

Thorne Brooke Primary School

Wike Gate Road, Thorne, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN8 5PQ

Inspection dates

24–25 January 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection there have been many changes of staff and leadership and this has restricted the pace of school improvement.
- The quality of teaching is variable across classes and year groups.
- Some teachers are not consistently following the school's marking and feedback policy, meaning that pupils are not clear about how to improve their work.
- Teachers' expectations about the presentation of pupils' written work are not consistently high.
- The teaching of phonics varies. Not all adults are confident or knowledgeable in how to teach phonics effectively.
- Progress for the least able pupils, especially in reading, is too slow. They do not receive sufficient guidance and support.
- The most able pupils are not reaching the standards of which they are capable. Work does not always challenge them enough.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not making sufficient progress or reaching comparable standards to other pupils.
- In the early years, there are limited opportunities for children to deepen thinking and extend learning.
- The governing body has not checked closely enough on learning progress and how well additional funding is used to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. They know where change is required.
- Leaders have put into place new systems to check on the quality of teaching and, as a result, this is beginning to improve.
- Staff receive good support and are keen to develop their practice.
- The good behaviour of pupils provides a sound platform for learning. There is a calm and orderly atmosphere around school.
- There are very positive relationships between pupils and adults.
- Pupils receive good care and safeguarding arrangements are secure.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - making effective use of assessment to identify misconceptions and address these quickly
 - build in opportunities in the early years for children to deepen their thinking
 - setting consistently high expectations in the way that pupils present written work across different subjects.
- Raise standards in reading by:
 - providing frequent and intensive support to pupils who find reading difficult
 - improving the expertise of all adults who teach phonics
 - checking that texts and reading books are at the right level for pupils
 - increasing more structured opportunities for pupils to develop their comprehension and research skills.
- Accelerate the progress of all pupils, including those who are most able, disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, in key skills across a range of subjects by:
 - checking that teachers set tasks that systematically build on pupils' previous learning and understanding
 - tailoring intervention support more effectively to address learning needs
 - building in increased challenge across a range of subjects
 - ensuring that all teachers follow the school's marking and feedback policy consistently.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection and over time, the work of leaders, managers and governors has not resulted in the continuation of good outcomes for pupils. Significant changes in leadership and staffing in the last two years have impeded school improvement.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school and know that inconsistent teaching is a major factor behind variable pupil progress. Limited leadership capacity over time has meant that actions to address weak teaching have lacked cohesion.
- Leaders' improvement plans focus correctly on raising standards in teaching and learning but strategies lack sharp, measurable reference points for evaluation. Consequently, it is not always easy for leaders and governors to judge how well the school is doing.
- The use of pupil premium funding has not been fully effective. Leaders and governors have not focused sufficiently on how well teaching is helping to increase the proportions of disadvantaged pupils reaching and exceeding expected standards.
- The targeted work to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is of variable quality. Leaders acknowledged a lack of precision in the way pupils are selected for support and the way that some activities are delivered.
- Until recently, leaders have not checked closely enough on teaching quality and the progress of different groups of pupils, including most-able pupils. The headteacher has now introduced well-organised strategies to evaluate teaching. As a result, more consistent practice is developing.
- The headteacher has overhauled the systems for managing the performance of teachers. Staff are now clear that rigorous decisions about pay progression hinge on successful pupil outcomes.
- Middle leaders are increasingly involved in holding staff to account for their performance. They are also keen to increase leadership expertise in order to develop their subjects.
- There remain inconsistencies in the way teachers follow the school's marking and feedback policy. These result in some pupils being unclear about how to improve their work.
- The headteacher has introduced and refined new approaches to behaviour management such as the 'Fantastic Friday' initiative. As a result, behaviour has significantly improved, little learning time is lost and there is an orderly and harmonious atmosphere around school.
- There has been an emphasis on the development of English and mathematics skills but the curriculum is now developing more widely. Leaders are just beginning to check on the scope and depth of learning in subjects beyond English and mathematics.
- The 'Go Global' work enriches cultural awareness but, as yet, pupils have a limited understanding of other faiths and cultures in modern Britain. They do not readily

connect the strong values that leaders promote with explicit British values.

- The funding for primary school physical education and sport is used appropriately to increase participation through several sports clubs and introduce pupils to new activities. Older pupils were very excited to take part in the local schools' six-a-side soccer tournament.
- Through local partnerships and the federation, leaders have been able to share and compare practice. Some staff have had the opportunity to visit other schools to broaden their experience. Support to leaders from the local authority, however, has been hampered by a lack of capacity.

