

Threshfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121594
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	292168
Inspection dates	2–3 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Rodger

This inspection of the school 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 on roll	102
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Huff
Headteacher	Mrs H Jarvis
Date of previous school inspection	19 February 2002
School address	Low Road Threshfield Skipton North Yorkshire BD23 5NP
Telephone number	01756 752348
Fax number	01756 752348

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small village school is situated on the outskirts of Threshfield in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It attracts pupils from a wide area. The number of pupils on roll has doubled in recent years. The school serves a socially advantaged area which is reflected in there being no pupils eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has achieved a large number of awards over the years, including Healthy school, Basic skills, Active Mark Gold, individual and cluster Investors' in People, International school award.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Threshfield School rightly deserves to be judged outstanding in its effectiveness. This is due in no small measure to the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, the committed team of staff and the impact of exemplary teaching and a first rate curriculum. Consistently high standards by the time pupils leave school have been a strong feature for several years. Parents wrote of the eagerness with which their children 'rush into school every morning', and 'the teachers' helpfulness and approachability', to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school's judgement on its overall effectiveness is accurate in some respects, but too modest in others. It is very effective in the way it tackles different circumstances, for example, a slight fall in achievement throughout Key Stage 2 last year to bring about improvements.

Pupils make outstanding progress and achieve very well throughout the school. Standards in this small school are broadly average on entry. Standards by the time the pupils leave school in Year 6 are generally high in English, mathematics and science. Achievement over time is outstanding because of the impact of excellent teaching on pupils' progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from an exemplary quality of support from staff and make excellent progress as a result. Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Healthy living is supremely well fostered through an extensive number of sporting activities in and out of school and attention to healthy eating. Older pupils and parents take good responsibility for organising games clubs after school for all pupils. Behaviour is excellent and pupils say they feel safe at playtimes because there is never any bullying or fighting. Enjoyment is reflected in the pupils' high attendance. Pupils' care, guidance and support are superbly dealt with and much appreciated by parents. The time and support provided for individual pupils is exceptional, resulting in well-rounded, confident pupils who are well equipped to make a smooth transition to the next stage of their education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding and characterised by innovative, practical and inspirational lessons that are planned well for all pupils. The use of whiteboard technology adds to pupils' enjoyment. Pupils respond with enthusiasm to high expectations and the challenge provided by talented teaching. The impact of rigorous monitoring of teaching and feedback by the headteacher over several years is evident in the consistently high quality teaching. The real 'jewel in the crown' of this school is the exemplary curriculum and topics taught to develop economic awareness and enterprise. For example, a badge-making enterprise raised money for charity and younger pupils have sown seeds to grow plants to sell later in the term. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of local and wider environments and a variety of cultures. They take their responsibilities related to maintaining the beauty of their immediate environment seriously and get involved in activities to protect it, for example, through recycling.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher is, without doubt, the leading professional in the school and has created an equally strong team around her. The vision and direction over many years has resulted in a school with the strongest possible commitment to making learning fun and providing well for pupils so they achieve well. The school is successful despite the limitations of the buildings. There is nowhere for staff to work or to take a break from teaching, the headteacher's office is a small cupboard and two of the classrooms are temporary and have been so for many years. The school gives excellent value for money and has a similar capacity to improve. Improvements since the last inspection have been exemplary.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide somewhere for teachers to prepare and plan their lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding and standards by the end of Year 6 are generally high. By the time children leave the Reception class they have reached above average standards in all areas of learning, although standards in creative development are not as high as other areas. Achievement throughout Key Stage 1 is outstanding. Pupils make excellent progress as a result of outstanding teaching and the enriching curriculum. Opportunities are well provided for pupils' writing to link to topic work. For example, captions linked to a recycling display showed accurate and well written sentences. Speaking and listening skills are developed well which contributes to increased fluency in the pupils' writing. Achievement in Key Stage 2 is outstanding overall. In 2004 and 2005 standards at the end of Year 6 were high; they fell slightly in 2006. Nevertheless, standards were above average in mathematics and average in English and science. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was high in all three subjects. Current progress in lessons is outstanding because of the pupils' enjoyment of learning and exemplary teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve very well because they are well supported. Progress is carefully monitored with parents and individual education plans are well matched to individual needs because they are written in consultation with the pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' enjoyment of learning is very strong. They are proud of their school. In discussions pupils reeled off many examples of enjoyment: a residential visit to York; meeting other children at events organised with schools in the area; weekly visits to a local secondary school for physical education and games in school. They feel safe in school, know their teachers care for them and appreciate the friendliness of the whole school environment. Behaviour is excellent. They say there is never any bullying because everyone is friendly and they value their community: as pupils said, 'just look around you!' Actions to develop awareness that the environment needs to be protected are exceptionally well understood by pupils: they are well exemplified in a whole school project on recycling and enterprise projects to develop economic awareness. Because decision making involves pupils, they know they will be able to cope well in later life and 'not be shy' when it comes to expressing their opinions. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent. Pupils have first hand knowledge of other cultures through a partnership and email exchanges with a school in India and are familiar with life in Africa through the curriculum. Attendance is excellent and pupils arrive promptly into school each day.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Classes are very well managed and planned work takes very good account of the mixed ages so all pupils are equally challenged and supported. Pupils are confident learners and value the practical activities provided throughout

