

Thursby Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112123
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	378430
Inspection dates	26–27 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Ann Ashdown

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonathan Hewitt
Headteacher	Rita Yeowart
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in six lessons and saw five teachers teach. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, pupils' progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation. They analysed 66 questionnaires from parents and carers and also those from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The features of the school which support its own self-evaluation that pupils' personal development and care, guidance and support are outstanding.
- Whether all groups of pupils are making the progress of which they are capable particularly at Key Stage 1.
- The quality of teaching and assessment and whether these are consistently good across the school.

Information about the school

This is a well-below average sized primary school. Pupils are taught in a Reception class and three mixed-age classes. Most pupils are White British. Very few pupils are from minority-ethnic groups and very few speak English as an additional language. A below average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The voluntary management led provision for childcare, 'Thursby Nursery' shares the school's site. It is subject to a separate inspection and will receive its own inspection report which will be published on the Ofsted website. In the last three years there have been major changes to school staffing.

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

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils overall achievement is outstanding because they make good progress and their attainment is high when they leave Year 6. This success, coupled with pupils' excellent behaviour, high attendance and extremely well developed basic skills means that Thursby pupils are particularly well prepared for the next stage of their education and for later life.

In this very welcoming school the youngest children settle quickly into the Reception class where they get a good start to their education and soon become confident learners. Pupils of all ages receive outstanding care, guidance and support, which contribute very well to their personal development. Consequently, they feel extremely safe and have an excellent knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy. The individual skills and talents of all pupils are highly valued and they all have excellent equal opportunities to succeed.

Under the very effective leadership of the headteacher the school has sustained and built on the good practice noted at the last inspection and has a good capacity to improve further. Governors, leaders and managers know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well, self-evaluation is accurate and appropriate priorities for further improvement have been sharply identified. For example, they have rightly recognised that during a period of unavoidable and major staff change pupils' progress has been slightly slower and attainment lower in Years 1 and 2. Successful strategies such as good staff deployment and an increased focus on monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning are now in place to address this relative weakness. Consequently, the pace of learning is beginning to accelerate in Key Stage 1 to match the rapid progress being made in Key Stage 2.

Pupils make good progress because the quality of teaching and learning are good. Staff know pupils very well and tailor work very closely to their individual needs. Most lessons proceed at a brisk pace, expectations are high and pupils are challenged to achieve their very best. The school recognises the need to build on and share this good practice even further to ensure pupils make equally good progress in all lessons. In a few lessons the pace of learning is slower because work is not quite as challenging and pupils are not quite clear about why they are studying a particular topic.

The school promotes community cohesion very well in the local community. Plans are now in place, but are not yet fully developed, to give pupils more opportunities to engage with communities further afield both within the United Kingdom and overseas.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupil's attainment at Key Stage 1 and ensure pupils make equally good progress across the school by:
 - building on and sharing existing good practice to ensure consistently high levels of challenge and pace in all lessons
 - further engage pupils in learning by clearly explaining the relevance of the tasks they are completing in all lessons.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to engage with communities, within the United Kingdom and overseas, which differ from their own.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They concentrate very hard in lessons, are extremely keen to answer questions and do their very best. Consequently, they attain highly and their achievement is outstanding. Pupils were seen enjoying learning and making good progress in developing their literacy skills as they described familiar local scenes in autumn. Work on classroom walls and in pupils' books confirmed the good progress that all groups of pupils are making.

Children enter the Reception class with the skills and abilities as expected for their age and make good progress from their starting points. However, test and assessment results for older pupils indicate that the pace of progress, although good overall, does vary across the school. Teacher assessments for the last three years indicate that progress slows slightly in Key Stage 1 but accelerates markedly in Key Stage 2 so that pupils' attainment is high by the time they leave Year 6. The school's detailed monitoring system confirms that current pupils are on track to reach their challenging targets this year and also that pupils' progress in Key stage 1 is now accelerating. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as their peers because they receive timely and well-focused extra help when needed.

Pupils have a highly developed sense of what is right and what is wrong and take great care of each other. They treat staff and each other with unfailing kindness and respect and are extremely welcoming to visitors. They gain great enjoyment from taking responsibility and working in teams and are proactive in contributing to their own and the local community. They are proud to act as buddies, mentors and members of the school council, and to take part in community activities as varied as singing, gardening and helping to organise the local gala. They take part in a huge range of sports, are very keen to keep fit and know exactly what is involved in eating healthily and taking care of themselves.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers know the pupils extremely well, relationships are excellent and lessons are conducted in an atmosphere of respect and trust. Teachers use a range of resources and varied teaching methods to engage pupils' interest so they are very keen to learn and make good progress. Pupils are successfully encouraged to assess their own work and know how to reach their targets. In lessons, learning is checked frequently, books are marked regularly and pupils are given clear pointers on how to improve their work. In the best lessons teachers explain clearly the relevance of the challenging work being set. In slower-paced lessons work is less challenging and pupils are not as sure of the relevance of what they are learning.