Governance of the school

- Governors acknowledge that the school has experienced considerable upheaval in recent years and that its effectiveness has declined. There have been many challenges in establishing the federation and resolving staffing and leadership turbulence. However, governors have confidence in recent appointments.
- The chair had produced a governor development plan in the past but feels that this needs updating, especially to clarify expectations around governor training.
- Governors understand that pupil outcomes have been variable, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. They plan to create a rapid improvement group to review the way pupil premium funding is used but accept that this should have been tackled at an earlier point in the school year.
- Governors visit school to work with senior leaders, and individual governors have links to classes and subjects. Each visit has a focus on which to base discussions with leaders. A minority of governors take on much of the workload.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Records of recruitment procedures are extremely thorough and meet statutory requirements. The chair of governors meets the headteacher to review safeguarding training and practice, but these discussions are not formally recorded.
- The site is maintained in a safe, clean and tidy condition. Due regard is paid to health and safety, care plans, first aid records and medical information.
- Induction arrangements cover safeguarding fully so that all new staff are clear about how to raise concerns about pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders ensure that they update staff on policy and practice through annual training and at senior leadership meetings or staff briefings.
- Leaders are alert to potential safeguarding issues raised by the use of electronic communication and social media. They have impressed upon pupils how important it is to be cautious in sharing personal details. The school's e-cadet initiative supports this work.
- Pupils have responded well to the effective promotion of caring and responsible behaviour. There is a calm atmosphere around the school and in lessons. High staff-to-pupil ratios on the playgrounds support positive breaktimes.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable across key stages 1 and 2 and requires improvement. Pupils make inconsistent progress as a result.
- Not all teachers take account of the range of pupils' learning needs when setting tasks. Some activities are too hard for the least able while work for most-able pupils lacks challenge, especially when applying key skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' written presentation and spelling are not high enough. The historical lack of a coherent handwriting policy, applied and checked consistently, has resulted in poor writing habits. In some classes, teachers set too many grammatical exercises instead of fostering skills through extended writing.
- More care is required in checking learning. In some cases, assessment checks show that some pupils lacked secure understanding, but little account was taken of misconceptions in subsequent sequences of learning.
- The work of teaching assistants in providing additional support to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities varies across the school. While there are good relationships with pupils, the effectiveness of the targeted work is not always apparent. This is because activities lack precision.
- The teaching of phonics by some adults is inconsistent because they have varying expertise and because there are different approaches in demonstrating how to blend sounds. Occasionally, some adults do not say the sounds precisely enough or explore the meaning of unfamiliar words fully.
- Reading skills are not extended well because activities to develop comprehension and understanding of inference lack challenge. Opportunities for pupils to build up and apply advanced reading skills across different subjects are limited.
- Homework to consolidate key skills is set on a weekly basis and pupils are also able to choose open-ended tasks from a menu of activities relating to their topic work. Most pupils are keen to complete these, though a few said that homework was not always issued regularly in some classes. Some most-able pupils felt it was quite easy.
- In mathematics, teachers are becoming more confident in building up secure understanding through a step-by-step approach, and there is a better match of tasks to different abilities.
- Teachers are starting to make increased use of problem solving to develop reasoning. In a Year 6 class, the teacher followed up work on fractions with a clear explanation of strategies to help pupils solve complex ratio questions. In Year 5, the most able pupils discussed how to calculate the surface area of a shoe box.
- Several examples of good teaching by teachers and teaching assistants were observed, where questioning was used well and where feedback involved pupils in reflecting upon and reshaping their work. In these classes and groups there were high expectations as to the quality and quantity of written work expected.
- Good learning attitudes are evident across the school, even when teaching is less engaging. Pupils enjoy lessons and respond well to their teachers. Relationships are

