

Thornton Dale C of E (VC) Primary School

Castle Close, Thornton Dale, Pickering, North Yorkshire YO18 7TW

Inspection dates

12 to 13 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and governors have failed to stem a decline in performance over time. The weak quality of teaching, learning and assessment significantly hampers pupils' progress. Pupils are poorly prepared for key stage 3.
- Senior leaders have not embedded a culture of high expectations. Adults' low ambitions stifle pupils' achievement and success, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are not supporting much needed change.
- Subject leaders lack the knowledge, skills and experience required to drive improvement in their areas of curriculum responsibility.
- Adults' expectations of pupils' behaviour and work vary and, at times, low-level disruption interrupts and hinders learning.
- In each key stage, pupils' basic knowledge and skills in mathematics, reading and writing are not developed quickly enough. Pupils' fluency, accuracy and confidence in each subject suffer.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' work over time is overgenerous and inaccurate. Across subjects, therefore, teachers plan tasks and learning which fail to match pupils' needs.
- Teachers in the early years and in key stage 1 do not model the process of writing effectively for pupils. Pupils have too few opportunities to practise and apply their writing skills.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the early years varies. Tasks and provision do not consistently have the right degree of challenge and purpose. An appropriate balance between adult-led and child-initiated learning has not been reached. Not all children are sufficiently well prepared for Year 1.
- The provision for two-year-olds is inconsistent in quality. Some staff lack a secure grasp of the large difference in care and development needs between this group and other children.

The school has the following strengths

- Recently, the leadership of both mathematics and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has strengthened.
- Leaders ensure that the primary sport premium funding is spent wisely.
- Pupils are very friendly, happy and feel safe.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and governance by:
 - sharpening whole-school and subject plans for improvement, making sure they are measurable, detailed and firmly focused on raising standards
 - securing consistently good or better quality in teaching and learning in each key stage and subject
 - ensuring that assessment information about pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is wholly accurate, well understood and used to good effect by staff
 - embedding a whole-school, shared understanding of the approach to the teaching and learning of reading
 - creating an ambitious culture by substantially raising adults' expectations of how pupils can behave and what pupils can do and achieve
 - equipping subject leaders with the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to drive improvement within their areas of curriculum responsibility
 - communicating even better with parents, offering them more regular opportunities to be true partners in their children's learning
 - building on skills in governance, to offer leaders greater challenge and support.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - strengthening teachers' subject knowledge and expertise across the curriculum
 - using assessment information to plan tasks and learning that accurately match the needs of all pupils across subjects
 - offering greater challenge to the most able pupils and those with typical skills and knowledge, ensuring that pupils strive consistently to present their very best work
 - developing greater confidence and fluency in pupils' basic number, reading and writing skills
 - deploying additional adults effectively so that they make a marked difference to pupils' learning and progress and help to maximise valuable teaching and learning time
 - applying an effective agreed approach to the positive management of pupils' behaviour and so eradicate low-level disruption.
- Increase children's progress from their typical starting points in the early years by:

