

# Throckley Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108446
<b>Local authority</b>	Newcastle Upon Tyne
<b>Inspection number</b>	377756
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Kate Pringle

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	211
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Helen Richardson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Colin Lofthouse
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 November 2009
<b>School address</b>	Hexham Road Throckley Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE15 9DY
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Kate Pringle  
Derek Sleightholme

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Twelve lessons and seven teachers, and higher level teaching assistants were observed. Inspectors also observed shorted sessions of support interventions for pupils and listened to reading. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, assessment information, policies and procedures, school development plans and updates of pupils' progress. The views of pupils and staff were considered, together with those of parents and carers in the 110 questionnaires they returned. In planning the inspection, the inspector found no responses made by parents and carers to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

## Information about the school

This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. There are few pupils from minority ethnic heritages and none who speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities, who are supported by the school without input from external agencies, is below average, as is the proportion who receive external support or with a statement of special educational needs.

The school has had by a number of staffing changes over recent months. The school has met the current floor standard set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school currently holds the Investing in Children award.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
 Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

### Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It has made good improvement over the last three years. Pupils, parents and carers are positive about the school and most reflect upon the high level of care and support given to their children. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils make satisfactory progress and leave Year 6 with average attainment, although their achievement in writing is lower than in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Elsewhere, it is largely satisfactory with some that is good. Increased focus upon individual support for pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities means that the gap between these pupils and others is narrowing. There have been improvements in the teaching of mathematics and reading although advancements in writing are less secure. Teachers' marking is not always used effectively to make it clear to pupils how to improve. The school works successfully with parents and carers, with the local high school and a range of external agencies ensuring that pupils are supported well in their personal development which impacts positively upon their attitudes to learning.
- Pupils behave well. They enjoy school and have good relationships with adults. The significant decline in the proportion of pupils who misbehave since the last inspection is recognised by the majority of pupils, parents and carers. The strong emphasis upon pupils' personal development enables pupils to interact well together, therefore, pupils feel safe. Although attendance is average, there is a clearly improving picture over time and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is low. Pupils enjoy school and they recognise the need to attend regularly.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior staff understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well. Actions to improve teaching are clearly focused upon underachievement with concerted actions to support teachers to raise their performance. As a result, pupils' performance is

rising. The strong governing body supports leaders exceptionally well and is integral in the drive towards further improvement.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise attainment in writing, by:
  - ensuring consistency of progress across year groups
  - raising expectations of pupils' achievement
  - extending opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills across other subjects.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching to consistently good or better by:
  - increasing the breadth of writing activities and ensuring that they are closely matched to pupils' ability
  - teachers clearly demonstrating their high expectations of what different groups should achieve
  - ensuring consistency in the marking of pupils' work
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to correct previous work
  - sharing next steps in learning more immediately when pupils have achieved a particular goal.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

From entry points in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which are mostly below and sometimes well-below those of other children of the same age nationally, children make good progress and enter Year 1 with average attainment. Effective teaching and an exciting curriculum are key factors that influence this progress.

Progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall with pockets of good achievement. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, attainment is broadly average. The 2011 national tests showed levels in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 were the highest in the last five years. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach average levels in reading.

Pupils want to please their teachers, they are keen to learn and work hard to complete tasks. As a result, learning in classrooms is satisfactory and rising as changes start to reap benefits. This is evident in Key Stage 2 when pupils are taught in groups linked to their ability and this is enabling greater challenge as work is more appropriate for different abilities. However, learning in these lessons is slower when teachers' expectations within the different groups are not high enough and this limits progress for some pupils. Across the school, there are evident improvements in reading and mathematics. However, pupils' attainment in writing has not been as successfully challenged because tasks do not yet focus sufficiently upon the next

steps in learning for individual pupils. There are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length and for them to use their writing targets to self-evaluate the quality of their writing. Assessment information clearly identifies underachievement and interventions are increasingly effective for pupils of lower ability and pupils with special educational needs and for those with disabilities. Progress for these groups is at least in line with others and, sometimes better. This is particularly evident in reading where concerted actions over the past year have resulted in raising pupils' performance.

### **Quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the Early Years Foundation Stage teaching is securely good. Resources are imaginative and support children's development in all aspects of learning. Attainment is rising when children move into Year 1. Children's interest is engaged through a range of child-initiated and adult-led activities both indoors and outside. Good assessments are used effectively to influence future planning and this ensures that all children progress well.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory overall. When teaching is good, teachers provide activities which are matched accurately to pupils' abilities. Practical tasks make good use of past learning and challenge pupils' thinking. Pupils enjoy such lessons and engage with great enthusiasm. This was evident in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, when pupils endeavoured to solve how many of differing types of animal were in the field given numbers of heads and legs! Pupils' enjoyed the challenge and made efficient use of a range of strategies to solve the problem. Progress is good when it is made clear to pupils what is expected of them. Slower progress is made when teachers do not tell pupils what they want them to do and pupils become confused. Teaching positively influences pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development because staff insist on good behaviour and encourage pupils to reflect on how to influence their own learning. The majority of parents and carers feel that their children are taught well and improve their skills. However, some identified specific year groups when they felt that progress slowed. The findings of the inspection reflect this.

