

Threshfield School

Low Road, Threshfield, Skipton, North Yorkshire BD23 5NP

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The strong leadership of the headteacher has brought about recent improvements, particularly to the quality of teaching, but there is still work to do to make up for gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge. Pupils' outcomes in mathematics require improvement. This is because of a legacy of underachievement in the past.
- Pupils, including the most able, do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length. This is particularly the case in subjects other than English.
- Governors do not plan precisely enough to ensure that their actions have the necessary impact on improving outcomes for pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. He has brought about significant improvement and provided clear direction in the period since his appointment as headteacher.
- Subject and area leaders are developing their expertise and are increasingly making positive contributions to the school's improvement.
- The quality of teaching is improving strongly. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning effectively to probe pupils' understanding.
- Attendance is good and above the national average. It continues to improve.
- Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school. They are eager to learn.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Robust systems are in place to record and report any concerns about pupils' welfare.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and speak positively about the changes made by the headteacher.
- Children in the early years get off to a flying start because they concentrate well on the wide range of activities provided for them. They are well prepared for Year 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make good and better progress by:
 - increasing the pace of actions to improve the development of pupils' skills in mathematics so that they continue to deepen their understanding and mastery of mathematical concepts
 - ensuring pupils have increased opportunities to write at length and in more depth across the full range of subjects in the curriculum.
- Ensure governors are more focused and prompt in their actions to improve the school by:
 - focusing precisely on how each action the school takes has a positive impact on all pupils' outcomes
 - further developing their skills and the effectiveness of their plans to ensure they focus more precisely on next steps in the school's improvement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. Prior to his taking up his post as headteacher in September 2015, leaders and governors at the school had not acted rapidly or effectively enough in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection in June 2014. The new headteacher has addressed these issues with drive, enthusiasm and an increasingly targeted sense of purpose. He is realistic about what needs to be done and his evaluation of how well the school is doing is accurate.
- The headteacher has worked effectively with all staff to improve their teaching skills through example and opportunities for training and development. Staff welcome and act upon the constructive feedback and advice they are given by the headteacher and are keen to develop their skills. The headteacher is determined to ensure that every pupil in every class has an equal opportunity to learn and develop and he ensures they do not miss out on valuable aspects of learning. The school has an agreed set of 'non-negotiables' that helps ensure that pupils get the best. This is having an increasingly positive impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Working with his team and in his role as leader for English, the headteacher has successfully introduced an approach to presentation and to spelling which is having a significant impact on pupils' confidence and success. Pupils' presentation is much improved. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about spelling strategies and delight in playing with words.
- The headteacher manages the performance of staff well. Staff targets are linked to the differing needs of pupils. Occasionally, however, targets are not quite specific enough to ensure that success can be measured precisely. Leaders are now developing systems to manage the performance of teaching assistants so that they match those used to manage the performance of teachers.
- Leaders, including those of subjects and of early years, are knowledgeable about their areas and increasingly growing in confidence in their roles. They lead support and training and, where appropriate, check and evaluate the quality of their colleagues' work and its impact on pupils' learning. The mathematics leader is having a very positive impact on learning. Under her imaginative leadership, the school is beginning to close the gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills in mathematics. This is particularly so in key stage 2 which was identified as an area to be addressed in the previous inspection. However, these improvements are more recent and the full impact has yet to be seen.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is effective. The school provides carefully targeted and successful support for these pupils which is rooted in a detailed knowledge of their needs. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs or disability report that they are very satisfied with the ways in which the school supports their children.
- Leaders have successfully reviewed the curriculum to ensure it is broad and balanced, taking into account all areas of the national curriculum. The curriculum is exciting and stimulating. It promotes pupils' interest in learning. For example, pupils in key stage 2 described with enthusiasm how they had researched, designed and built a model Greek theatre in design lessons.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly throughout the curriculum, around the school through colourful and thought-provoking displays and in assemblies. Pupils are involved in a wide range of charities, both national and international. Pupils report that assemblies are enjoyable and help them to think carefully about their place in the world. Pupils are prepared very well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders ensure that pupil premium (extra funding provided to support disadvantaged pupils) is used effectively to target support where it is most needed. Leaders have appointed additional teaching assistants so that disadvantaged pupils can be supported if they are underachieving, to enable them to make the progress they should. The impact can be seen in the sustained closing of gaps across the school in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and continued improvements in their attendance.
- The primary school sports funding is used effectively to ensure that the 'legacy' of this additional funding continues to be felt into the future. The physical education leader has worked carefully with the staff to ensure that pupils experience a wide range of sports activities and that staff are well trained and effective in supporting pupils' involvement in sport. The school runs a range of sporting activities.
- Officers of the local authority have provided effective support to the school following the previous inspection and during the subsequent turbulence in leadership and staffing. They secured additional leadership support for the school when the previous headteacher moved to part time, and further support before the appointment of the present headteacher. The education development partner continues to

support and challenge the school on a regular basis. The local authority's written reports on the school's progress are helpful and detailed.

