

Thorpe Willoughby Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121436
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327488
Inspection dates	21–22 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Don Mason

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	258
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	Mrs J Tetley
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Brown
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Londesborough Grove Fox Lane Thorpe Willoughby Selby North Yorkshire

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	21–22 January 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is average in size. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. A small but growing percentage come from the Traveller Community and are of Gypsy/Roma heritage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision is for children in Reception and in a mixed Reception/Year 1 class. The school has received a local authority Inclusion Mark, Leading Aspect Award, Healthy Schools status and the Activemark.

There is an independently managed childcare centre on the school site. This provision was inspected separately and receives a separate report.

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 with many good features. It enjoys the overwhelming support of parents who rightly appreciate its happy, inclusive ethos and the good quality care and guidance their children receive. The school works exceptionally well with local authority support services, the Traveller education service, the childcare centre, the church, local schools and parents to promote pupils' welfare. These links contribute effectively to good community cohesion. However, when planning improvements, the leadership and management focuses too much on what it provides rather than pupils' achievements and the standards they reach.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children enter Reception with levels of skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age, particularly in their language development. They make good progress and enter Year 1 with skills that are in line with national expectations. Progress from Year 1 to Year 6 is satisfactory. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make as much progress as other pupils because of the well planned support they receive from conscientious teaching assistants. This satisfactory achievement is due to the fact that, until recently, pupils' progress was not being monitored often enough or with sufficient rigour. Consequently, less able and more able pupils did not always make as much progress as they should have done. An improved system for checking pupils' progress was put into place in September 2008. Pupils' progress is now frequently, formally checked and regular discussions between senior staff and class teachers about the progress being made by their pupils have been established. As it is recent, this information is not yet being used in a strategic way, by senior staff, to check and promote pupils' achievement and to check the school's own evaluation of its performance.

Teaching is satisfactory, although lessons seen during the inspection were good. There is a good balance of lively teaching to the whole class with sufficient time for pupils to work at their well planned, interesting activities. The new arrangements for checking pupils' achievement are beginning to result in improved progress, are showing signs of more rapid progress. Curriculum planning now provides well for the teaching of basic skills and information and communication technology (ICT). The planning makes learning interesting by making links between subjects and providing practical activities. These enhance the pupils' enjoyment and learning. Pupils, of all abilities and backgrounds, receive high levels of pastoral care and good academic guidance. As a result, they enjoy school and feel safe and secure. They grow in self-confidence and self-esteem and their personal development is good. Through the school council, links with village activities and through taking on such responsibilities as listening to younger pupils read, and playground 'ambassadors', pupils make a good contribution to the community.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and improving.

However, planning for school improvement does not yet take sufficient account of pupils' achievement or the standards they reach, and targets are not used well enough to measure the impact of planned initiatives. Nevertheless, the determination of enthusiastic staff to improve achievement, the early signs of more rapid progress, the dramatic rise in language skills in Reception and now Year 1 and the good teaching and curriculum seen during the inspection indicate the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

As a result of excellent relationships with parents and outside agencies, good induction procedures, clear routines, and warm relationships, children settle in quickly and make good progress in their learning, especially in personal development. Language development, which was a weaker area, is now improving rapidly because of the new method of teaching phonics. Staff observe and check children's progress and use the information to plan short, adult-led activities which are enjoyed and which enhance learning. Adults interact well with the children encouraging conversation, addressing misconceptions, checking learning and promoting children's curiosity. There is a good balance between activities children choose themselves and those led by adults. The provision for outdoor activities is limited, particularly for the children in the mixed Reception/Year 1 class. Plans are in hand to rectify this situation. Leadership is good, giving the children's welfare a high priority. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Transition into Year 1 is seamless and those children, who need to, are able to continue to benefit from a Reception curriculum. The leader is able to talk about the children in detail. However, there is less confidence when talking about the progress of cohorts, trends and how these contribute to the general picture of achievement and standards across the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make use of the recent assessment information to improve pupils' achievement and to check the school's self-evaluation.
- Ensure achievement and standards are a key priority when planning school improvements and use measureable targets to check the effectiveness of those initiatives.

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

Standards at the end of Year 6 are average and achievement for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been broadly average over the last six years with some variation due to the nature of the cohort. The progress made by pupils in Years 3 to 6 has been satisfactory for four years with the latest, provisional test results for 2008 showing the weakest progress of that period. This helped to alert the school to the need to check the progress made by their pupils more frequently and with much greater rigour. Pupils, in danger of falling behind, are now identified more quickly and provided with the appropriate support. Expectations of what all pupils can achieve are rising and early signs of more rapid progress are encouraging. A new method of teaching phonics was introduced in Reception last year. It has had a very beneficial impact on children's language development and is now being introduced into Year 1.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' good personal development is reflected in their good behaviour, positive attitudes to work and the good levels of concentration they display in lessons. Attendance is average