- balancing teacher-led and child-initiated learning more effectively
- raising adults' expectations of what young children can do and achieve, offering greater challenge in tasks and provision, across each area of learning
- affording children, and boys in particular, more regular opportunities to practise and apply their basic reading, writing and number skills
- modelling letter formation and the writing process frequently, clearly and explicitly
- supporting all staff to better understand the development needs of two-year-olds and checking regularly on the quality of provision for this group.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and governors have not taken effective action to stem the decline in the quality of teaching and learning. Evaluation of the school's performance is, and has been, too generous. Considerable weaknesses in pupils' progress and attainment across subjects have persisted over time. Pupils are poorly prepared for the next year group or key stage, and too many of those leaving Year 6 are not ready for the demands of secondary school.
- Senior leaders have not secured accuracy in the assessment of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Inflated views of pupils' achievements over time have hindered leaders from focusing on the correct priorities. Recently, new systems of assessment have been put in place. Not all leaders, however, have fully grasped the principles of these new approaches, including those introduced in the early years. It is too soon to tell if more precise, accurate information will be collated and used to better effect to make a difference for pupils and children.
- Leaders have not embedded a shared, whole-school approach to the teaching of reading, though they have recently raised its profile. New books have been bought and the phonics strategy has been amended. Nevertheless, leaders are not sure about the quality and impact of the teaching of reading in each year group. Their knowledge of how often pupils engage in reading comprehension work or how often children read with adults in Reception, for example, is too vague. Leaders' expectations have not been made clear for staff and so practices vary widely.
- Senior leaders have not successfully embedded a culture of high expectations among staff. Adults' ambitions for pupils across key stages and subjects are too low. This puts a false ceiling on pupils' aspirations and achievements. Despite their typical starting points, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in the combined reading, writing and mathematics element, by the end of key stage 2, has remained well below other schools nationally over the last three years.
- Leaders' action plans are not supporting rapid improvement. This includes subject leaders' action plans. Timeframes are too vague or protracted and success criteria are imprecise. It is not clear exactly who will do what and when, or what success will look like in particular. In addition, leaders' intended actions are not focused sufficiently on improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Subject leaders across the curriculum are still learning the craft of leadership. The headteacher has ensured that professional development opportunities and training are in place. These are intended to support and challenge leaders to manage their areas of responsibility with greater skill and knowledge moving forward. Currently, however, most subject leaders are having a very limited impact on improving pupils' outcomes across the curriculum.
- Leaders work well in partnership with parents to ensure that pupils attend regularly and on time. Leaders' and governors' visibility and work with parents on a wider scale is less well embedded. Issues of instability in staffing and difficulties in recruitment have not been conveyed clearly to parents to help them understand the reasons behind some unavoidable changes. During inspection, a significant minority of parents

expressed concern about the quality of leadership and the processes for communicating with them.

- The leadership of mathematics has strengthened with the fairly recent appointment of a deputy headteacher. His efforts to mitigate the effects of a legacy of weak teaching over time are showing some signs of success with current upper key stage 2 pupils. He has introduced new resources to improve pupils' fluency with times tables and he has reviewed the calculation policy. His aim to drive improvement within mathematics more widely, across each key stage, is the right one. It is too early to tell the extent to which these good intentions will bear fruit.
- Leadership of SEND is improving apace. The recently appointed SEND coordinator (SENDCo) is experienced and suitably well qualified. She is taking appropriate action to support pupils with SEND to make the progress that should be expected of them. She has, for example, sharpened systems for identifying pupils. This has resulted in a steep rise in the proportion of pupils on the SEND register, but it now offers a more accurate reflection of pupils' needs. The SENDCo has also worked with staff to improve their knowledge and understanding of managing the needs of pupils. Persisting weaknesses in the quality of teaching, however, mean too few teachers currently offer pupils with SEND the correct support and challenge in their work.
- Leaders and governors are now ensuring that the primary sports premium funding is being used effectively. Sports ambassadors and play leaders have been introduced to inspire active, healthy behaviours among pupils. More frequent involvement in sporting competitions is helping to increase pupils' skills of perseverance and teamwork.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not been sufficiently rigorous in holding leaders to account for persistent weaknesses in pupils' progress and attainment. They have not understood issues in enough depth or ensured leaders take appropriate, timely action to remedy them. As a result, underperformance has not been tackled robustly and the school's performance has declined.
- The new chair of governors has taken appropriate steps to shape and improve the quality of governors' work and involvement. He has organised a school improvement group in partnership with the local authority and diocese, which meets frequently to offer greater challenge and support to senior leaders. It is not clear if actions resulting from the group's work are making a measurable difference.
- Several governors are new to post since the previous inspection and, overall, governors are keen to ensure that pupils do better. Minutes from full governing body meetings show more searching questions are being now asked of leaders. It is too soon to tell, however, if the current governing body will be successful in shaping a more positive future for pupils.
- Governors show commitment to self-improvement. A raft of suitable training has recently been undertaken. An audit of governors' skills is complete, ensuring that the governing body now has the correct balance of skills and expertise.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that staff undertake regular child-protection and safeguarding training. Consequently, staff know the signs of potential abuse and are appropriately vigilant.
- Leaders make sure that safeguarding is a standing agenda item on all staff meetings. This means that staff regularly discuss and understand their collective duties and responsibilities to care for and protect all pupils. Staff have appropriate 'it-could-happen-here' attitudes and so are alert to the dangers and risks pupils may face.
- Logs and records are fit for purpose. Documents are stored securely and in chronological order, easing liaison with external partners, such as health, where needed.
- The environment, though generally tidy and hazard free, is cluttered and worn in places. Occasionally, this means pupils and children are at risk of tripping or reaching for items that could be stored more securely.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teaching and learning across subjects in key stages 1 and 2 is weak. Teachers' expectations and aspirations for pupils are too low. As a result, too few pupils in each year group reach the standards that they should. This is particularly evident in pupils' weak outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2, over time.
- Teachers do not use assessment information well to plan tasks and learning that accurately meet the needs or interests of pupils. The most able pupils and those with starting points that are broadly typical for their age are not challenged effectively. In addition, some lower-ability pupils are given work they do not understand and cannot do. Consequently, pupils lose interest and engage in low-level disruption, which hampers their progress and that of their peers.
- Due to a lack of consistency in teachers' expectations, pupils do not take enough pride in the presentation of their work. The quality of pupils' handwriting, including letter formation, is not sustained across pieces of work over time.
- In key stage 1, current pupils' books show that they are making particularly weak progress in writing. They are not encouraged or inspired by staff to write frequently and with gusto. Issues of poor letter formation and/or mistakes in spelling of common words are not addressed systematically by adults.
- The approach to the teaching of reading differs from year group to year group. An agreed approach to developing reading comprehension among pupils, and to ensuring that pupils read widely and often, is not well embedded. This means that, currently, too few pupils are reading with the confidence, fluency and understanding that should be expected for their age and stage of development.
- Teaching support assistants do not reliably make effective contributions to pupils' learning and progress. Their time is not used to best effect.

