School report

Inspection of Thornton Watlass Church of England Primary School

Thornton Watlass, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 4AH

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils who are registered at this school are either educated here or at Snape Community Primary School. Snape is the other school in the federation. The two schools operate as one school split across two sites. Pupils have opportunities to come together through collaboration days and by attending the breakfast or after-school clubs, which operate at Thornton Watlass. Many staff work across both sites. They are familiar to all the pupils.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and interacting with their friends. Relationships between pupils and staff are strong. Most pupils behave very well. In the early years, children play cooperatively with each other. Bullying is not a problem here. On the rare occasions that bullying occurs, leaders take swift action to address it.

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for the school. They have high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There is a range of opportunities for pupils to extend their learning beyond the curriculum. Pupils benefit from the range of clubs that are on offer to them and the educational visits they experience, such as planting trees at an arboretum. Pupils engage with the local community through visitors from the local gardening and history groups.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the schools in the federation were last inspected, leaders have made several changes to bring about further improvement. The curriculums in most subjects are now coherently sequenced and ambitious. The curriculum in the early years is carefully designed to take account of children's experiences and the context of the schools. As a result of the changes made, pupils' attitudes to learning are improving. There is a small number of instances where pupils' behaviour does not meet leaders' high expectations. Leaders take action to address these immediately.

Pupils with SEND are supported effectively to access the same curriculum offer as their peers. Teachers, parents and carers work together to construct support plans that help pupils to achieve their full potential.

Leaders have broken sequences of learning into small steps. Mathematics is a particular strength of the school. In the early years, there are plenty of opportunities for children to develop their mathematical skills through, for example, measuring in the construction area and using money to pay for items in the role-play area.

There are frequent opportunities within the curriculum for pupils to revisit and build on prior learning. However, teachers do not consistently make it explicit to pupils when they are building on something that they have been taught before. This means that some pupils do not make the important links between their learning.

Adults who work in the mixed Nursery, Reception and Year 1 class know the children inside out. They are clear about each child's next steps in learning.

Teachers regularly check whether pupils can remember what they have been taught. While pupils remember their recent learning, some cannot articulate what they have learned previously. In some subjects, such as science, teachers do not give pupils sufficiently ambitious tasks to deepen their learning.

By the time they reach Year 3, most pupils are capable, fluent readers. The phonics programme is taught consistently by all staff. Pupils take reading books home that are generally well matched to the sounds they know. Leaders quickly spot any pupils who are struggling to learn to read and put support in place so that they catch up with their peers.

Pupils demonstrate very mature attitudes when talking about some of their learning in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). They have a secure understanding of different types of family structures and relationships. They know how to keep themselves healthy and safe. Pupils are very clear that their school is inclusive. They understand the importance of being tolerant and treating everyone equally. The school's Christian values help pupils to learn to be respectful and compassionate towards others.

Wider opportunities, such as educational visits, help to broaden pupils' experience. The residential visit to London, for example, enables older pupils to experience a contrasting locality to the rural area in which they live. At an outdoor education centre, pupils develop teamwork skills, resilience and confidence through participating in adventurous activities. The range of after-school clubs that are on offer, such as chess and different sports clubs, helps pupils to develop their talents and interests.

Governors play an active role in the life of the school. They understand that working in a small school can put pressure on staff. For example, staff who are responsible for several subjects of the curriculum are under additional pressure. They have taken action to alleviate this pressure by allocating dedicated well-being time to every member of staff on a termly basis. Staff appreciate this support. They are proud to work in the federation and feel that leaders, including governors, support them well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have identified the risks that pupils face through living in a rural community, such as the dangers posed by farm machinery. They have personalised the curriculum to ensure that pupils are educated about these contextual risks.

Staff know pupils and their families very well. They quickly spot any indicators that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Leaders work with families and external agencies to ensure that action is taken swiftly when concerns arise. Safeguarding records are detailed and clearly outline leaders' actions.

Thorough checks are made on any adults who want to work at the school. Leaders ensure that a comprehensive safeguarding training package is in place for staff and governors.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some lessons, the tasks that teachers give to pupils are not sufficiently ambitious. As a result, pupils do not acquire detailed knowledge or make links between their learning. Leaders should ensure that they develop teachers' pedagogical subject knowledge of how to deepen pupils' learning so that they develop detailed knowledge across the curriculum.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use Ofsted Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further guidance on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	121521
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10241010
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	30
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve Palmer
Executive headteacher	Jane Wood
Website	www.stwschoolsfederation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Federation of Snape Community and Thornton Watlass CE Primary Schools. It is also part of a wider collaboration with a third school.
- Both schools in the federation are led by one executive headteacher. Subject leaders and the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) work across both sites.
- Pupils in Nursery, Reception and Year 1 are educated at the Snape site. Pupils in Years 2 to 6 are educated at the Thornton Watlass site.
- The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in March 2016.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- A breakfast club operates at the Thornton Watlass site. This is managed by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher and deputy headteacher, who is also the SENDCo. Inspectors also met with subject leaders, the chair and vice-chair of governors, the senior education adviser from the local authority and the diocesan adviser.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed the curriculum for PSHCE.
- Inspectors observed pupils reading to familiar adults.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils in lessons and during breaktimes.
- Inspectors examined the single central record and looked at how safeguarding incidents are reported. Inspectors spoke to leaders, teachers, support staff, governors and pupils about the culture of safeguarding in the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses made by parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. This included any free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to the staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Philippa Kermotschuk, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Moira Banks	Ofsted Inspector

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