

# Thurstonland Endowed Voluntary Controlled First School

Marsh Hall Lane , Thurstonland, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD4 6XD

**Inspection dates** 22–23 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make outstanding progress across the school and consistently reach standards at the end of Year 5 that are well above those expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is particularly strong. They use their reading and writing skills exceptionally well in different subjects and for many purposes. They have fewer opportunities, however, to use their mathematical skills in different subjects or to solve problems in real-life situations.
- Children get off to an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are eager to learn as they explore the exciting range of activities in the classroom and outdoors. They are extremely well prepared for Year 1.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers have a very good understanding of how well pupils are doing and plan very carefully to build on their prior learning and understanding. Skilful and experienced teaching assistants provide valuable support in lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, both in lessons and during break times. They are polite and respectful, work hard and are keen to do well. Their enjoyment of coming to school is reflected in their above-average attendance. Pupils say that they feel very safe and well looked after in school.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive in their support for the school. They express total confidence in the headteacher and other staff, and are very appreciative of the individual care and attention their children receive.
- The curriculum is rich and varied. It provides a range of experiences which mean that pupils thrive personally, as well as academically.
- Outstanding leadership by the headteacher, together with the support and commitment of the governing body, have led to marked improvements in achievement and the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
- The headteacher has very successfully shared her views on how the school can improve further with all staff and, as a result, there are high levels of teamwork.
- Members of the governing body show a clear understanding of how well the school is doing. They support the school and rigorously hold it to account.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in seven lessons, including three joint observations with the headteacher. The inspector listened to pupils reading and observed the teaching of early reading skills. She also looked at examples of pupils' work to obtain a view of teaching and progress over time.
- Discussions took place with pupils, parents, the Chair of the Governing Body, the vice-chair and two other governors, a representative from the local authority, and teaching and support staff.
- The inspector took account of 57 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), letters from parents and 12 staff questionnaires.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including data on pupils' progress across the school, the school's view of its own effectiveness and its development planning, records of the quality of teaching and learning, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documentation in relation to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Christine Potter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils move on to their next school at the end of Year 5.
- All pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- There are currently no pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Thurstonland and Stocksmoor Out-of-School-Club provides a breakfast and after-school club. These are not run by the school's governing body and are subject to separate inspections and the reports are available on the Ofsted website at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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

- Provide pupils with more opportunities to use their mathematical skills in different subjects and to solve problems in real-life situations.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are broadly typical for their age, although this does vary. Their Year 1 'buddies' help them to settle quickly into school routines and they soon become confident and independent learners. They make rapid gains in all areas of learning.
- This rapid progress is sustained across all year groups with high proportions of pupils making better than expected progress. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is well-above average and, by the end of Year 5, they reach levels which are well-above those expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. This means that they are exceptionally well-prepared for their next school.
- Pupils' attainment in reading is particularly high because reading skills at all stages are taught extremely effectively. The youngest pupils concentrate exceptionally well as they listen to and identify different sounds. Older pupils answer searching questions about the books that they read. Almost all pupils reach the expected standard in reading words by the end of Year 1. Pupils say how much they love reading.
- Pupils' work shows that they achieve high standards in all subjects. They use their writing skills very successfully in a wide range of contexts. Clear links are made between what they learn in their literacy lessons and the writing they do in other subjects. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 used their persuasive writing skills very successfully in their formal letters of application to join the Roman army.
- Pupils make excellent progress and reach high standards in mathematics because mathematical skills are taught extremely thoroughly. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use these skills in other subjects or to solve problems in real-life situations.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make excellent progress from their individual starting points. The proportion of pupils in previous years known to be eligible for free school meals is so small that any comparisons between their attainment and progress and that of other pupils are not statistically valid.
- Through its emphasis on meeting the needs of every individual pupil, and making sure that all pupils are included in every facet of school life, the school clearly demonstrates its commitment to equality of opportunity.

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- Teaching across the school is highly effective in inspiring pupils and ensuring that they learn exceptionally well. Teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve and promote skills for independent learning. They praise and encourage pupils so that they give of their best. Pupils say how much they enjoy their lessons.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children learn quickly because of the range of imaginative activities provided. Children wore witches' hats and developed their understanding of rhyming words to make up spells as they pulled objects out of their 'cauldron'.
- Teachers know in detail how well pupils are doing as a result of very thorough assessment systems and they plan very precisely to meet the needs of individuals. The most-able pupils are given work to challenge them at higher levels. In a short space of time in a Year 1 phonics lesson, some pupils focused on writing specific words, whilst others were challenged to use them in sentences and then to improve their writing by adding suitable adjectives.
- Pupils are clear about what is expected of them in lessons. Teachers use very skilful questioning to check pupils' understanding and help them to explain their reasoning and develop their ideas. The teacher's probing questions helped pupils in a mixed class of Years 4 and 5 pupils to explore a wide range of interesting and complex vocabulary to use in their descriptive writing. Pupils regularly assess their own learning and develop skills to comment constructively on their

classmates' work. Pupils take a lot of pride in their work and present it neatly.