- The school has received effective support in improving mathematics teaching from Carleton Endowed Church of England Primary School. The headteacher of this good local school has also provided mentoring support for the headteacher at Threshfield School. Cowling Community Primary School, another good local school, has also provided effective support for the school in the use of the new system for tracking pupils' progress.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors were not quick enough after the previous inspection in addressing the key areas of weakness in the school. Nor, at first, did they work effectively to ensure that there was strong leadership in place to tackle these weaknesses. However, governors' recent actions have been more focused and effective.
 - Governors now recognise and are much more focused on what needs to be done to improve the school. They are working effectively with the headteacher to address the issues. They are increasingly adept at identifying key areas. They support the school through regular visits and are becoming more skilled at identifying what quality learning looks like.
 - Governors value the more detailed information provided by the headteacher and other leaders, particularly about the performance and outcomes of pupils. This enables them to challenge leaders effectively. However, scrutiny of the minutes of governors' meetings suggests that not enough emphasis was placed on the progress of pupils and groups of pupils. More recent records show improvement in this area. The progress of pupils is now being addressed by governors in a more consistent way.
 - Governors have a clear oversight of the school's finances and deploy them effectively. They help to ensure that the school achieves good value for money. However, they are not always clear enough about the impact that additional government funding is having on, for example, disadvantaged pupils.
 - Parents report that governors engage with them effectively.
 - Although they take their statutory duties seriously, governors have not ensured that the school website is up to date and meets government requirements.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The safeguarding policy is comprehensive and detailed. Procedures are known and understood by staff. All staff have received up-to-date training and everyone knows what to do should they have any concerns. All staff, governors and volunteers are subject to rigorous checks before they are allowed to work with pupils. Appropriate records are kept. Leaders conduct thorough risk assessments to ensure the environment is safe for pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Evidence in pupils' current work and the headteacher's regular checks in lessons show that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the previous inspection and, especially, in the last few months. Teaching is now consistently good. Staff work more effectively as a team and are sharing good practice and expertise. This improved quality of teaching is enabling pupils to make more rapid progress which is helping to address the legacy of underachievement from the past.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. They track each pupil's progress regularly through following the school's marking policy and the recently introduced whole-school tracking system. This tracking of each pupil's progress helps staff planning so that they target work to suit and challenge pupils.
- Staff generally use questioning effectively to help pupils move on in their learning. At its best, staff, including teaching assistants, give pupils time to reflect and explore the answers to questions that ask 'how' and 'why' rather than the more mundane and less challenging 'what'.
- Teaching assistants are generally well deployed in lessons and are, increasingly, taking responsibility for the learning of pupils in their care. Careful communication between teaching assistants and teachers about individual pupils' progress is leading to increasingly focused and effective teaching. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs or disability and disadvantaged pupils is effective with teachers and teaching assistants providing valuable support. This enables these pupils to make similar progress to their peers.
- The quality of teaching for the most able pupils has improved and these pupils are now given more challenging work. Evidence found in pupils' work books and folders, however, shows that pupils are not

consistently being given opportunities to write at length in subjects beyond English. Writing at greater length in a wider range of subjects across the curriculum would give all pupils, and particularly the most able, opportunities to explore and extend ideas and develop stamina as writers.