very positive. As a result, there is a good platform for future successful learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils show respect for each other and older pupils explained that they like to help others to make new friends. One Year 6 pupil said, 'We like to help other children feel good about school.'
- Pupils play a growing part in the life of the school. They take on a variety of responsibilities, such as library monitors, digital leaders or e-cadets. They carry out these duties conscientiously.
- The school council meets weekly and enjoys presenting suggestions about school improvement, such as ways to eliminate any unkind play or improving the cloakroom areas. Older pupils have helped to raise funds as part of charity work, such as the Sport Relief day run by the house captains.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of what constitutes bullying. They say that this is much reduced and hardly ever happens now. They trust the adults to help them to sort out friendship issues and are adamant that pupils are fair to others with differing backgrounds. 'We helped someone to learn English,' one proudly said.
- Much work has taken place to improve staff expertise and knowledge in managing pupils whose behaviour has been challenging in the past. Records indicate that these pupils are developing more control and are better able to participate in learning alongside others. Communication with parents is positive.
- Pupils explain clearly how to stay safe online, especially when playing games and exchanging messages with others. They know that diet and exercise are important to health. They talk animatedly about the variety of enrichment activities, such as the outdoor pursuit residential visit.
- The wide-ranging spiritual, moral and social education of pupils promotes positive attitudes. While pupils remember the different values promoted through the federation vision, they do not link these explicitly with fundamental British values. Their understanding of different faiths and cultures represented in modern Britain is limited.
- The day gets off to a good start for those pupils who attend the breakfast club. They enjoy playing with toys and board games and respond quickly when it is time to tidy up. Staff provide a range of cereals, cooked food and milk.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils display consistently responsible attitudes and are friendly and courteous to each other and to visitors. They move around school in an orderly way, remembering to hold doors open for each other and for adults.
- During an assembly, pupils entered the hall calmly, appreciated the classical music and

listened well to the message about enthusiasm. They duly contributed enthusiastically and in a heart-warming manner when it was time to sing 'It's good to be me', in parts.

- Behaviour in the hall at lunchtime, around the corridors and in the playgrounds is consistently good. Pupils join in games, taking turns and responding positively to adult support.
- Good behaviour in lessons means that little learning time is lost and teaching can proceed without interruption. The new behaviour policy has been a real success, pupils say. They feel it is fair and helping everyone to get on better.
- Attendance has improved over time and is now in line with national averages. Although there is a small minority of pupils whose attendance is patchy, the vast majority enjoy coming to school, meeting friends and taking part in all school has to offer. One parent said, 'You can't keep my child away – he loves it!'

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- As a result of variations in the quality of teaching over time across the school, pupils make variable progress in reading, writing and mathematics. School assessment information for current pupils shows that more pupils are now starting to reach age-related expectations.
- In 2016, Year 1 pupils performed in line with those nationally in the phonics screening check.
- At the end of key stage 1 in 2015 and 2016, the proportions of pupils reaching expected standards were in line with national averages in all subjects. Proportions reaching greater depth in all subjects showed an improved picture in 2016 from the previous year. In reading, these were close to those seen nationally, but in writing and mathematics they were well above.
- By the end of key stage 2 in 2016, from different starting points, pupils' rates of progress and attainment in reading and mathematics were below those seen nationally. Progress and attainment in writing were above national averages.
- In 2016, progress and attainment of the most able pupils at key stage 2 were well below the higher standards seen nationally in reading and mathematics, though were slightly higher in writing.
- At the end of key stage 2 in 2016, the progress of pupils who had special educational needs and/or disabilities was similar to or better than all pupils nationally in all subjects, except mathematics, where it was lower. The progress of current pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remains variable, however.
- Disadvantaged pupils make less progress than other pupils nationally, especially in reading, where they are well behind at all key stages. This is particularly the case for least-able pupils. Actions to address the issue have been insufficient.
- Analysis of pupils' work in books shows that written presentation and handwriting vary across the school. Basic errors in spelling and letter formation for all groups, including the most able pupils, slow down progress. Work across subjects other than English and mathematics lacks depth and challenge.
- Older pupils display responsible attitudes and show a strong commitment towards