overall and most pupils attend well. Relationships with the Traveller community are very good with the result that there is a growing trend amongst these families to limit their travelling times, or to make alternative arrangements, because they value what the school has to offer their children. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The pupils have a good understanding of healthy living, how to keep themselves safe and of the needs of others. They respond enthusiastically to the many sporting activities available in school. The school council meets regularly and ensures that pupils feel that their views are listened to. Pupils feel confident that they can approach staff for advice or to express any worries. Pupils leave the school as self-disciplined, responsible individuals with good personal and satisfactory academic skills that prepare them satisfactorily for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is improving and good teaching was seen during the inspection. There is early evidence that the rate of pupils' progress is increasing with a corresponding improvement in standards. However, the quality of teaching overall remains satisfactory because the improved progress is recent, not yet secure, and not yet reflected in national test results. Most lessons seen were planned well, with activities varied to meet pupils' needs. The purpose of lessons is always made clear to pupils who are encouraged to make their own assessment of their achievements. The final part of lessons is well used to review and consolidate learning. In some lessons, pupils are not challenged enough because the pace is too slow and there are too few opportunities for pupils to contribute.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

As a result of the more intense focus on achievement and standards, the curriculum is now well planned to support pupils' learning of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. It makes a good contribution to their personal development and understanding of healthy living. Activities increasingly make good links between subjects as in the Year 6 topic on 'Macbeth' which involved work in reading, writing, drama, art and music. Regular visitors to the school include poets, authors and singers and visitors who undertake role play have enlivened history work. Weekly curriculum afternoons, in which pupils rotate round different activities in music, physical education, art and French, take advantage of teachers' individual expertise, thereby enhancing the pupils' motivation and the development of their skills. A wide range of sporting and art based extra-curricular activities are well attended and popular. Following disappointing test results, the needs of more able pupils are being given greater attention. For example, those in Year 6 are receiving focused teaching in English and mathematics one morning a week. This is highly motivating for the pupils and helping to ensure that they reach their full potential. Teachers make good use of ICT facilities to enliven the curriculum. The computer suite is well used but pupils have limited opportunities to develop the skills they have learnt, independently, in the classroom.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The high standard of pastoral care that pupils receive contributes well to their good personal development and well-being. Vulnerable pupils or those who are experiencing temporary difficulties are supported well, and helped to manage their behaviour enabling them to play a full part in school life. Very good links with the Traveller education service promote the achievement of children from Traveller families. The requirements for safeguarding pupils are fully met. Although some inconsistencies remain, the academic guidance provided for pupils is good, especially in writing. Lively discussion about the purpose of lessons and individual targets promotes the pupils' understanding of their achievements and how they can improve. The quality of marking is mainly good. The leader of the childcare centre reports that pupils are keen to talk about their homework, which is set regularly, and to work on it before they go home.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's many strengths, including a strong commitment to ensuring that pupils from all backgrounds achieve equally well, are underpinned by the tone set by the headteacher and her obvious care for the welfare of her pupils and staff. The school has a satisfactory understanding of its strengths and weaknesses but it is unable to explain why its provision is not yet matched by good achievement and standards. Teaching is regularly monitored but is not judged strongly enough in relation to the progress pupils make over time. The school development plan provides a satisfactory plan of action for improvement. However, not enough use is being made of targets to check how beneficial improvements have been with regard to pupils' progress. The school accepts the need to set more challenging targets and use the improved assessment information, in a strategic way, to check and promote pupils' achievement and to ensure that its self-evaluation is accurate. Subject leaders are given time and resources to develop their role and are becoming increasingly effective. Governors are proud of the school and provide strong support. They are pleased with the new assessment data and believe that it will help them to develop their monitoring role, especially in relation to standards and achievement.

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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?	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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

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	3
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	3

The quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 eliminated	3
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	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

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

My colleagues and I really enjoyed our visit to inspect your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. We particularly enjoyed visiting your classrooms, seeing the work you were doing and talking to you about your school. You are proud of your school and rightly so because it has many strengths. However, we found that the quality of education you receive is satisfactory and standards at the end of Year 6 are average. The inspectors and your teachers think you could reach higher standards than this.

Things we found out about your school

- You are beginning to make more rapid progress because all the adults in school are determined that you should. They are checking how well you are doing in much more detail.
- Because your progress is being checked more often, teachers are able to make sure that, if you need it, you can get extra help as soon as possible.
- Your good behaviour and attitudes in class are a credit to the school.
- You enjoy your lessons, especially the practical activities, and appreciate the after-school activities and special events which the teachers provide for you.
- The adults in school are feeling positive about the future development of the school and are working hard to improve standards and achievement.

What we have asked your school to do now to improve further

- Begin to gather together the new information about your progress, summarise it and use it to make sure that, over time, year groups and individual pupils make as much progress as possible so that standards rise.
- Make achievement and standards the most important subject in the school development plan and find ways to measure how successful the school is being in making improvements.

You can help by thinking even harder about the purpose of lessons and your targets so that you know how to improve your work.