

# Threshfield School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121594
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	339976
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kath Halifax

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	97
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Peter Huff
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Collings
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Low Road Threshfield Skipton BD23 5NP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01756 752348
<b>Fax number</b>	01756 752348
<b>Email address</b>	admin@threshfield.n-yorks.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
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Manchester M2 7LA

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons or parts of lessons taught by four different teachers. Further time was spent looking at pupils' work books and information about pupils' progress. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff, and other professionals and looked at the school's review of its work, the current development plan, minutes of the governing body meetings, and documentation to ensure that pupils are safe. The responses to 61 parental questionnaires were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' attainment in writing
- the effectiveness of initiatives to raise attainment at Key Stage 1
- how well assessment is used to provide and plan for pupils who learn more slowly
- the effectiveness of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Information about the school

This smaller-than-average primary school serves an area where most families are in employment. This is reflected in the low take-up of free school meals. Almost all pupils are of White British background. The proportion of pupils who experience learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs, but the proportion of pupils with medical conditions is rising, as is the proportion of pupils with complex needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage caters for eight children who are taught full-time in the Reception class. The school has received a number of awards including the Healthy Schools Award, Investors in People status, and the North Yorkshire Quality Basic Skills Mark.

Following the recent retirement of the headteacher, the school is currently led by a senior teacher, and overseen by a consultant headteacher who is allocated one day a week. The post of headteacher has now been advertised.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Despite a turbulent three years, owing to staffing difficulties, this is a good school that provides good value for money. Immediately following the last inspection, the school faced many challenges. The lack of consistent senior leadership left staff facing situations for which they had received no training. As a consequence, while the overall standards at the end of Year 6 remained above average, gaps appeared in the learning of various groups of pupils. The situation has, however, improved substantially during the current academic year under the knowledgeable leadership of a consultant headteacher and the tremendous efforts of the senior teacher. Pupils' achievements are now good and improving. The fall in attainment at Key Stage 1 has been reversed, and there are no longer significant differences in the performance of different groups of pupils. Pupils do not achieve as well in writing as they do in reading. Nevertheless, they make good progress overall because of good teaching and a relevant curriculum. This is recognised in the national awards that have been achieved, and in pupils' excellent behaviour and good personal development. The achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The Reception class has only been operating in its present form for a matter of months. While there are some examples of good practice, overall provision is satisfactory. The outdoor area is not used to full advantage and opportunities for child-led learning are limited.

The consultant headteacher and senior teacher have worked with determination and tenacity to counteract disruption. Faced with a slowing in pupils' progress, their focus on improving classroom practice has paid dividends. School self-evaluation is now accurate and takes account of the views of staff and governors. Staff say they feel valued and part of a team. Confidence has been restored. Following a period when pupil numbers fell significantly, they are now rising. The skill and determination to take the school forward is evident, though the temporary nature of the current senior leadership makes the school's capacity to improve satisfactory.

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

- Narrow the gap between attainment in writing and reading, by ensuring that pupils:
  - – use a variety of punctuation
  - – use imaginative vocabulary
  - – use complex sentence structures
  - – improve their spelling.
- Ensure the achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage matches that of pupils in other key stages, by:

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- – making better use of the outdoor provision
- – enabling children to make more choices and take the initiative for their learning
- – recording incidental learning and using this when planning further activities.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils enjoy their time in school, acquiring new knowledge and skills at a good rate. They show good concentration and are keen to do well. However, it is only over the past year that pupils have begun to take responsibility for their learning. Pupils comment that previously, much of their learning has been by rote, but are proud they are now clear about what they are learning, as opposed to what they are doing. Classrooms are now buzzing with pupils bursting to take their learning further.

On entry to, and on leaving, the Reception class children's attainment is above that expected for their age. In the two years following the previous inspection, the attainment of girls, and that of pupils who learn more slowly has fallen in Key Stage 1. As a result of far more rigorous assessment and better teaching, pupils' progress has accelerated and this is seen in much improved attainment in reading and mathematics. Similarly, the attainment of boys, and of pupils who learn more slowly, slipped in English at Key Stage 2. This resulted in a downturn in standards. Again, through better provision, this is much improved. However, while pupils produce a good amount of neatly presented work, their use of imaginative vocabulary, varied punctuation and sentence structure is underdeveloped. Attainment in mathematics has remained well above average since the last inspection, and in science, attainment is high.

Pupils make good gains in their personal life because of the good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are exceptionally well behaved and have a clear set of values. Pupils conscientiously fulfil their roles as play leaders, in the office, or taking responsibilities at mealtimes. All endeavour to achieve the coveted daily Selected for Pride of Threshfield (SPOT) award. Pupils make a marked contribution to the school and wider community, planting bulbs, painting murals on toilet walls, through the creation of a butterfly garden and contributing items for international emergency boxes for overseas charities.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Teachers have a good command of the subjects they teach and are successful in encouraging pupils to be active learners. For example, pupils' understanding and rate of progress increased in a science lesson as they discussed their thoughts on 'air resistance' with a partner, and devised activities to demonstrate how the rate at which an object falls is determined by its surface area. Planning is detailed with tasks now carefully matched to the ability and interest of the wide age and ability span in each class. Teachers know their pupils well and use a range of methods to ensure all are fully included in all lessons. Skilled support assistants contribute considerably to pupils' learning in individual and group work, but their time is not always utilised well in the introduction to lessons. Very good systems have been introduced to keep a check on pupils' progress. As this is now undertaken half-termly, pupils needing additional help are quickly identified and programmes put in place to boost their learning.

