

Thornaby-on-Tees Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Baysdale Road, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees TS17 9DB

Inspection dates

20–21 November 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, supported well by senior leaders, provides honest and purposeful leadership. Together, with great tenacity, they have tackled the findings from the school's most recent monitoring inspection effectively and quickly.
- Recently appointed phase leaders are skilled practitioners. They provide strong guidance to staff regarding their expectations for teaching and learning and contribute to the school's good capacity for further improvement.
- Subject leaders' roles in evaluating the work of the school is improving. Subject leaders are knowledgeable. Those leading English, mathematics, history and physical education (PE) are highly effective in driving forward improvements successfully. However, there are some subject leaders whose roles are still developing.
- The progression of subject-specific knowledge skills and understanding is mapped out effectively in some subjects. However, this is still developing in other subjects, particularly in geography and science.
- Pupils' outcomes are improving. The past decline in pupils' historical outcomes at key stage 2 has now halted. Provisional outcomes from the summer 2018 national tests show a marked improvement in pupils' achievements.
- There remain some historical differences between the outcomes of other pupils and those of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) that still need ironing out.
- The strong Christian ethos provides the bedrock for the warm relationships that exist across the school. Pupils demonstrate respect for each other and for adults and this is reciprocated by all staff in this happy school.
- A strong programme of assemblies and an equally strong personal and social curriculum support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, including in early years. Over time, however, the approach to the teaching of phonics has been adapted and is inconsistent. This affects the overall quality of the teaching of phonics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership further, by ensuring that:
 - the roles of all subject leaders in evaluating the work of the school are firmly established
 - there is greater clarity in the progression of knowledge, skills and understanding of all subjects beyond English and mathematics.
- Improve teaching and learning to improve pupils' outcomes further, by:
 - ensuring greater consistency in the delivery of phonics sessions, including ensuring that teachers have fidelity to the agreed approach
 - ironing out the remaining differences in the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, compared with those of other pupils nationally.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher provides effective leadership and much stability to the school. She has managed a period of significant change within the school's senior leadership team with much success. Although the deputy headteacher was not present during the inspection, the good effect of her work is clear to see. Collectively, the headteacher and deputy headteacher acted quickly to ensure that the areas for improvement identified at the school's most recent monitoring inspection were tackled with determination and resolve.
- The recently appointed phase leaders are skilled professionals. They share the headteacher's ambitions for the future and they are committed to improving pupils' outcomes. They have established a clearly defined path to get there, which is well considered and wholly appropriate.
- The role of subject leaders is now firmly established in school. They demonstrate secure subject knowledge and play a role in evaluating their subjects. Subject leaders for mathematics and English have made significant improvements to the quality of teaching and learning across these subjects, in a very short space of time. They have ensured that assessment information is used effectively to adjust teaching and to inform planning. Likewise, the subject leaders for history and PE are ensuring that pupils develop knowledge, skills and understanding sequentially. While this represents a significant improvement from the previous monitoring inspection, other subject leaders are yet to effect the same level of speedy improvement in their subjects.
- Leaders have ensured that the pupil premium funding is used effectively to minimise the differences between disadvantaged pupils' outcomes compared with those of other pupils nationally. However, historical differences remain that need to be ironed out. Such differences vary between year groups and subjects and can be linked directly to the proportion of disadvantaged pupils with SEND. Nevertheless, leaders have identified differences in each year group and have a dedicated programme of interventions in place to tackle this.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has improved the school's procedures for identifying, supporting and reviewing the needs of pupils with SEND effectively. It is testimony to the highly effective leadership of SEND that although the SENCo was not present during the inspection, the evidence of her improvement work was clear to see. The referral process to specialist agencies is precise, and the evidence gathered supportive. The rigorous work carried out by the SENCo has resulted in several pupils receiving the correct diagnosis of need and appropriate additional financial, educational or emotional support where needed. As a result, the progress of pupils with SEND is improving successfully.
- The PE and sport grant are used effectively to promote pupils' engagement in sporting activities and competition and to promote pupils' mental and physical health. The school has successfully achieved the Sports Mark silver award and is well on the way to achieving the gold standard. The introduction of the 'daily mile' is ensuring that all

pupils take exercise each day. In the previous school year, leaders enabled 98% of all pupils to represent the school in sporting competitions.

- Subjects beyond English and mathematics are taught through a topic-based approach, which provides a meaningful context in which pupils can learn. However, the previous lack of oversight from subject leaders has led to gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in some subjects. This is no longer the case, and leaders are using standalone events, such as a 'STEM' (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) day, to bridge the identified gaps in pupils' knowledge. In the longer term, leaders are in the process of identifying a clear progression of knowledge, skills and understanding for all subjects, beyond English and mathematics. This is further ahead in some subjects than in others.
- The vast majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school and would recommend it to others. However, a small minority of parents feel that their concerns are not handled effectively. Leaders are aware of this and are acting to work with parents to tackle their concerns.
- The local authority offers timely and purposeful support to the school. The local raising achievement partnership groups enable subject leaders to access support and advice. This is supporting school improvement further.