- Most teachers show a strengthening understanding of the part that phonics plays in developing pupils' reading knowledge and skills. Recent adjustments to the organisation of teaching and learning in phonics is enabling some pupils to make better progress in this essential early reading skill. Nonetheless, not all staff currently articulate sounds precisely for pupils, correct pupils' misconceptions effectively or use time well to get the very best out of each phonics session.
- In upper key stage 2, mathematics teaching and learning is improving. Pupils' fluency in times tables facts are developing and pupils are afforded greater opportunities to practise their skills of reasoning and problem-solving. Older pupils are now extending their understanding of the number system and place value more consistently. Nonetheless, pupils' progress in number fluency and mathematics, across year groups more widely, remains weak.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils' understanding about how to be a successful learner is not developed consistently or effectively by all staff. Pupils are not reliably challenging themselves to do or try their very best. Too often there is an over-reliance on adults, and not all adults foster pupils' skills of independence effectively.
- Pupils' books and displays demonstrate that insufficient pride is taken in pupils' presentation of work. Not all staff model, expect or demand high standards and consistency.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors, and/or responded to Ofsted's survey, say that they feel safe in school and have nice friends. They feel free from the worries and negative influences of bullying. Pupils feel assured that staff would support them if any little worries arise.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- A new system for capturing incidents and instances of poor behaviour is supporting leaders to spot patterns and to tackle repeated issues promptly. However, adults' inconsistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour means that pupils' conduct varies. Transitions and busy times sometimes result in boisterous behaviour such as jostling and running in corridors and classrooms. Not all pupils are aware of their own and others' personal space, rights and/or responsibilities.
- Pupils are good-natured, lively and friendly. They react promptly to positive feedback and encouragement. For example, pupils respond eagerly to assume polite, considerate behaviours when these are modelled well by staff.

- Leaders and parents work well in partnership to ensure that the large majority of pupils attend regularly and on time. Over time, pupils' overall attendance is consistently above national averages. This is a strength of the school/home partnership.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Due to weaknesses in the quality of leadership, teaching and learning, current pupils' progress across subjects in key stages 1 and 2 is poor. Pupils' books and work, as well as the school's own assessment information, show that too few pupils are working at age-related standards or the higher standards that should be expected of them. From starting points that are typical, this demonstrates considerable underachievement among pupils.
- In 2018, in key stage 2, pupils' progress in reading and mathematics was significantly below average and in the lowest 10% of schools nationally. The proportion of pupils reaching the combined reading, writing and mathematics standard was well below the national average, and no pupils reached a greater depth of learning in this element.
- On average, over three years, pupils' attainment in key stage 2 in mathematics at the expected standard has been in the bottom 10% of schools. Too few pupils, compared to national averages, reach a greater depth of learning in mathematics over time.
- In key stage 1, in 2018, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in writing was below the national average and was in the lowest 10% of schools nationally. No boys reached a greater depth of learning in writing. Such outcomes typify underperformance in writing in key stage 1 at present.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 has improved recently. In 2018, outcomes were broadly average. From their different starting points, current pupils are making variable progress in phonics due to the weaknesses in teaching and learning.
- Pupils' published outcomes in science over time are unreliable. During this inspection, senior leaders and inspectors identified significant inaccuracies in teachers' assessment. While all pupils in key stage 2 in 2018 were assessed as reaching the expected standard in science, current pupils' books do not demonstrate good learning or reflect this suggested strength in the teaching of science. Current pupils' progress and outcomes in science and the wider curriculum are too weak in each key stage.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning in the early years is variable. Some areas of provision and tasks set lack sufficient challenge, for example in reading, writing and number. Consequently, from their typical starting points, not all children make the progress that adults should expect of them in each area of learning.
- Leadership of the early years is developing. New assessment systems have been introduced to better capture the progress that children are making over time, and to improve teachers' accuracy in planning. Parents can now make online contributions to their child's learning journey profile. Nevertheless, not all staff are using assessment

