

# Inspection of Thornton Primary School

Thornton Road, Thornton, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD13 3NN

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Inspection dates: 16–17 January 2020

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at Thornton Primary School have a real zest for learning. They are excited by lessons because teachers make them interesting and fun. Parents agree with their children and talk about the passion staff have for teaching. Pupils enjoy visits to places such as the Industrial Museum because it 'brings learning to life'.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour both in and out of class. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and they concentrate in lessons. There are a few pupils whose attendance is not good enough. This makes it hard for them to settle in class when they have missed out on some important learning. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They say bullying incidents are rare but when they do occur staff sort them out.

The school's curriculum in reading is well planned. Pupils understand the texts they are reading because they are well linked to the other subjects. Historically the planning of mathematics and writing has not helped pupils learn and remember more. Recent changes to the planning and sequencing of mathematics teaching are now making a positive difference. In the foundation stage and key stage 1 the curriculum planning for teaching writing is not ambitious enough for the most able pupils.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Children get off to a good start in the school's Nursery. Activities are well planned to help children build on their learning step by step. They happily follow the school routines. In the Reception classes there is a sharp focus on teaching the skills children need to read and enjoy books. For their age, children read fluently and show a real pleasure when listening to stories.

Teachers' planning for the outside area of the Reception classes is not as good as provision in the classroom. Children play in the fresh air and particularly enjoy the sandpit. Some of the activities outside do not build on children's next steps. Children do not have good opportunities to practise reading and writing skills outside. The weaker planning of the curriculum in the outside area means that children do not sustain concentration and flit about from one thing to another.

Leaders have received good support and challenge from both the trust and the governing body. This has helped the school to devise a curriculum which has been well thought through. It is particularly strong in reading, history and science. In these subjects lessons carefully build on what pupils have learned before and what they need to learn next. Pupils rise to meet these expectations and achieve well. Pupils are enthusiastic about science. They are keen to be 'super scientists'. Year 6 studied the circulatory system and dissected a pig heart. In their work pupils wrote up their findings using the correct scientific vocabulary. They used their computing skills to

write a simple animation programme explaining the working of the heart. As they had been reading 'Pig Heart Boy' in class pupils could discuss the moral issues around transplantation.

Leaders have been successful in prioritising reading for enjoyment. Throughout the school, pupils have a real love of reading. Teachers choose reading books to help younger readers practise their phonics. Older pupils read to a high standard and confidently talk about their favourite authors.

The school has recently introduced a new approach to the mathematics curriculum. Although it is early days, this is starting to help pupils. They are now building on their previous learning and starting to apply what they know to solving mathematical problems. The planning of the writing curriculum particularly for the younger pupils is not sharp enough. It lacks ambition for most-able writers. Pupils are unsure how to form their letters correctly. In key stage 2 pupils' written work is of a good standard. Pupils use the skills they have learned in English when they write in other subjects.

The school provides well for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND.) Teachers make detailed plans to set out clear learning steps so these pupils achieve well.

Thornton is an inclusive school and provides well for pupils' and staff's well-being. A few pupils have sometimes found it more challenging to focus in school. They say that the support the school has put in place has helped them improve their behaviour. The school's weekly 'phrase that pays' means that pupils reflect on a range of topical issues. They have a mature understanding of why other people might choose to adopt a different lifestyle or religion to their own.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff work well with parents and carers, and other agencies. This helps to protect pupils and keep them free from harm. Governors check that they meet their statutory duties for the safer recruitment of staff. Staff are well trained and they understand their responsibilities for safeguarding pupils.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in school, online and in the local community. When they share their worries with staff they are confident they will be followed up effectively.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Historical weaknesses in curriculum planning and the sequence of content in mathematics has resulted in gaps in some pupils' understanding. Recent changes to the curriculum are already having a positive impact. Leaders need to continue to address this legacy so that pupils can use their mathematical knowledge to tackle and solve mathematical problems.
- Previously, too few pupils starting secondary school have achieved the expected and higher standard for their age in writing. Improvements to the curriculum planning for writing in key stage 2 have resulted in better achievement for these pupils and has raised teachers' expectations. This is less evident in key stage 1. The curriculum is not ambitious enough for more-able writers. The sequence of teaching writing should ensure that young pupils consistently write their letters correctly.
- The outdoor provision for children in the Reception classes lacks focus. Planning the outside activities needs to be an integral part of the learning environment. The curriculum for this age group should build on children's previous learning and promote all areas of learning, but particularly reading and writing.
- Attendance for some groups of pupils has been lower than the national average over the past few years. Too many pupils are absent too often. Leaders have begun to implement more-effective procedures that are beginning to make a difference. They should now ensure that procedures are applied with vigour so that attendance rises, and the persistent absence of all groups of pupils falls.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143944
<b>Local authority</b>	Bradford
<b>Inspection number</b>	10121647
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	583
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Clive Davies
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth Davison
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thorntonprimary.co.uk">www.thorntonprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Thornton Primary School converted to become an academy school on 1 February 2017. When its predecessor school, Thornton Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement overall.
- Thornton Primary School is part of the Focus Multi-Academy Trust.
- Since the school opened, there has been a reduction in staffing, including staff in leadership positions.
- The school has a Nursery which children attend both part and full time.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff. The lead inspector met with trust representatives, including the chief executive officer, and a group of governors, including the two chairs of the governing body.
- We looked in depth at the following subjects: reading, mathematics, science, writing and history. In doing so, we visited classes across all year groups and

reviewed pupils' work. We spoke to pupils about their learning and listened to them read. We also met with teachers.

- We met with those responsible for safeguarding. We looked at a range of documentation linked to safeguarding including: child protection policies and procedures; absence data; information about how pupils' behaviour is managed; and information about how more-vulnerable pupils are supported. We talked to pupils during the inspection and asked them about how safe they feel.
- We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at breakfast club, playtimes and lunchtimes. We gathered pupils' views about the school through formal and informal discussions. We considered the two responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and 22 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- We scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding documents.
- We gathered the views of parents at the start of the day. We considered the 57 responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View, and the 45 free-text responses.

### **Inspection team**

Karen Heath, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Fiona Dixon

Ofsted Inspector

Peter Marsh

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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