some teachers do not provide pupils with consistent opportunities to practise their developing writing skills in all subjects.
- Outcomes in mathematics are also improving because teachers insist on pupils practising their basic mathematical skills daily, and many pupils have regular opportunities to use important skills in a range of problem-solving activities, in different subjects, especially across key stage 2. However, some teachers in key stage 1 do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to use their mathematical skills to solve different problems. Teachers increasingly expect pupils to explain their approaches to individual calculations and to justify their findings.
- Pupils achieve well across many subjects of the curriculum. The school prepares pupils well for secondary school. They develop particularly good all-round knowledge and skills in science, history, geography and religious education. This is because the teaching of these subjects is good, and pupils have regular opportunities to carry out investigations, to share views about famous people and events from the past and present, and to take part in a range of interesting activities outdoors in the local environment.

Early years provision

is good

- Well-planned activities and support help an increasing proportion of children to make good progress from their different starting points. Children are increasingly well prepared for transition to Year 1.
- Children get off to a good start because of the strong relationships they form with the adults who work with them. A focus on reading, writing and number means that many learn to read, write and understand numbers very quickly.
- Teachers encourage children to explore their environment and work well with one another at all times. Children are enthusiastic and clearly enjoy the activities which take place, both indoors and outside. As a result, almost all of the current children in the Reception Year are reaching a good level of development.
- Adults provide many opportunities for children to learn what good behaviour looks like and how to play together cooperatively. The vast majority of children are considerate and behave well.
- The very small numbers of disadvantaged children make good progress over time, and the early years pupil premium is used successfully to support their particular needs.
- Teaching in the early years is good. Staff take children's interests into account constantly. For example, children were captivated by the imminent hatching of chicken eggs in the indoors incubator, and enjoyed thoroughly mixing colours to paint scenes of hens. Outdoors, children played imaginatively in the 'mud

kitchen', talking excitedly about the different herbs available, and enthusiastically making an infusion of mint tea.

- Early years staff have developed effective and close working partnerships with parents. Parents are well supported in helping their children to continue their learning at home, and are readily welcomed into school.
- Children's welfare and safety are a high priority for staff. As a result, children are happy, safe and increasingly confident and independent learners.
- The leadership of the early years is good. All of the adults make effective use of assessment information to plan to meet children's interests and individual needs. 'Learning journeys' capture well children's emerging experiences and skills, although they do not always indicate the next steps in their learning, or include sufficient evidence about their achievements beyond school.

School details

Unique reference number	121521
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10011951
This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	25
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gareth Jones
Headteacher	Kathleen Allison (executive headteacher)
Telephone number	01677 422 685
Website	www.stwschools.org
Email address	headteacher@stwschools.org
Date of previous inspection	13 February 2014

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school.
- All pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported through the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The school is federated with Snape Community Primary, with an executive headteacher. The early years class is taught on the Snape site. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are taught on the Thornton Watlass site. Both schools share the same governing body.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant staffing changes, including the appointment of a new executive headteacher, and changes in the senior leadership team and in teachers. Membership of the governing body has also changed, and governors' committees have been reviewed.
- The school receives support from schools within the Swaledale Alliance and the Bedale Cluster, and from the local education authority.
- The federated schools run pre-school 'wake up, shake up!' and after-school clubs each day on the Thornton Watlass site.
- The inspection has not reported on school performance against the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics, because the size of the Year 6 cohort in 2015 was too small.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in a range of different classes. The early years class was visited jointly with the executive headteacher.
- Pupils' work was sampled informally in classes in a range of subjects. In addition, mathematics and writing from Years 2, 5 and 6, and work in other subjects from Years 2, 5 and 6, were sampled separately.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's own information on current pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, minutes of the governing body's meetings, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents pertaining to safeguarding.
- The inspector held meetings with pupils in Years 3 to 6, with governors and with school staff, including those with management responsibilities. In addition, a telephone conversation took place with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector evaluated the 24 responses of parents to Parent View, and also took into account the views of 21 pupils and 10 members of the school's staff who completed the Ofsted online questionnaires.

Inspection team

Andrew Swallow, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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