Governance of the school

- There have been a few changes to governance since the last inspection. A new chair and vice-chair of the governing body are now in post.
- Governors undertake their roles with due diligence and have a strong focus on school improvement and in championing children.
- Designated governors for disadvantaged pupils and for pupils with SEND ensure that additional monies are spent effectively. Governors regularly evaluate the impact of this spending on improving pupils' outcomes.
- Governors ask pertinent questions about pupils' outcomes. A review of minutes of governing body meetings reflects the level of questioning to school leaders. More recently, these have become significantly more challenging.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have maintained their focus on safeguarding since the last inspection. The designated safeguarding officer, supported by a dedicated pastoral scheme, ensures that the school's most vulnerable pupils are kept safe. Records are detailed and reflect the chronology of events precisely. Strong links with external agencies ensure that there is effective, 'joined-up' thinking. Staff frequently go above and beyond what is expected of them to support pupils and their families in times of need or crisis.
- All appropriate safeguarding checks are completed for those staff working at the school, to ensure that they are fit to do so. Staff receive regular training and updates to make sure that they are familiar with the government's most recent safeguarding

legislation. Staff who spoke to inspectors were clear about the role they play in keeping children safe and the processes they must follow to report any concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Strong relationships are the hallmark of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes, and teachers have secure subject knowledge and use it effectively to plan pupils' learning so that they make good progress.
- Following the school's most recent monitoring inspection, leaders made several changes to their approach to the teaching of reading. Pupils are now heard to read regularly by the school's team of reading volunteers. Although only in place for a relatively short space of time, this is contributing to pupils' increasing fluency and stamina effectively. A raft of interventions, along with a shift in focus to develop pupils' skills of inference and deduction sooner, are ensuring that pupils' language and comprehension skills are also improving. This is reflected in the better provisional outcomes of national tests for pupils in 2018.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. By the time they leave Year 2, most pupils have reached the expected standard in the national phonics screening check. While pupils' outcomes in Year 1 are almost at the national average, there has been very little improvement on this. Over time, teachers have developed their own approaches to delivery of the phonic materials. This has resulted in a loss of fidelity to the school's scheme of choice. Leaders accept that this needs to be consistent.
- There is now greater consistency in the teaching of writing across the school. Pupils learn to write confidently in a range of styles, with secure links made to pupils' knowledge of English grammar, spelling and punctuation. Teachers insist on the same high standard of writing when pupils write in other subjects. As a result, pupils are making good progress.
- Teachers follow a 'mastery' approach to the teaching of mathematics. This is enabling pupils to acquire mathematical fluency, reasoning and problem-solving skills effectively, particularly the youngest pupils. However, some of the older pupils who have been taught using different methods lack confidence when applying their mental arithmetic strategies to reason and problem solve. Occasionally, this is inhibiting some pupils' progress. Leaders have identified this and are already providing additional pre-learning sessions each morning to support pupils' access to learning.
- The teaching of subjects in the wider curriculum is more variable. In some subjects, such as history and PE, there is a strong focus on developing pupils' subject-specific knowledge, skills and vocabulary sequentially. However, this is not yet consistent in all other subjects.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The personal and social curriculum, along with a well-considered programme of assemblies, ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils demonstrate empathy for others and respect for those of different faiths and cultures, and those of none. This prepares pupils successfully for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of bullying and its forms. They are very clear on what bullying is and are confident that a trusted adult would sort out any issues they may have.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that there are no unsafe places in school. Those pupils who talked to inspectors were able to speak confidently about the ways in which they are taught to keep safe when using the internet.
- While the vast majority of pupils are confident and self-assured learners and are encouraged to be so by their teachers, a small minority of older pupils lack confidence in their abilities. This is particularly so when they are asked to reason, and problem solve in mathematics. Leaders are already acting to remedy this by offering 'assertive mentoring' sessions before school starts to complete pre-learning tasks that build pupils' confidence and develop more positive attitudes to learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils demonstrate good manners and readily hold doors open for each other and adults.
- The school's inclusive ethos and strong Christian values ensure that some of the most vulnerable pupils are supported effectively to manage their behaviours. Strong links with other agencies mean that pupils receive the support they need to manage their anxieties in a timely and thoughtful way. As a result, there have been no exclusions at the school since 2015.
- Leaders have established a very comprehensive procedure for managing the absence of pupils. Clear expectations are set for parents to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and on time. A range of sanctions have been established and are followed assiduously by leaders. Although overall attendance appears to have dipped slightly compared with the national average, it belies the significant improvements leaders are making to individual pupils' attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2016 and 2017, pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 were below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders accepted that this was not good enough and have made considerable improvements to the teaching of these subjects. Their efforts have paid dividends. The 2018 provisional outcomes show a marked improvement, with pupils' combined outcomes for reading, writing and mathematics being above the national average.
- Over time, pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 1 have been consistently in line with the national averages at the expected standard, and slightly above the national average at the higher standard. This has been sustained in the provisional outcomes for 2018.
- By the time pupils leave Year 2, almost all of them have successfully achieved the required standard in the national phonics screening check. Outcomes for the same check in Year 1 remain broadly the same, although in 2018 this represented a slight dip against the national average. This is in part due to the variations in resources and approach to the teaching of phonics across the school and teachers' loss of fidelity to the school's preferred scheme.
- The most able pupils achieve well. They are challenged to think hard about their learning and work is well matched to their needs. Increasing proportions of pupils are reaching the higher standard in the national tests at key stage 2, and outcomes in key stage 1 have been sustained.
- From their varying starting points, disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving across the school. Almost a third of all disadvantaged pupils also have additional SEND. Leaders identify any differences in disadvantaged pupils' outcomes compared with those of other pupils and are now more focused in their interventions to enable these pupils to catch up in their learning. Such differences present themselves differently in different year groups, and leaders acknowledge that in the past, they were insufficiently discerning in the additional support they offered. This is no longer the case. Intervention packages are evaluated thoroughly and regularly to ensure that they are the most appropriate in meeting individual pupils' needs. While this represents improvement from the time of the previous monitoring inspection, leaders are fully aware that there remain some historical differences that still need to be ironed out, particularly for older pupils.
- The progress of pupils with SEND is improving markedly. This is due to significant improvements in the leadership of SEND across the school. Identification procedures are sharp, which ensures that pupils receive accurate diagnosis of need and subsequently focused support, care and intervention.

