

## Thorne Moorends Marshland Primary School

### Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 106690           |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Doncaster        |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 309199           |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 18–19 March 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Andrew Swallow   |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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|---|---|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary   |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 4–11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed   |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |   |
| School                                    | 156   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body  |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mr Mark Aveyard   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mrs Julia Rouse   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 17 November 2003  |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Marshland Road<br>Moorends<br>Doncaster<br>South Yorkshire<br>DN8 4SB |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01405 812693  |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01405 741038  |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Thorne Moorends Marshland is a smaller than average sized primary school in the centre of the village community that it serves. A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed very recently. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions eligible for a free school meal and requiring support for learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are above the national average. The school has Activemark accreditation.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. The recently appointed headteacher provides clear and determined leadership. She has worked tirelessly over the past two terms to address the challenges arising from staffing changes and a potential amalgamation with a local primary school. Her emphasis on teamwork has developed, in a short time, a collaborative approach to raising pupils' achievement. New strategies have been introduced to respond to the fall in overall standards in 2007, but have not yet had sufficient time to take full effect. Self-evaluation is largely accurate and has identified the right priorities to move the school forward. However, current processes do not always enable senior leaders and governors to check thoroughly the impact of their action on the school's work. Leaders realise that achievement and standards across the school are not high enough, and that there is too much variability in the quality of teaching and learning, particularly across Years 3 to 6. The school also knows that there is more work to be done to assess the impact of teachers' work on pupils' learning, and to involve governors more in understanding how well the school is doing. The senior leadership team and, increasingly, other staff are now actively involved in tracking individual pupils to support those who are falling behind. Parents recognise all of this good work. They say, 'The school has a good feel about it', and 'The teachers have always got time for both children and their parents'.

Standards are improving by the end of Year 2 and are now below average. This represents satisfactory achievement for the vast majority of pupils. Increased standards reflect children's improved starting points as they enter Reception, and satisfactory learning experiences as they move through the early years. By the end of Year 6, standards are well below national levels in English, mathematics and science. Nevertheless, this still represents satisfactory achievement, given that starting points for these pupils were well below average. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but is not of a consistently high enough quality as pupils move through the school. Most teachers plan interesting activities that stretch all pupils and encourage them to learn independently. In some lessons, however, the work is not sufficiently challenging and teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy school and their behaviour is generally calm and sensible. The vast majority recognise how to keep safe and healthy. They are soundly prepared for life beyond school, for example through the opportunities given to take on responsibilities. The curriculum is satisfactory, although not yet sufficiently lively and creative to stimulate and inspire all learners. The quality of care and guidance is satisfactory. Good emphasis is placed on pupils' pastoral care and well-being, but the school does not yet provide consistently precise and regular information, so that all pupils know what they need to do to make the next steps in their learning.

The focused leadership by the new headteacher, and developing strengths of the senior leadership team and governing body, are moving the school forward. These factors ensure that the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement. It provides satisfactory value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Most children arrive in the Foundation Stage (Reception class), from locally based nursery settings, with skills that are improving but below those expected for their age. The well

established links with parents and thorough induction arrangements help children settle quickly. The teaching team ensures that care and welfare procedures are of paramount importance. Every child really does matter in this small but supportive environment. Staff interact appropriately with all children, using discussion and questioning to stimulate their learning. The emphasis placed on children's personal, social and emotional development is a strength. Teachers' planning and assessment take account of children's individual needs and ensure that most make satisfactory progress in their communication, language and calculation skills. As a result, many are beginning to reach their early learning goals by the beginning of Year 1. Nevertheless, there are insufficient overall opportunities for children to initiate and take responsibility for their own learning. Experiences to move freely from activity to activity, both in the Foundation Stage environment, and the outside area, are limited. Systems to assess children's progress are satisfactory and the vast majority are enthusiastic about their learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise achievement and standards in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school, and especially across Years 3 to 6.
- Increase the overall quality of teaching and learning to the level of the best practice in the school, particularly with reference to teachers' expectations of pupils and the level of challenge provided.
- Improve processes by which senior leaders and governors check how well the school is performing.
- Improve attendance.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' standards on entry into Year 1 are beginning to rise and are now below average. They make overall satisfactory progress across Years 1 and 2. As of late, pupils' achievement in mathematics has improved, and increasing numbers reach national expectations. However, the most recent teachers' assessments show that standards in reading and writing are still below average, with too few pupils attaining the higher levels. Pupils achieve satisfactorily across Years 3 to 6, although standards are variable. This is largely because group sizes differ from year to year. In 2007, standards fell significantly in English and mathematics and were well below average. They were average in science. Current information shows that standards by the end of Year 6 remain well below average, but that these outcomes continue to represent satisfactory progress for these pupils, given their starting points. Nevertheless, information about pupils' progress across Years 3 to 5 indicates that a minority are not achieving as well as expected in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because the quality of teaching is uneven and is not enabling all pupils to do as well as they can. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily, because of the extra support they receive. The school sets increasingly challenging targets to raise attainment but at present the impact of this work is limited.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Pupils are proud of their school. They say that the teachers and other adults are always there for them, and so they enjoy coming to school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and is promoted effectively through assemblies and the personal, social and health education programme. The majority of pupils understand the contribution that a good diet and regular exercise make to a healthy lifestyle and the many extra-curricular sporting activities are well supported. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know who to turn to if they need help. Most behave appropriately and the school is an orderly community. There are increasing opportunities to take on responsibility. The school council, though at the early stages of development, has been instrumental in bringing about some changes, such as a school newspaper and playtime leaders. Despite the school's best efforts, attendance remains unsatisfactory, and is well below the national average. A significant number of families persist in taking holidays during the school term. Technology activities, and projects undertaken at the art and craft club, encourage pupils to become involved in mini enterprises. However, by the end of their time in school, some have still not developed the literacy and numeracy skills to prepare them well for their future lives.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good features, across Years 1 and 2. Across Years 3 to 6, there is too much variability. Here, the quality of teaching and learning ranges from inadequate to good. In the better lessons, activities are stimulating and engaging, with well-chosen resources that help pupils to work with increasing independence. Effective questioning prompts pupils to think for themselves. For example, in a Year 6 poetry lesson, pupils devised their own checklists to draft the opening lines of a poem about a tornado; in Year 2, pupils used a 'feely bag' to devise adventurous words to support their descriptions of animals. In lessons such as these pupils enjoy their learning. This is because they receive regular feedback about how well they are doing and they feel challenged to give of their best. In a number of lessons, pupils' learning is stifled by activities that are over-dominated by teachers, that are uninspiring, and that provide too little challenge. Pupils do not make sufficient progress because it is unclear what precise skills or understanding they are aiming to develop, and teachers are not rigorous enough in checking how well pupils are doing. Most pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently to help them in their learning. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effectively met, through tasks that match their needs and appropriate support from teaching assistants.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and balanced, and all statutory requirements are met. Arrangements to boost pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are beginning to meet their needs, particularly through new groupings across Years 3 to 6. Provision for ICT has improved significantly since the last inspection, and pupils have good access to computers to help them in their learning. The teaching of French is beginning to enrich pupils' language skills and appreciation of life in the 'global community.' Throughout the school more pupils are taking advantage of learning