- Pupils report that they now enjoy learning in mathematics. Pupils are now given opportunities to explore and master mathematical concepts through 'open-ended' activities and knotty problems rooted in everyday life. For example, a group of Year 5 pupils relished the opportunity to solve a square root problem using a combination of logic and guess work. As they sought the answers to the problem, high levels of discussion took place. Pupils jotted down a range of approaches and answers. At the end of the session, the teacher, through careful and targeted questioning, helped pupils draw conclusions about which approaches worked. It is through work such as this that the school is successfully addressing the legacy of weak mathematics teaching and pupils' outcomes at the school.
- Reading is taught well and pupils respond with enthusiasm, taking great pleasure in reading. Older pupils report that they are now given many more opportunities to read at school, as a class and individually. They are also encouraged to read at home to family members, recording their reading in their reading record books. Pupils read with fluency and expression, including younger children and those of lower ability. Pupils apply their skills of inference and deduction well and have a good understanding of the texts they are reading.
- Since the appointment of the headteacher, the school has responded effectively to the weaknesses in presentation and spelling identified in both the previous inspection report and the 2015 test results. Presentation is much improved throughout the school. Almost all books seen show that pupils take real pride in the presentation of their work. This is because all staff have very high expectations and give pupils strategies and approaches that help them ensure their presentation is consistently good.
- Spelling is also improving rapidly. This is because the school has recently adopted a whole-school approach that pupils find fun and rewarding. It is rooted in a clearly thought-out and consistent approach to the teaching and correcting of spelling that emphasises the visual nature of words as well as their meaning and sound.
- The whole-school approach to marking and feedback introduced this year is having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and progress. Teachers mark work carefully following the school's policy and pupils are given time to respond to teachers' comments. Teachers indicate precisely where pupils need to respond and pupils are, generally, diligent in their responses, working carefully and methodically. Pupils say that they know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils report that they now find homework more interesting and consistently set than before. Working at home takes a range of forms and includes both long topic-based activities and short tasks, often related to spelling and mathematics challenges. Pupils say that they welcome the more open research-based tasks because it gives them opportunities to explore ideas and pursue interests. Most parents who responded to the online questionnaire indicated that their child received homework appropriate for their age.

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 are keen to do well and take great pride in their work. This, combined with better teaching, helps them to make increasingly good progress. Pupils spoken to by the inspector said they like that they are now set more interesting and challenging work by their teachers. They relish this.
- Pupils are polite and friendly and show respect to adults and to one another. They show kindness and understanding towards their peers. They talk animatedly and with serious enthusiasm about their fundraising activities and how their actions can help people across the world who are struggling.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the various forms that bullying can take. This is because they have a range of opportunities to discuss it and it is a regular topic for assemblies. They say that there is very little bullying at the school and that, when anything does occur, they know that they can rely on staff to deal with it promptly and effectively.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and all of those spoken with at the school gate said that their child felt safe.
- Pupils enjoy the extra-curricular opportunities the school offers them. The gardening club and the

enterprise club are particularly popular. The enterprise club, supported by local business leaders, encourages pupils to set up their own businesses. One of these, Pizza Co., where a group of pupils takes orders for pizza on Mondays for delivery to the school gate on Fridays, is particularly popular. Pupils say that they welcome these opportunities to participate, socialise with their friends and serve others.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour is generally good in lessons and this ensures that pupils learn effectively without any distractions. At lunchtimes, there is a calm, orderly atmosphere in the dining hall where pupils are well supervised. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils' behaviour is sometimes boisterous outdoors. However, pupils mostly play well together.
- Routines, both in and out of the classroom, are very clear and pupils know what is expected of them. They take very good care of the classrooms and corridors. They learn in a well-ordered environment. They take pride in their work and look after the displays and school equipment very carefully.
- Attendance is good and continues to improve. It is above the national average. The school actively promotes regular attendance and punctuality, and checks carefully on the reasons for absence. Any patterns of absence are quickly identified and the school moves promptly and effectively to support children and families who, from time to time, find attending school a struggle.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- The improving quality of teaching is tackling the legacy of underachievement, particularly in mathematics, effectively. This is because of the decisive actions of the headteacher and the mathematics leader.
- Outcomes for pupils have improved since the previous inspection. However, because effective action to address the weaknesses outlined in the previous inspection was slow and uneven in its impact, these improvements are in their early stages.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the early years was high in both 2014 and 2015. The school's assessment information indicates that this will again be the case in 2016. However, the accuracy of these predicted outcomes is now more carefully checked as a result of close working with the local authority and other schools.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been variable for the past three years, being too often below the standard. The school's assessment information indicates that it will rise this year. Inspection evidence supports this.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils making the expected progress between key stages 1 and 2 in mathematics was significantly below average. Scrutiny of the work in pupils' mathematics books shows that, for pupils currently in school, progress is notable as a result of better teaching. However, there are still gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge. The school's own assessment of its work acknowledges this and effective measures are now in place to address it.
- The impact of good-quality teaching in grammar, punctuation and spelling is helping pupils to improve their writing skills. However, in the work books examined during the inspection, the most able pupils are not given opportunities to write at sufficient length to develop their skills and stamina as writers for a wide range of audiences.
- The content of pupils' writing is improving and pupils are beginning to have some opportunities to practise their writing skills in other subjects, for example in their topic work. A higher proportion of pupils, especially boys, made more than expected progress in writing than pupils nationally in 2015, showing notable improvement in attainment from the previous year. However, leaders acknowledge there remains work to be done to reach higher standards.
- In recent years, disadvantaged pupils have too often attained less well than others in school and others nationally. The school's information about the performance of pupils currently on roll indicates that these pupils are currently making progress equal to, or greater than, others in school. Inspection evidence supports this.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress because of the effective individual support they receive.