Early years provision

Good

- Staff know the children well and form strong bonds with children quickly and effectively. They are intuitive to children's needs and demonstrate a good

understanding of how young children learn. As a result, children are very settled in their environment and present as happy, confident children who behave well.

- Children's outcomes improved markedly in 2018, with the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception being just below national averages. This reflected almost twice the outcome of 2017 and is much more representative of the quality of teaching and learning of early years.
- Although children's average starting points vary considerably year on year, children's speaking skills are consistently lower on entry than those typically expected for children of a similar age. This is particularly reflective of disadvantaged children's attainment on entry. The early years leader uses additional funding to provide dedicated speech and language support to children in need. This is having a positive impact on ensuring that children's skills in this important area improve to enable children to be ready for the challenges of Year 1.
- At the school's most recent monitoring inspection, leaders were asked to provide more opportunities for children to develop their reading and writing skills in the areas of learning. Leaders have done this in abundance and children are encouraged to write signs and labels and make lists. Examples of their work adorn the classroom walls and learning journals.
- The early years leader has recently returned to work. She has made an immediate, positive impact on the quality of teaching across the unit. Adult-led activities are planned carefully, focusing upon children's specific needs and abilities, and enabling children to make good progress in all areas of learning. However, the organisation of activities in the outdoor area inhibit staff from intervening to extend or probe children's learning with the same degree of precision. Leaders are aware of this and are reviewing timetabling arrangements to tackle this relative weakness.

School details

Unique reference number	111669
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10052943

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	385
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jean Rigg
Headteacher	Elaine Hughes-Narborough
Telephone number	01642 763060
Website	www.thornaby.stockton.sch.uk
Email address	thornabyce.school@stockton.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 October 2013

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with SEND.
- The school offers breakfast club provision.
- This inspection followed a monitoring inspection of the school in January 2018.

Information about this inspection

- This was a full section 5 inspection following a section 8 monitoring inspection in January 2018 that identified some aspects of the school's effectiveness that needed to improve.
- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. Some of these observations were completed with members of the senior leadership team. During lesson observations, inspectors talked to some pupils about their learning and reviewed their work in books.
- An extensive, separate review of pupils' work in a range of books was completed by inspectors alongside phase leaders and the head of school.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. Inspectors talked to parents at the beginning of the school day and took account of the 56 responses to Ofsted's online consultation, Parent View, as well as the 151 responses to the school's own most recent parent consultation exercise.
- Pupils were observed at playtime and lunchtime. Inspectors talked to groups of pupils about their learning and pupils' behaviour, and listened to them read.
- The inspection team reviewed a wide range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation

Inspection team

Diane Buckle, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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