to play a musical instrument. Visits to local museums and places of interest enhance pupils' learning, alongside the many visitors to school, such as artists, poets and sports coaches. Pupils say that they appreciate the widening range of extra-curricular activities which include sport, art and craft, gardening and computer clubs. Years 5 and 6 pupils particularly enjoy the residential visits to Hartington and Scarborough.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Parents appreciate the strong pastoral support provided. Positive relationships throughout the school help pupils to feel safe and secure. They say, 'There's always someone there for you. It's like one big family.' Safeguarding procedures comply with government guidelines. Many older pupils are becoming increasingly involved in understanding how well they are doing. They say that their targets are helpful in reminding them about how they can improve their work. However, not all pupils are clear about what they are aiming at. This is because opportunities for teachers to give advice through their marking are sometimes missed, and not all targets are precise enough, or written so that children can understand them. Systems to identify and support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are satisfactory.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The recently appointed headteacher has established a very clear direction for the work of the school and an emphasis on raising achievement. Teachers speak highly of the way she has gained quickly the support of all staff and encouraged them to work as a team. The newly formed senior leadership team supports the headteacher's drive to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential. Recently refined tracking procedures are providing a clearer picture of pupils' progress across the school, and highlighting those who are not achieving as well as they can. Self-evaluation is largely accurate and strategies are in place to boost pupils' performance in reading, writing and mathematics, and to develop more fully the checking and analysing roles of key staff. Many of these strategies are new and have not yet had sufficient time to take full effect. Action plans identify the correct priorities, but do not describe intended outcomes in sufficient detail to enable meaningful evaluation. Governors are supportive of the school and largely fulfil their statutory responsibilities. However, processes have not been in place long enough to enable them to feel confident in understanding the school's strengths and areas for development, and in holding staff to account with sufficient rigor.

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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 |
|---|----------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection  | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?   | 3   |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage   | 3   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements   | 3   |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 3 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress                              | 3 |

### Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?                                  | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 3 |
| The attendance of learners  | 4 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 3 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community                                    | 3 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |

### The quality of provision

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?          | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?   | 3 |

<sup>1</sup> 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**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 3   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3   |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | 3   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 3   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 3   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 3   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 3   |
| 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  |

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We really enjoyed talking with you and being in your lessons. It was good to see that most of you are friendly and polite to each other, and to the teachers and other adults who work with you. We liked the caring atmosphere in which you feel so safe and happy.

Most of you attend school regularly which helps you build on what you learn each day. However, some of you do not attend as well as you might which is not helping you to make the best possible progress. We were impressed by your understanding of the importance of living healthily; certainly, you enjoy the start to the day that the breakfast club provides and take regular exercise, during and after school. Many of you appreciate the work of the school council, which tries to get things done on your behalf. We know that many of your lessons are interesting, and that visits and visitors to school help to make your learning more enjoyable.

There have been lots of changes recently to ensure that you make good progress, rather than the satisfactory progress that you make now, but there is still much more to be done. All of your teachers want the school to be the best it can be and are working hard to make it a good place for you to learn. We think that your school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Nevertheless, we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to help you make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics, by making sure that the work they give you always helps you to learn as well as you can. We have also asked them to think more carefully about how lessons are taught, and how this affects the progress you make. Finally, we have asked them to check more carefully how well you achieve, and to work with you in making sure that as many of you as possible come to school every day. As a result, we think that you will enjoy lessons even more and do even better. You can help by attending school regularly, trying your hardest in every lesson, and telling your teachers if you find the work they give you too hard or too easy.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly. I really do hope that you continue to enjoy your time at Thorne Moorends.