learning. They enjoy making a contribution to school life. These positive attitudes are likely to serve them well when they move to their next schools.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching key skills varies. Adults do not model pure sounds well enough when teaching phonics and sometimes do not check that understanding in number work is secure when planning next learning steps. While some adults insist on correct pencil grips, this expectation is not always reinforced.
- Children join the Nursery with abilities that are broadly typical. They make expected progress, so that proportions reaching a good level of development have been similar to national averages, dipping slightly in 2016. Disadvantaged children have made less progress than others nationally over time.
- Good opportunities for role play and constructional work exist, but there is less consideration for problem-solving and investigational work. Use of the reading area is under-promoted.
- While some children are confident speakers and keen to greet visitors, not all are so assured. There is a focus on developing key language skills, but questioning and discussion do not always extend children's thinking. Sometimes adults miss opportunities to extend thinking or to introduce new words into the discussion.
- There are plentiful activities to support writing, supported by displays and word cards. In a role play area, a group of Nursery children were observed happily writing and drawing. 'I'm drawing chickenpox,' one child announced. In Reception, the most able children wrote independently the caption, 'I can zoom to the moon.'
- Children mix in a kind and cooperative manner. Boys and girls play happily with each other, taking turns and absorbed in a range of purposeful activities, sustaining their interest and completing tasks. Just occasionally, a minority flit across activities and require adult direction, but behaviour is overwhelmingly good.
- Children come to join the Nursery or Reception from a range of providers and good arrangements are in place to assess each child's needs. The children quickly settle into well-established routines and there is a sense of order and harmony. Staff foster independence well, encouraging children to 'have a go' at things.
- Children are well prepared socially for the move to Year 1 as a result of good liaison between the early years and main school staff. Reception children join in key stage 1 assemblies or playtimes to become familiar with expectations well in advance. Children with additional needs continue to be well supported with individual transition plans in place.
- The indoor learning environment is attractive, bright and stimulating, with children's work celebrated to good effect. The outdoor area complements the indoor provision.
- Leaders know the strengths of the setting and where improvements are required. To improve outcomes in mathematics, new approaches to the teaching of number are at an early stage of introduction. Staff are also keen to provide more opportunities for children to develop a better awareness of other religions and cultures.
- Positive relationships between home and school support learning. Parents appreciate

meetings provided to inform them about progress and are able to add comments to learning profiles, although this is yet to be fully developed. They have confidence in the provision, commenting on how well their children thrive.

- Staff know the children's needs well. All welfare requirements and safeguarding arrangements are secure, with clear procedures in place for care and first aid. The setting is clean, secure and tidy.

School details

Unique reference number	130289
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10003066

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	436
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Oldknow
Headteacher	Sarah Hall
Telephone number	01405 812200
Website	www.thornebrooke.doncaster.sch.uk
Email address	admin.brooke@brookemarshlandfederation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 September 2011

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is federated with Marshland Primary School, a short distance away. The executive headteacher and a single governing body have responsibility for both schools.
- The school is due to become an academy in the summer term.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The next significant groups represented are Other White and Irish Traveller.
- The proportion of current pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is just above average.
- There are similar numbers of boys and girls in the school.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs, or education, health and care plans, is just above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards that set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There have been significant changes in staffing and leadership since the time of the previous inspection. A new executive headteacher took up her post in September 2014. The substantive deputy headteacher moved to a headship position in January 2015 and a new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2015. This post was then upgraded to head of school in April 2016.
- As a result of staff movement, there was a period of discontinuity in middle leadership in 2014 and 2015. New subject leaders for English and mathematics were appointed in April 2016.
- Only one teacher at the time of the previous inspection remains at the school. Almost half of the current teaching team have been at the school for less than two years.
- The school provides before-school care daily, through its well-attended breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body.
- The local authority provided support to senior leaders and staff up to July 2016 but limited capacity meant that it was unable to do so in the autumn term. Support has recently resumed.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the previous year's pupil premium expenditure, and its impact on educational attainment, on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 28 lessons or part-lessons across all classes to assess teaching and learning.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading from Years 2, 3, 5 and 6.
- Inspectors sampled work from all year groups in English, mathematics and a range of other subjects. The headteacher and lead inspector sampled some work jointly.
- Inspectors conducted meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders, subject leaders, the governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed information from a scrutiny of school documentation. This included published data about pupils' progress and attainment, previous inspection reports, external reports by the local authority and the school's latest assessment information.
- Inspectors viewed school improvement plans, the school's own evaluative judgements, information about the performance of current pupils, curriculum outlines and school monitoring information. Inspectors also looked at governing body minutes and safeguarding documentation.
- Inspectors took the views of parents into account through several informal discussions with them and by analysing responses from the 47 parents who completed the online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspection team also took account of the school's own recent survey of parents.
- Inspectors took the views of pupils into account through four planned meetings with different groups of pupils. Inspectors met a group of most-able pupils from Year 6, pupils from Years 3 and 4, members of the school council, and a group of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors took the views of staff into account by analysing responses from the 16 staff who presented written notes to the inspection team.

Inspection team

James Reid, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Cook	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Twaits	Ofsted Inspector
Janis Warren	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Mensah	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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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