The use of self-assessment by pupils helps teachers to provide extra help where it is needed. Although teachers have a good understanding of pupils' ability they do not use this information to plan lessons and the curriculum at a sufficiently high level to extend learning across the curriculum. Expectations, particularly in writing, are limited by a lack of challenge in what is to be learned in the lesson, as well as the specific expectations for individuals and groups of pupils not being high enough. The new marking policy is proving increasingly effective, although not yet used consistently well by all teachers. The best marking highlights pupils' successes against their targets, although few examples identify future steps. Although teachers clearly draw attention to errors, opportunities for pupils to return to their work and learn from their mistakes are rare.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils speak confidently about feeling safe in school and that teachers, together with buddies and peer mentors, help them overcome their concerns. They are helped by

adults to identify risks, in and out of school, and consider the consequences of their actions. Pupils, parents and carers have positive views about behaviour and the safety of their children and these endorse inspections findings. Where parental questionnaires indicated some concerns about physical bullying, these were duly followed up by inspectors who found that consistently applied strategies have successfully addressed this concern. Pupils are secure that bullying of all types is not a problem in the school. The school makes excellent use of the Parent Support Officer who works closely with families who are encountering problems and supports the work of the school successfully to reduce negative behaviour and improve attendance. Attendance has risen and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has declined dramatically to a low level.

Behaviour is good in lessons and pupils engage positively with their peers. They interact well in the playground and were observed playing well together with no confrontations. Older pupils are very clear about the improvements in behaviour and talk about how much it has improved. They tell of any poor behaviour having diminished over time and when it occurs how this is rapidly addressed. Although there have been two fixed-term exclusions in the past year, behaviour logs indicate that such instances are much reduced because of the work to communicate consistent approaches to behaviour management with pupils, parents and carers.

### **Leadership and management**

Over recent years, leaders and managers, including the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, have focused successfully on the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The quality of teaching is improving significantly because of the highly-focused nature of teachers' professional development. This indicates the successful communication of high expectations and ambition by key leaders and managers including the governing body. Better teaching is having a positive impact upon pupils' attainment, although staffing instability has contributed to the inconsistency in pupils' progress. Focused actions to improve attainment in mathematics and reading have been successful. Development plans clearly identify next steps in securing improvement in writing through higher expectations for all and to further narrow the gap for those pupils with special educational needs and for those with disabilities. Actions to improve communication with parents and carers, improved working partnerships with the high school and strong links with external agencies, are evident in the noticeably positive ethos and atmosphere in the school, which is commented upon by pupils, staff, parents and carers. A clear understanding about the way ahead, together with better provision and outcomes especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage, demonstrate a good capacity to improve.

Leaders have been effective in making the curriculum more imaginative and enabling pupils to have greater access to experiences outside of their locality. However, the curriculum is only satisfactory because there are still too few opportunities for pupils to use their skills of reading, writing and mathematics across subjects and insufficient differentiation of task to meet the needs of differing abilities. Nevertheless, changes are providing greater opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems. A strong focus upon gardening and cookery are strengths of the school in extending pupils' understanding of a healthy lifestyle, together with giving them additional skills for their future. A range of clubs, visits and visitors contributes to pupils' enhanced

skills and interests through music, sport and art. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Opportunities to reflect upon their own practice and engagement in responsibilities, such as buddies, peer mentors and school council enable pupils to participate in the decision-making process within the school and wider community.

The governing body has a very detailed knowledge of the school and its work. It understands fully the need to raise attainment and has worked successfully in partnership with the headteacher and senior leaders to provide a happy environment. Close attention is given to safeguarding pupils and ensuring that all requirements are met so that they all learn and achieve safely. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good, as can be seen in the narrowing gaps between attainment of different groups and the harmonious community.



## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



16 January 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Throckley Primary School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE15 9DY**

Thank you for the lovely welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school. We found this to be a satisfactory school, where your teachers work hard to help you feel safe and happy. Thank you for talking with the inspectors and to those of you who completed questionnaires. We were very impressed by your good behaviour and the care and respect you show to each other. We found that your attendance is improving with fewer of you taking time out of school. Your parents and carers feel that the school looks after you well and we agree. It was good to see that you help your teachers by taking on responsibilities such as by becoming buddies, peer mediators and school councillors.

Children in your school get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception classes. We know that in Years 1 to 6 you enjoy school more when you are actively involved in your learning and that the experiences of visits and visitors help you to learn. We believe that you could achieve higher levels in writing if your teachers could help you more. So we would like them to make sure that you make good progress across the school in writing by extending the opportunities you have to use your writing skills independently in other subjects, such as history and science.

We would like all teachers to make sure that they expect even more of you and to make sure that they provide challenging activities for each one of you. You need to have good feedback about how well you have met your targets and what you need to do next. We would also like them to give you the opportunity to correct marked work regularly so that you can reflect on where you need to focus your learning.

We hope that you continue to enjoy learning and to continue to try your very best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Kate Pringle  
Lead inspector

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