Pupils take pleasure in learning because the curriculum is varied and meaningful. For example, pupils are acquiring a good knowledge of their National Park and of the history of their 300-year-old school. Pupils gain a range of skills and health benefits from a wide array of sports on offer. A variety of activities, including producing the school newsletter, extends the competencies of pupils who have a gift or talent. Frequent visits and visitors to the school enrich the curriculum and broaden pupils' horizons. Popular evening clubs add to pupils' enjoyment and learning.

Pupils receive good pastoral care to help them to succeed and play a full part in school life. They say they feel safe and understand how to live a healthy lifestyle. Skilled personal support and close liaison with other agencies ensure the well-being of

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vulnerable pupils. As a result of good training, and effective contacts with health professionals, well-thought-out care plans have been devised enabling pupils with medical needs to manage their conditions well. The early identification and provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have changed for the better over the past year. These pupils are identified early and, alongside pupils who learn more slowly, are given good additional support. Focused teaching and attention to their individual 'Passport to Learning' allow them to now make similar progress to their classmates.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The consultant headteacher has been instrumental in moving the school forward over the past year. Faced with the need to address an overwhelming number of issues, he has prioritised those needing most attention and provided excellent professional training to enable the staff to be self-sufficient when his tenure comes to an end. The staffing has been restructured, and all are now clear about their roles and responsibilities. All the required policies are up to date and provide good guidance. Under his leadership, the senior teacher has the skills to manage the school. The senior teacher's work on tracking pupils' progress, and in managing the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as those who learn more slowly, has made a significant contribution to pupils' increased rate of progress.

Governors are committed and supportive of the school. However, until the past couple of years, they have not had a full understanding of its strengths and weaknesses of the school. They now have an accurate evaluation of the school's needs and have remained loyal, despite having to make some difficult staffing decisions, including redundancies. Resolute to be financially stable, they are tackling the projected budget deficit head on. Governors have a strong commitment to all aspects of pupils' health, safety and welfare. Safeguarding and recruitment procedures are good and are reviewed and updated regularly, as are those for child protection. The school is a cohesive, harmonious, outward looking community, not just to the village but to the wider and global community. The links with and the exchange of teachers and letters with a school in India have been a revelation to pupils, though links with a United Kingdom school, with pupils from different social backgrounds, are at an early stage.

The school works well to promote equality of opportunity and to celebrate diversity. The

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style of teaching is inclusive and brings out individual pupil's strengths. Leaders have successfully remedied the variations in progress for different groups. Links with other schools benefit pupils' learning well. For example, contact with the local special school improves the provision for pupils with complex needs, while the skills of those with a sporting talent are furthered through connections with the specialist sport school.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy their time in the Reception class and take great pleasure in discussing the pictorial records of their learning with visitors. Adults have worked hard to provide activities indoors and outside in all areas of children's learning. Whilst the indoor area successfully promotes children's language and literacy and number skills, the outdoor area is not fully utilised for this purpose. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good for the teaching of new sounds, early reading and for calculation. Improvements have been made to the organisation of the Early Years Foundation Stage to enable children to choose activities, but adults sometimes step in too quickly with ideas instead of leaving children to solve problems or use their imaginations. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is not a specialist in the education of young children, but has willingly undertaken training. This is showing in the way in which topics are planned to cover all areas of learning and children's interests. Children especially enjoyed packing their rucksacks prior to setting off on their 'hike'. Thought had been given to the provision of binoculars and in encouraging children to listen to birdsong, but while adults recorded achievement conscientiously, children's incidental learning in this activity was not noted. Comprehensive policies and procedures ensure that children are well protected and



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supported and all welfare requirements are met.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

### **Views of parents and carers**

A large majority of parents and carers returned their questionnaires. In addition, a high proportion had taken the time to make comments. Parents and carers are very positive about the school and their child's education. They are especially pleased with the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the range of clubs available to pupils, and the much improved communications. A high percentage expressed concern at the length of time the school has been without a leader, but is full of praise for those who have taken on extra responsibilities. Inspection findings support the strengths identified by parents and carers.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Threshfield School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 100 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	62	22	36	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	69	19	31	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	51	28	46	0	0	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	54	22	36	4	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	62	22	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	48	27	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	66	21	34	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	34	56	24	39	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	48	26	43	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	39	28	46	5	8	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	44	26	43	5	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	21	34	56	7	11	3	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	49	27	44	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



26 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Threshfield School, Skipton, BD23 5NP

Firstly, may I say what a delightful time my colleagues and I had when we visited your school. Thank you for talking with us and for showing us your work. I especially enjoyed eating lunch with you and hearing all about your sporting achievements. It was very clear from our chats and the questionnaire replies we received from you and your parents and carers that you enjoy school, and think that you are safe and well cared for.

Your school provides you with a good education. Good teaching allows you to make good progress. You receive good care and support, especially those of you who have medical problems or special needs. As well as working hard, you have a very positive attitude to everything the school offers, you enjoy lessons, clubs (especially the art and weaving clubs), and visits out of school. You are extremely well behaved. All this is happening because you have good leaders.

Here are some areas that would make your school more successful:

- your writing is improving, but it needs to be the same standard as your reading
- we would like children in the Reception class to make greater progress.

We know you will do all you can to help your teachers and wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Katharine Halifax

Lead inspector

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