

Thorpepark Primary School

Laxthorpe, Orchard Park Estate, Hull, HU6 9EG

Inspection dates 11–12 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Thorpepark is at the heart of the community. Parents and pupils are proud of their school. They say it is changing their lives for the better and raising their aspirations.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school and sometimes outstanding. Teachers are enthusiastic and ensure that all pupils are inspired to learn through exciting lessons.
- From their very low starting points on entry to the school all groups of pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium, achieve well.
- The curriculum offers a wide range of exciting experiences, including clubs during and after school, and local and residential visits. It makes a positive contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They take responsibility for their own behaviour. Their positive attitudes to learning are important characteristics in their success.
- Pupils feel extremely safe because they know that adults in the school care for them and help them if they have any problems.
- The highly dedicated and inspirational headteacher is ably supported by a skilled leadership team and an informed governing body in his successful drive to improve the quality of teaching. The staff are equally committed to providing pupils with the best education and care.
- Pupils greatly enjoy coming to this friendly, caring and welcoming school. Attendance is above average.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is good overall, it is not of a consistently high quality to bring about outstanding achievement.
- Work planned for pupils is not always hard enough especially for the more-able pupils.
- The more-able pupils are not always given enough opportunities to practise their mathematical problem-solving skills or write creatively at length in other subjects other than mathematics and English
- In some lessons, pupils do not have sufficient time to complete their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons of which four were joint observations carried out with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils from Year 2 to Year 6, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, senior and middle leaders and a representative from the local authority. Short discussions were held with pupils at break times and lunchtime.
- The inspectors took account of 46 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, analysed 52 staff questionnaires and had discussions with parents at the beginning and at the end of the school day to ascertain their views of the school.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and took into account the work in pupils' books, the school's own data on pupils' current progress, the school's improvement plans, planning and monitoring information and minutes of governing body meetings. Records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding were also considered.

Inspection team

Anthony Kingston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sally Hicks

Additional Inspector

Barbara Martin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Thorpepark is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the children of families in the armed forces, is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual time is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that there is always sufficient challenge in the work provided in lessons
 - making sure pupils have enough time to complete their own work in lessons
 - providing more well-planned opportunities, especially for the more-able pupils, to apply their mathematical skills to problem-solving activities
 - providing more well-planned opportunities, especially for the more-able pupils, to write creatively and at length in subjects other than English.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The overwhelming majority of children start school with skills that are exceptionally well below those typically expected for their age in most areas of learning.
- Children settle quickly when they start school and respond very positively to the high levels of care. They make good progress throughout the Nursery and Reception classes because of good teaching and the exciting range of well-planned activities which take account of their individual needs. By the time they enter Year 1, their attainment has risen to below average.
- At Key Stage 1, attainment had been consistently well below the national average for a number of years. However, pupils are now making rapid gains in their learning. In 2012, this resulted in average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Despite year-on-year improvements at Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics has been consistently low since 2009. This is largely due to the high number of pupils who join the school during this key stage. However, in 2012, the continuous improvements in pupils' progress resulted in better attainment, with mathematics being in line with the national average but English remaining below.
- Taking into account pupils' starting points, their progress is good overall and outstanding in mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that progress is continuing to accelerate at a faster rate than that nationally and attainment is continuing to improve rapidly. However, at Key Stage 2, not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Reading is a priority throughout the school. The systematic teaching of linking letters and sounds is enabling younger pupils to tackle new and unfamiliar words with greater confidence. As pupils move through the school they develop a love of reading and are keen to discuss moral and ethical issues within the text, such as those in John Boyle's harrowing story, '*The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*'.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs make progress similar to that of their classmates. Their progress is checked carefully, programmes of work are planned to help them improve and teachers and teaching assistants provide good support.
- The group of pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make progress and attain standards similar to that of their classmates in English and mathematics. This is because they benefit from the careful and considered allocation of this funding to ensure their needs are met.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the large majority of lessons observed teaching was good and some was outstanding. No teaching was inadequate. However, not enough teaching is outstanding to ensure that a higher proportion of the more-able pupils reach the higher levels, especially at Key Stage 2.
- Where teaching enables pupils to make good or better progress, it is characterised by: high expectations of what most can achieve, including those who are supported by the pupil premium; excellent questioning skills; accurate assessment of pupils' work so that activities fully engage and challenge all pupils; regular opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' feedback and marking; and the continuous promotion of excellent relationships and good behaviour.
- Overall, teachers plan enjoyable lessons that meet the needs and interests of pupils well. As a result pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn. However, on occasions, the work given does not always make them think hard enough. When this occurs pupils, especially the more able, do not always make the best possible progress.
- Rightly, the school places emphasis on the teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics. However, sometimes the more-able pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to be involved in extended writing activities across other subjects, nor are they given enough

opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to real-life problem solving.

