

Thornton Dale C of E (VC) Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 121520 |
| Local Authority | North Yorkshire |
| Inspection number | 314022 |
| Inspection date | 21 October 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Robert Robinson |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 146 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Iain Spittal |
| Headteacher | Mrs Lorna Karenyk |
| Date of previous school inspection | 4 July 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Castle Close Thornton Dale Pickering North Yorkshire YO18 7TW |

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|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Age group | 4–11 |
| Inspection date | 21 October 2008 |
| Inspection number | 314022 |

Telephone number
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1751 474345
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The following issues were investigated: the standards and achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' and parents' views of the school and the impact of leadership and management on pupils' achievement. The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, examination of pupils' work, assessment data, interviews with staff, pupils and governors, and scrutiny of documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school situated in a more favourable than average socio-economic area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. The school is an Investor in People and it has achieved the Financial Management Standard for Schools. It has also gained the Activemark, Dyslexia Quality Mark, and the Local Authority Inclusion Mark awards. The headteacher commenced her appointment in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Thornton Dale Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. During the time pupils are at the school their achievement is satisfactory. However, because of good leadership and management pupils' progress has recently speeded up in some age groups but there has been insufficient time for this to have resulted in a significant improvement in standards. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory on balance, reflecting the progress pupils have made over time, though much of the current teaching is good. Standards are broadly average but do vary from average to above average because of small numbers in year groups and differences in pupils' skills on entry to Year 1.

Pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because of strengths in the curriculum and the effective care, guidance and support provided for them. As a result, by the time they leave the school, pupils are confident and have positive attitudes to learning. Older pupils are unafraid to express their views and know that they are listened to. They applaud the changes made to the curriculum during the past year. For example, they enthused about the greater emphasis on themes linking subjects together. They stated that this helped to make their learning more meaningful and enjoyable. A topic about water gave them opportunities to search for information on the Internet. They enjoyed writing about their findings. It also added purpose to learning in science and geography as well as the effect of water supply on different communities. A pupil remarked 'It was very handy with the preparations for harvest.' At the Harvest Festival pupils gained a better awareness of the life in Tanzania and how their support could benefit a farming project.

Parents' views of the school are generally positive though a few have concerns about behaviour and their children's progress. Parents and parent governors are highly supportive of the headteacher and the school. Typical comments are 'Strong level of confidence in the headteacher and 'The school is an asset to our community'. Parents appreciate the good pastoral care for their children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They report that if there are any concerns the school is approachable and handles any issues sensitively. Systems in place for child protection and safeguarding procedures meet government requirements. Health and safety arrangements promote a safe and caring learning experience for pupils.

Behaviour in the school is good both in lessons and around the school. As a school councillor stated, 'There is no bullying and behaviour is getting better.' Pupils' progress does vary through the school and reflects variations in the quality of teaching and learning rather than mixed-age group classes, a worry expressed by a few parents. The headteacher's rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning has resulted in improvements in quality. In most classes pupils are now making good progress. Support is being provided in others to increase the pace of pupils' learning. Where teaching is good or better, exciting activities (both indoors and outdoors) engage pupils' interest in learning. Lessons move at a brisk pace. They are well planned and organised to meet the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment. Pupils in these lessons make good or better progress. Where teaching is less successful, pupils spend far too long listening to the teacher. Not enough time is provided for pupils to be actively involved in investigations and practising new learning. Questioning is not linked sufficiently well to pupils' capabilities. The pace of learning is not quick enough to enable the pupils to make better than satisfactory progress. Throughout the school the marking of pupils' work clearly celebrates their achievements and suggests how they can improve.

In the short time the headteacher has been at the school, she has gained the confidence of pupils, parents, governors, staff and the local community. She is ably assisted by governors, senior managers and other staff. The governors and headteacher have successfully handled difficult staffing issues to ensure the long-term financial viability of the school. The curriculum has been revised during the past year in line with national recommendations. The wealth of data on pupils' attainment is now being used well to set targets for pupils and staff to challenge them to improve standards. Already, pupils are making better progress because of the changes to the curriculum and improvements in pupils' learning. The senior management team and subject leaders are increasingly taking greater responsibility for improving provision at the school. The strengths in the leadership and management, including governance, pupils' good personal development and the well thought out curriculum, provide the school with good capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is satisfactory, as are leadership, management and teaching. Children's achievement is satisfactory. Children enter school with skills broadly typical for their age. They are well behaved and are interested in learning. They respond well to one another and to staff. Members of staff check children's learning carefully. As a result, by the time they leave the EYFS children's skills are similar to those normally seen but their personal, social and emotional development is good. This prepares them soundly for future learning. The curriculum has been revised appropriately to meet recent national guidance. It is too early to judge the impact of the new arrangements on children's progress in the EYFS. A greater emphasis is now placed on linking learning indoors with that outdoors. However, too many sessions are closely directed by teachers rather than well thought out activities that challenge children to investigate and find out for themselves. Children settle well into school life and are well cared for. Links with pre-school providers are strong, particularly because of the recent establishment of a pre-school group on the school premises. Parents confirm their satisfaction with the good care and welfare provided for their children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency in the quality of teaching in order to ensure a good pace in learning and challenge for pupils at different levels of attainment.
- Extend the opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils throughout the rest of the school to develop their own learning through purposeful investigations.

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.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

| | |
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| 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? | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 3 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 3 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 3 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 3 |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress | 3 |

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

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| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 |

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 2 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 2 |
| 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 | 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 |

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

Inspection of Thornton Dale C of E (VC) Primary School, Pickering,

YO18 7TW

Thank you for welcoming me and for being so polite and friendly when I inspected your school. I enjoyed my visit and I want to share with you what I thought about your school.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. Your achievement is satisfactory and you reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Your headteacher knows how to make your school better. Many new initiatives are helping you to make better progress. The headteacher is helped well by governors and other staff. In addition, she has your parents' support. You make faster progress in some classes than in others because of differences in the quality of teaching and learning. I have asked the school to ensure that in all lessons there is a good pace of learning and questioning and work is suited to your level of attainment.

I was pleased to hear that you enjoy school and that you find the themes, which link learning in different subjects together, make your lessons more interesting. Your personal development is good. I was pleased to see how well you related to one another. Your behaviour is good. You enjoy school and attend well. Your school councillors take their responsibilities seriously. They are confident to express their views about the school and know they are listened to. It was a privilege to watch your Harvest Festival. I was impressed by your focus on caring about the lives and needs of children and adults in Tanzania.

The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has been changed this year. There is now a greater emphasis on linking learning indoors with that outdoors. To enable children to increase their skills at a faster pace, I have asked the school to give them more opportunities to make choices about their learning through well thought out investigations. This is also necessary throughout the rest of the school.

I appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn. I am sure that you will continue to work with the staff and your headteacher to help them to continue to improve the school. I wish you well for the future.