Early years provision

is good

- Leadership in the early years is strong. Staff work effectively as a team, sharing expertise. The early years leader has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas to be improved and works hard to ensure that any new developments are thoroughly embedded.
- Children start in the early years with skills and knowledge that are slightly above what is typical for their age. However, numbers are very small so this differs from year to year. In 2015, all children reached a good level of development by the time they left Reception. The school's assessments show that there will be a similar outcome in 2016.
- Children are keen to learn and participate in activities with enthusiasm. They show good levels of concentration and perseverance in the interesting and varied activities which are provided for them. They are developing good learning routines. For example, when further developing their stories based on 'Jack and the Beanstalk', children readily referred to the English 'learning wall' where they had written dialogue from a session earlier in the week.
- There are many opportunities for children to improve their physical development in the outdoor and semi-outdoor areas. The leader has creatively developed these areas with a wide range of climbing and similar activities so that children can explore and grow in confidence.
- Children develop their early writing skills well. This is because staff ensure children develop a good pencil grip from an early stage. As a result, generally, children form letters and numbers correctly. Children are learning to write in a cursive style; this prepares them well for writing further up the school. They are also developing their phonics skills well and this lays good foundations for future reading.
- Adults support children's learning well, particularly by asking effective open-ended questions to assess children's understanding and promote their speaking and listening skills.
- Children are achieving well because the activities that the adults plan are based on accurate assessments of each child's strengths and needs. Observations are carried out regularly to assess how well children are learning. Children's work and their learning journals, which are available to each child's parents online, show good progression in a range of areas, particularly in their early writing and number skills.
- Children's behaviour is good. They cooperate well together and spontaneously help one another when needed. There is a purposeful, orderly and calm atmosphere in which children thrive. Children are developing good attitudes to learning. They are interested and engaged.
- Staff ensure that children are kept safe, feel safe and are safe. Children's safety, health and welfare are paramount. Safeguarding policies and procedures are closely adhered to.
- There are very good relationships with parents and families. The school uses a range of ways to keep home-school communication strong. Parents are given many opportunities to work in partnership with the school to support their children's learning.

School details

Unique reference number	121594
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10012058

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	58
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Maxfield
Headteacher	Richard Cook
Telephone number	01756 752348
Website	www.threshfieldprimary.co.uk
Email address	admin@threshfield.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 June 2014

Information about this school

- Threshfield is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability receiving support is higher than found nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is above the national average. Pupil premium funding is provided to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The current headteacher took up his role in September 2015. There had been some turbulence in leadership and staffing prior to him taking up post.
- All the teachers at the school have taken up their posts since the previous inspection in June 2014.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in all classes. The headteacher jointly observed the quality of teaching with the inspector in some lessons. The inspector also made short visits to classrooms to evaluate the quality of the curriculum and the provision for different groups of pupils.
- The inspector listened to a number of pupils read and reviewed the work in pupils' books.
- The inspector spoke to pupils informally in lessons and breaktimes and met a group of Year 6 pupils more formally. He observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, subject and other leaders, members of the governing body, a group of parents and a representative of the local authority. He also sought the views of a number of parents at the beginning and the end of the school day.
- The inspector evaluated a range of information, including the school improvement plan, the school's evaluation of its own performance, minutes of governing body meetings, reports from the local authority, monitoring records of the quality of teaching and information on pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. He also looked at documents relating to safeguarding (protecting children and making sure they are safe). The inspector evaluated a wide range of information on the school's website.
- The inspector considered the 28 responses made by parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View). He took into account the views expressed by six staff and 21 pupils.

Inspection team

Mark Evans, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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