- Teachers use a wide range of imaginative resources and teaching styles to help pupils learn in different subjects, including making very good use of the outdoor area and local environment. This term, pupils in Years 2 and 3 have already explored the woodlands for signs of autumn, cooked the blackberries they picked, surveyed the buildings in the village and made local history videos for younger children.
- Teachers use marking very effectively to identify what pupils have achieved and what pupils need to do next. Pupils say how much they value the verbal and written feedback they receive, which helps them to 'learn from their mistakes'. Their personal targets and record sheets help them to understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- Excellent use is made at all times of the skills and expertise of teaching assistants. They contribute to the planning for different pupils and their support makes a significant contribution to the high quality of learning for all pupils.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- Pupils are unfailingly polite and considerate as they move around this very happy school. They work and play together extremely well. Their excellent attitudes to learning make a strong contribution to their outstanding achievement. They are exceptionally keen to learn and are excited by the world around them.
- Pupils know that they are respected and valued as individuals. They, therefore, respect others around them and very much care about one another. They eagerly take on responsibilities, such as collecting the compost for the school garden or as play leaders. They are proud of their contribution to school life. They know that their views matter and adults will always listen to them.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and say that the school is a 'bully-free zone'. On the rare occasions when they fall out with each other, they say they can usually sort things out for themselves, or they seek assistance from playground 'buddies'. They are confident and like to be independent, but know that teachers will always deal with any issues or concerns that they may have.
- Parents unanimously agree that the school keeps their children safe. Pupils know how to behave in a safe manner at different times, for example, when going out of school with staff to the play area. They know about different types of bullying and how to stay safe when using the internet.
- Pupils also show concern for those who are less fortunate than they are. The high value that they place on a good education for all is demonstrated in their letters to the government, asking them to spend more on supporting schools in less well-developed countries.
- The school places a high priority on punctuality and on good attendance, which is consistently above average.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The headteacher provides extremely strong leadership. She leads by example and has high expectations of staff and pupils. She inspires them to give of their best, and parents describe her as 'exceptional'. She has successfully delegated responsibilities so that all staff have a leadership role and contribute to development planning. This, together with the support and challenge provided by the governing body, has led to the improvements in teaching and achievement since the last inspection.
- Staff at all levels say that they are valued members of the team. There is a shared commitment to improving opportunities for all pupils. The headteacher monitors teachers' work closely, from daily 'walkabouts' to more formal observations of lessons and pupils' work. She gives teachers clear feedback which helps them to improve their teaching even further. Performance management procedures are rigorous and clearly linked to decisions relating to pay progression.

All staff regularly attend high-quality training, and they share what they learn with each other.

- The systems for checking on pupils' progress have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now highly effective. All teachers are involved in making sure that pupils who are at risk of falling behind in their learning are identified at an early stage and are given precisely tailored support so that they make as much progress as their peers. The most-able pupils and those who have particular talents are also identified. They receive additional support and opportunities to develop their skills further, so that their progress is accelerated.
- The curriculum ensures that pupils not only make excellent progress, but also find learning exciting and memorable. Themed days give them opportunities to deepen their understanding of other religions and cultures. Topics are well planned to link skills in different curriculum areas, through activities as diverse as making reconstructions of Roman helmets, or using the internet to research the 'food miles' involved in bringing different varieties of apples to the local shops.
- The school is very keen to promote pupils' physical health and well-being. Lunchtime activities are provided by external sports coaches. A lack of indoor space is not seen as a problem, nor is adverse weather. Gymnastics is taught on outdoor equipment and indoor fencing takes place on rainy days. The school is making good use of the Primary School Sports funding to ensure that staff develop their skills even further so that opportunities for pupils will be sustained.
- There are excellent relationships with parents, who are exceptionally supportive of the school and are delighted by the progress their children make. They say that they appreciate the personal care and attention that they and their children receive. Pupils' differing needs are seen 'as a challenge, never a problem' and they know that their children come 'first and foremost'. They thoroughly enjoy the chance to take part in family events such as the annual 'Wigs and Wellies' walk.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for this outstanding school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is outstanding. As well as providing excellent support, governors ask challenging questions to ensure that the school's performance is of the highest quality in all areas. They study performance data, receive regular and detailed reports from the headteacher and carry out their own observations in school, to make sure that all pupils are achieving as well as they should. They are well informed about the quality of teaching and decisions relating to pay progression. They know what the school is doing to improve even further. Governors are fully committed to equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination of any kind. They check that when the school receives any pupil premium funding it is used well to benefit eligible pupils. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	107717
<b>Local authority</b>	Kirklees
<b>Inspection number</b>	425919

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–10
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	65
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tim Difford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christine Kirton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 October 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01484 222818
<b>Fax number</b>	01484 222818
<b>Email address</b>	office.thurstonland@edukirklees.net

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