The curriculum is good. Closer links between subjects are making the work more relevant and interesting for pupils. The study of topics such as 'Early Settlers' in Years 5 and 6 is giving pupils increased opportunities to write at length. The curriculum is enriched by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities which add enormously to pupils' enjoyment of learning. They speak very enthusiastically of trips and visits they have been on and artistic, musical and sporting activities they have taken part in. During the inspection a large group of older pupils were away on a well-planned trip to York. Others spoke excitedly about an outdoor activities trip they had been on and a school camp they were looking forward to.

Pupils and their parents and carers are very appreciative of the outstanding care, guidance and support that the school provides. All pupils receive excellent academic and personal support which is closely tailored to their individual needs. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable receive expert help from staff in school and from specialist outside agencies. Pupils are extremely well prepared for each stage of their education and settle very well into new classes and schools.

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has been instrumental in building on existing good practice and bringing about school improvement during a time of unavoidable but major staff change. The impact of this has been minimised by very good strategic staff deployment and an increased focus on staff training and support to maintain the good quality of teaching and learning. Members of the governing body and leaders and managers at all levels have a very clear vision for further school improvement which is shared by all staff. The talents of all members of the school community are highly valued and both staff and pupils are given excellent equal opportunities and are empowered to succeed. Consequently, morale is high. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Governance is good. The governing body know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and are fully involved in determining its strategic direction and in monitoring its work.

Safeguarding is good. All policies and procedures are in place, staff are well trained and have a good awareness of child protection issues. The school has good links with parents and carers and communicates with them regularly to enable them to support their children's learning. The school promotes community cohesion very well within the local area. However, although plans are in place to extend this aspect of the school's work, pupils have fewer opportunities to make contact with those from contrasting communities overseas and within the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account:	
The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

On their first full day at school children were seen to have settled quickly into school routines and were confidently choosing activities for themselves and sharing toys and

equipment sensibly. Most children start school with the skills that are expected for children of their age. By the end of the Reception Year they have made good progress and enter Year 1 with skills and knowledge which are at least in line with, and often above, the national average. Children are very well supported and cared for so they feel safe, become more confident and enjoy learning. In a dance class children made good progress in their physical development as they made 'smooth' and 'spiky' shapes with their bodies. Activities are well planned and there is a good balance, both indoors and outside, of teacher-led activities and those which children choose for themselves. Teaching and learning are good and expectations are usually high. Occasionally, some activities do not fully challenge all children. Children's progress is carefully monitored and recorded in journals which are shared with parents and carers. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Under the very experienced and knowledgeable guidance of the headteacher, less experienced teachers and teaching assistants are well deployed.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Of the high proportion of parents and carers who filled in the questionnaire the overwhelming majority are entirely happy with the education the school provides. They are very appreciative of the efficient way in which the school is led and managed and of the outstanding care, guidance and support it provides for their children. Inspection evidence entirely supports these views. A few parents and carers felt that the school did not keep them sufficiently well informed about their children's progress and did not help them to support their children's learning. Inspectors investigated these concerns but found the school's communication with parents and carers to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Thursby Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 66 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 93 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	73	16	24	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	74	17	26	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	39	59	22	33	5	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	55	24	36	3	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	67	20	30	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	53	23	35	5	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	74	16	24	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	45	68	18	27	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	56	26	39	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	59	22	33	3	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	55	21	32	4	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	52	79	11	17	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	53	80	12	18	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



28 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thursby Primary School, Carlisle, CA5 6PN

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school this week. A particular thank you to those of you who were keen to talk with us and told us so enthusiastically about all the things you really enjoyed doing at school.

This is what we have said about your school in our report.

- Yours is a good school where you are given excellent care, guidance and support.
- Your achievement is outstanding because you make good progress and your attainment is high.
- Your behaviour is excellent, your attendance at school is high and you have an extremely good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy.
- The way your school is led and managed, the curriculum you follow and the quality of teaching and learning are all good.

This is what we have asked your school to do to make it even better.

- Help you to make even faster progress by:
 - making sure you work at a brisk pace, that you understand the importance of the topics you are studying and that the work you do is always challenging
 - asking your teachers to share their best ideas for teaching with each other.
- Give you more opportunities to find out about communities within the United Kingdom and overseas which are different from your own.

All of you can help your school improve even further by working with your teachers to achieve the very best you can.

Yours sincerely

Ann Ashdown
Lead inspector