school. For example, pupils carrying out a practical science investigation relished the encouragement to predict and hypothesise. Precise and clear instructions, such as the work to write a Fair Trade shopping list in Key Stage 1, mean that pupils demonstrate confidence and good skills in their writing. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is inspirational and takes excellent account of the outdoors to promote learning. The concentration and aptitude of children, as they prepared their plants for sale by labelling and counting, were excellent examples of applying basic skills. The skilled use of a digital microscope with well timed adult intervention developed children's language to describe objects. Marking of pupils' work is exemplary and makes clear what pupils need to do to improve, sometimes referring to meeting targets. The impact of the systematic and thorough monitoring of teaching and learning is very evident in the high quality teaching.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is inspirational because it successfully combines many subjects in a themed approach, carefully cross-referenced to the National Curriculum, for example, 'helping our world' and 'towns and villages'. Well planned literacy and numeracy lessons are effectively taught. Pupils' enjoyment and understanding of their impact on the environment is exemplary. This is recognised in the many awards achieved by the school in recent years. Many visitors help pupils' understanding of local occupations and the customs of other cultures. Educational visits and residential trips provide good enhancement. An extensive number of after school activities for all pupils continue to enrich and provide many enjoyable and healthy activities in and out of school. The Foundation Stage curriculum is very effective and combines indoor and outdoor learning in equal measure.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This very caring school provides excellent support for its pupils because they are valued as individuals. Pupils new to the school settle quickly and make friends. Links with outside agencies and parents to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are exemplary and reflected in the high praise of many parents. Arrangements to ensure pupils are safeguarded meet requirements. All staff have up-to-date awareness of child protection and other safety issues in school. Local authority checks confirm that everything is in place to ensure pupils are kept safe in school. All outdoor visits are thoroughly assessed to ensure they pose no risk to pupils. There is a detailed system in place to track the progress of pupils as they go through school and very informative term by term assessments of pupils' writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported and the fairly large numbers of more able pupils are also well catered for. Transition from pre-school into school and to the receiving secondary schools is well managed and relatively stress-free for pupils because of the strong links and some partnership teaching with a local secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. Teamwork between staff, governors and the community is a strong feature. Everyone has a high level of commitment to the school which is palpable in the effective working relationships. The headteacher is committed to networking

and collaborating with other schools and the community. This feature is largely responsible for the excellent opportunities that pupils have to understand the diversity and richness of the wider world alongside the local community. Self-evaluation is at the core of the headteacher's vision for the school and is firmly based on meeting the needs of each and every pupil so they reach their potential and enjoy all the school has to offer. The headteacher has a clear educational vision for the school and her commitment shines through. Pupils are thrilled when taught by her. Expectations are high. The school sets itself exacting standards and strives to meet them. Excellence is acknowledged and there is no complacency. Governors are fully involved, both by their presence in school as helpers and through strategic planning, although actions to tackle the limitations of the accommodation for staff are not yet reaching any solution.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Theshfield Primary School, Threshfield, BD23 5NP

Thank you for all the help you gave to me when I visited your school recently. It was a pleasure to talk to some of you and hear all about your school. It was really amazing to find out all about what you do to help improve the environment and to hear about your links with a school in India. Your school is quite outstanding and you are very lucky to be attending such an exciting place to learn. Practically everything was outstanding, but some things were particularly so and these are listed below.

- You work hard and really enjoy everything you do.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you care for each other very well.
- You do some really exciting topics and have made some brilliant screen prints over the years.
- Your school environment is outstanding too and you know that it needs to be cared for.
- Some of you need help in school to learn as well as you can. This is very well provided by your teaching assistants.
- Your headteacher and teachers work very hard to provide you with so many exciting things to do which means you enjoy learning and achieve well.

You mostly have plenty of space to learn and access to a really good outdoor area (especially for the Reception children), but your teachers have nowhere to work or to have their lunch. It is suggested that the accommodation is improved to provide somewhere for your teachers to work when they are not teaching you.

Good luck to you as you go through Threshfield School. Enjoy the rest of the year and best wishes to you all.