information as well as they could to ensure that tasks and learning are sufficiently demanding.

- Some adults' expectations of what young children can do and achieve are too low. Children in Nursery and Reception, in particular, do not practise and apply their knowledge and basic skills in reading, writing and number with enough direction, regularity or focus. Staff try hard to follow and accommodate children's interests but the balance between child-initiated play and adult-led learning is not consistently effective.
- The profile of reading has been raised by leaders in the early years. Parents read regularly at home with their child and are very supportive partners. Increasingly, books are better matched to children's phonics needs. Not all children make good gains in their reading, however, because they have too few opportunities to practise and apply their reading skills and knowledge. In addition, some adults' understanding of phonics is insecure.
- Reception children's writing, which is captured online, shows that not all children are well enough prepared for the demands of Year 1 in this area of the curriculum. Progress over time is too weak for some pupils. Children's letter formation, spelling and sentence construction do not improve consistently, and errors are repeated time and again and some children produce very little writing at all. Teachers' modelling is not reliably offering children good examples and methods of capturing their ideas in writing.
- Staff are kind and caring. They have warm relationships with children. Usually children behave well, responding swiftly to adults' instructions and requests. Most children therefore make good gains in their personal, social and emotional development because of adults' work and interactions. This said, not all staff are skilful and confident in their understanding of the care and development needs of two-year-olds. This means that, at times, resources and learning are not arranged or tailored effectively enough for work with this group of children.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development has improved over time and in 2018 was broadly in line with the national average. However, boys are not achieving as well as girls.

School details

Unique reference number	121520
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10059077

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Iain Spittal
Headteacher	Lorna Karetnyk
Telephone number	01751 474 345
Website	www.thorntondaleprimary.co.uk
Email address	admin@thorntondale.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 June 2018

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized school catering for pupils from two to 11 years of age.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. There are currently no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by pupil premium funding is much lower than other schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND has risen sharply recently to just below national averages. Historically much lower-than-average proportions of pupils with SEND have been supported. The proportion of pupils with SEND who have an education, health and care plan is lower than national averages.
- There have been significant changes in leadership and staff since the last inspection. A deputy headteacher and a SENDCo have recently been appointed. A new chair of the

governing body took up post in November 2018. There have also been several changes of teaching staff.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were out of school on a residential visit. The work of Year 6 pupils and associated assessment information was, however, scrutinised and taken into account.
- Teaching and learning were observed across each key stage over both days of the inspection. Several observations were undertaken jointly by the lead inspector and the headteacher and by the team inspector and the SENDCo.
- Inspectors talked with parents face-to-face during the inspection. The views expressed by 81 parents in the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, were considered. In addition, written communication with inspectors and 57 parents' free-text responses were also taken into account.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, scrutinised their work and talked with pupils during lesson observations. The views of 18 pupils who responded to Ofsted's pupils' questionnaire were examined. The views of pupils were also considered during more formal discussions.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, a representative from the local authority and a representative from the diocese, as well as governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- A wide range of the school's own information and documentation was studied, including the self-evaluation document, improvement and subject action plans and records of the checks made on teaching and learning. Information about safeguarding practices was examined, alongside policy documentation.
- The opinions of staff were taken into account via the 15 responses made to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and through formal and informal discussions.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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