

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



19 January 2017

Mr Mark Atkinson
Headteacher
Throston Primary School
Flint Walk
Throston Grange Estate
Hartlepool
TS26 0TJ

Dear Mr Atkinson

Short inspection of Throston Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 January 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained and improved upon the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement from your previous inspection by improving the quality of teaching and refining the methods you use to evaluate the school's strengths and areas for development. As a result, you are systematically improving the quality of education. Pupils and parents are proud of the school. In particular, they greatly appreciate the breakfast and after-school clubs and the wide range of high-quality extra-curricular activities the school provides.

Teachers and other adults that work in the school share senior leaders' high expectations. They plan carefully and prepare lessons that pupils enjoy and are keen to participate in. Pupils' excellent behaviour and positive attitudes allow lessons to flow productively. Pupils quickly acquire new knowledge and skills and have good opportunities to apply their learning to new topics. In addition, the 'Throsties' programme is used widely by teachers to promote personal qualities such as resilience, curiosity, imagination and teamwork. As a result, older pupils develop as confident learners who are ready and willing to take on responsibilities. As a result, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

You have skilfully managed the relatively high turnover of staff over recent years. Good recruitment and rich development opportunities ensure that members of staff are committed to improving the school. New subject leaders, promoted from within the school, have confidently begun to lead well-considered initiatives to enhance

aspects of teaching and assessment. You ensure that you track every pupil's progress carefully and provide good additional support for any pupil that falls behind.

Your focus on the quality of provision has led to a number of improvements since the last inspection. Children benefit from excellent resources and a well-planned programme of learning in the early years. By the end of Reception, most pupils reach a good level of development. Most pupils make strong progress and attain standards at the end of Year 6 that are above those seen nationally. However, the progress pupils make in key stage 1 is not as rapid as in other phases of the school and the progress made by the most able pupils needs to improve, particularly in reading, mathematics and in their use of grammar.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the governors give safeguarding a high priority and ensure that policy and practice in the school is in line with statutory requirements. A raft of regular checks and audits are used to check for continued vigilance. You ensure that rigorous vetting procedures are followed for all adults that work in the school and that regular training ensures that members of staff confidently know what actions to take if they have any concerns about a child's safety or well-being. Your curriculum helps pupils to understand and appreciate potential risks to their safety.

Inspection findings

- Most pupils currently in the school are making strong progress. This is most rapid in the early years and key stage 2, where pupils are on track to make more progress than seen nationally. Leaders have correctly identified those groups of pupils for whom progress has been slower and are taking steps to address this. For example, those pupils that enter key stage 1 less secure in their reading, writing and/or numeracy skills receive additional support and are heard to read by a trained adult most days. Nevertheless, in 2016, a below-average proportion of these pupils reached the expected standard at the end of key stage 1. Around 90% of pupils reach the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 2. Good support is in place in Year 3 for the 10% of pupils that fall short of the expected standard.
- In 2016, pupils made strong progress in reading and mathematics and significantly better progress than seen nationally in writing. This continues to be the case for most pupils currently in key stage 2. The school's assessment information indicates a higher number of pupils are on course to reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics than in 2016, although the proportion of pupils on course to attain the higher standard remains no better than average. Teachers are aware of this and are ensuring that their lessons stretch and challenge the most able pupils effectively.
- Progress across the wider curriculum is equally strong. Drama of a high standard is used to develop pupils' confidence and reading is promoted and encouraged effectively. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in history, science, food technology and physical education develops strongly and is complemented very

well by the exciting range of extra-curricular opportunities on offer.

- My visits to lessons and my scrutiny of pupils' books confirmed your evaluation that good teaching consistently contributes to pupils' strong progress. Teachers plan and deliver interesting and engaging lessons that help pupils take the next steps. Expectations are high. Lessons are well resourced, dynamic and stimulating. Teachers ask probing and pertinent questions to check pupils' depth of understanding and provide helpful feedback to pupils on their work. It continues to be important, however, to ensure that the most able pupils are consistently stretched so that they develop the knowledge and skills to attain the highest of standards.
- Governors are experienced, demanding and astute. They have a detailed grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and good mechanisms in place to check whether leaders' actions are having a positive impact. They hold all teachers to account through their standards committee. The headteacher's performance management objectives are sharply focused on the areas which need to be improved. Governors strike an effective balance between supporting and celebrating the school's strengths and robustly challenging where improvements can be made. While watchfully checking the detail of the school's performance, governors also give careful consideration to the longer-term strategic direction of the school in order to sustain and enhance the quality of education into the future.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils entering Year 1 who are less secure in reading, writing and/or mathematics make rapid progress and reach at least the expected standard by the end of the key stage
- the most able pupils are consistently challenged so that a greater proportion attains the highest standards in reading, mathematics and in their spelling, punctuation and grammar by the end of key stage 2.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Hartlepool. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection I pursued the following lines of enquiry:

- Are pupils currently in the school making strong progress across a range of subjects and key stages? Are the most able pupils challenged and stretched sufficiently so that more of them are on course to reach higher levels of attainment?
- Are lower-attaining pupils making good progress in key stage 1? Do they receive effective teaching and additional support to address gaps in their literacy and numeracy skills?
- Is the quality of teaching, learning and assessment consistently good or better?
- Do governors have an accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and hold leaders to account effectively?
- Are child protection and safeguarding arrangements robust and does a culture of vigilance exist across all members of staff?

During the inspection, I met with you, a group of teachers, the attendance officer and a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. I listened to some pupils read and spoke with pupils both formally and informally during social times and in lessons. I spoke to the school improvement partner by telephone. You and other senior leaders visited a number of lessons with me across each phase of the school. I scrutinised the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, assessment information, attendance data and safeguarding policies. I also reviewed information on the school's website. I scrutinised in detail the books of some of the most able and least able pupils. I also took into account the views of pupils, members of staff and parents through their responses to questionnaires.