- In a few lessons, teachers do not make the best use of time and this restricts the amount of time pupils have to get on with their own independent learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work in excellent partnership. Skilled teaching assistants target support for groups and individuals. This underpins the good progress pupils with special educational needs and those eligible for the pupil premium make.
- Marking and feedback across the school are regular and positive. In the best practice, pupils are informed of what they have done well, what the next steps are to improve further and have opportunities to respond to teachers' comments and to correct errors.
- All staff manage pupils' behaviour exceptionally well. They have all nurtured excellent relationships with pupils, who say that their teachers are always friendly, care for them and are always there for them if they have a problem.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school provides an exceptionally caring and supportive environment in which all pupils are valued.
- Teachers manage behaviour extremely well and resolve issues swiftly and quietly. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent. Pupils are carefully nurtured as individuals and those with behavioural difficulties learn how to regulate their own behaviour. Pupils are aware of all the different forms of bullying, reflect on the impact of their actions on others and take full responsibility for their personal conduct. Consequently, incidents of bullying are rare.
- Pupils are confident in sharing their concerns because they know that staff will listen to them. They feel safe in school and know who to turn to if they are worried about anything. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- Highly positive relationships and a very wide variety of lunchtime and after-school clubs make a strong contribution to pupils' good social development. They have a high regard and level of respect for others' cultures and beliefs and understand their rights and responsibilities. As a result they treat everyone on equal terms. This was exemplified by one pupil who said, 'We all live in the same world, we are all equal and we should treat everyone in the way we want to be treated.'
- The office staff, including the home and school support officer, have been pivotal in improving communication between home and school. They worked relentlessly with parents to improve pupils' attendance as well as helping parents resolve any difficulties which could adversely affect their child's performance at school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides the school with extremely strong and highly effective leadership. He has high expectations that are shared by all staff, ensuring a strong sense of teamwork. The staff questionnaires reflect this strong team spirit.
- Leaders and managers know the school well. Their sharply focused and rigorous checks on teaching and learning give staff clear guidance on how to improve, driving improvement forward by tackling weaknesses quickly and successfully through well-planned training for teachers and teaching assistants. This process has been supported by effective appraisal systems to review teachers' work, through which the most effective teachers have been promoted into positions that have enabled them to drive up the quality of teaching across the school.
- The local authority is aware of this school's qualities. It checks rigorously on the school's performance and quality of teaching and offers excellent support which is greatly appreciated by the school, in particular that provided through the pupil referral unit.
- The school promotes and checks that all pupils have equality of opportunity. For example,

additional income received by the school to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium is used well to provide additional support such as one-to-one or small-group work focusing on literacy and mathematics.

- Since the time of the last inspection, leaders have redesigned the curriculum. It excites pupils' imaginations and supports their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, it is not yet outstanding because it does not sufficiently enable pupils to practise and apply their writing skills in a range of subjects, nor does it promote sufficiently well their mathematical problem-solving skills.
- The school has an excellent partnership with parents. Parents are involved in the life of the school and many attend the workshops designed to help them to support their children's learning at home. They fully support the high aspirations the school sets for their children. This was exemplified by one parent who said, 'The staff are there for us come rain or shine. The school is at the heart of and has transformed our community. It's exceptional.'
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities. They attend training to ensure they have the skills to hold the headteacher and leaders to account for the school's performance. Governors have a good understanding of data; therefore, they know how well pupils achieve and are aware of the school's performance compared to other schools. They allocate the pupil premium judiciously to make sure that all pupils have equality of opportunity to succeed. The governing body ensures that reviews of teachers' work are linked closely to the progress and attainment of all pupils, to the standards expected of teachers and to teachers' pay scales. Governors ensure statutory requirements are met, particularly for safeguarding pupils and child protection.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	117808
Local authority	City of Kingston upon Hull
Inspection number	412979

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	421
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Fenwick
Headteacher	Simon Witham
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2008
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