

Inspection of a good school: Throston Primary School

Flint Walk, Throston Grange Estate, Hartlepool TS26 0TJ

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 February 2022

Outcome

Throston Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils speak highly of this friendly school. They enjoy their learning and appreciate the many opportunities offered to them. Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive. The school's 'Throsties values' are loved and understood by pupils.

Leaders are highly ambitious for all pupils. Staff work together as an effective team. They share the leaders' vision of providing a wide range of learning activities that will support lifelong learning.

Leaders ensure that all staff know how to keep pupils safe. Pupils behave well and say that bullying rarely happens. They trust staff to help them resolve issues. Teachers value pupils' opinions. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to the wider life of the school.

There are strong relationships between families and staff. These relationships start at an early stage at the Throsties tots group. Families are very supportive of staff. One parent said, 'Staff are passionate and supportive and encourage all the children to achieve their best. The pastoral care is wonderful.' This echoes the views of many parents and carers. Families appreciate the help they were given during COVID-19 restrictions.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that combines the requirements of the national curriculum with the needs and interests of the pupils. The local area features heavily in the curriculum design. Curriculum plans help pupils to systematically build important knowledge, skills and vocabulary in all subjects from early years up to Year 6.

Reading is a priority at the school. Leaders are keen to ensure that pupils become successful readers. All staff promote a love of reading. Staff believe that reading is the door to lifelong learning.

The curriculum leader for English is determined to strengthen reading across the school. A new programme for teaching early reading and phonics has recently been introduced. This programme is working successfully for the youngest children. However, some of the older pupils have gaps in their phonics knowledge. Some pupils are unable to decode as well as they might. Consequently, some pupils are not reading as fluently as they should.

Leadership of mathematics is strong. The curriculum and effective teaching combine to ensure that pupils' learning in mathematics is positive. Staff explain new learning clearly and make regular checks on pupils' understanding. Most pupils have a strong grasp of calculations, including times tables. Pupils learn how to reason and to solve mathematical problems well. Pupils confidently discuss their mathematical ideas with each other and their teachers.

Teachers use different ways to successfully check pupils' knowledge and understanding in English and mathematics. However, checks on pupils' learning in other subject areas are not consistent. In some subjects, teachers do not use regular assessment information to identify gaps in pupils' learning. This means that some pupils are not learning as well as they could.

In early years, staff make sure that children settle quickly. Children confidently take part in stimulating activities. Staff support children's learning effectively and help them to acquire lots of new vocabulary. Children in early years are prepared well for their next steps in learning.

Leaders are highly committed to supporting pupils' personal development. Pupils learn how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and what to do if problems arise. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility for others and their school, for example as sports leaders. Pupils participate in a broad range of experiences to develop their talents and interests. All staff share a common commitment to helping pupils to thrive personally, both in and out of the classroom.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported effectively. Staff know their pupils well and act early to help those who struggle. The special educational needs coordinator has established valuable partnerships with a range of external agencies. This helps to ensure that pupils get the extra support they need in a timely manner. Support from well-trained staff means that pupils with SEND achieve well.

Leaders have used catch-up funding effectively. They have provided a substantial amount of additional support to a large number of pupils, for example through after-school tutoring sessions. This has helped pupils to catch up with the learning that was disrupted by COVID-19.

Senior leaders have a clear determination to ensure that all staff provide pupils with the best possible start to their education. Regular professional development has helped to develop teachers' curriculum knowledge. Teachers speak highly of the support they have received from school leaders. Governors know the school well. They work closely with senior leaders to support school improvements.

Staff are proud to work in this school. They say that they enjoy their work and feel valued. Staff share the leaders' vision in helping pupils to achieve a 'flying start to success'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding is a priority of staff at the school. Staff know the pupils very well. They know the signs that could indicate a pupil is potentially at risk of harm. They also know what to do when safeguarding concerns arise.

Leaders work well with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils and their families. The designated safeguarding lead has created a thorough system to monitor and record all safeguarding concerns. She ensures that vulnerable pupils receive the support they need.

Procedures for ensuring the safe recruitment of staff are robust. The record of staff recruitment checks meets all requirements.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The new approach to teaching phonics is still in the early stages of its introduction. Some teaching and support staff are not fully trained to implement this. Some pupils are not accessing the new reading programme. These pupils find it difficult to decode words. They are not learning to read as quickly or as successfully as they could. They find it difficult to read texts with fluency. Leaders should ensure that training is provided for all staff, so they have the necessary expertise to teach pupils to decode successfully and read with fluency.
- Teachers do not consistently assess learning and use assessment information to support pupils' learning in the foundation subjects. Some teachers do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge quickly enough. Some pupils do not learn as well as they should as they are unable to securely build on their prior knowledge. Leaders should ensure that there are regular checks of pupils' learning, so that pupils are helped to gain strong knowledge and understanding across the foundation subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2012.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	111612
Local authority	Hartlepool Borough
Inspection number	10211111
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	462
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Millward
Headteacher	Mr Mark Atkinson
Website	www.throston.school.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a significant rise in the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, members of the governing body, the school improvement partner and a representative of the local authority. The inspector also met with subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, teachers and support staff.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. This involved examining curriculum plans, speaking with leaders, visiting lessons, speaking with pupils about their work and examining their workbooks. The inspector also

observed pupils reading to an adult and spoke with teachers about the learning in the lessons visited.

- The inspector observed pupils during lunchtime and at breaktimes.
- The inspector evaluated the safeguarding arrangements in the school by examining the school's child protection records, talking with safeguarding leaders and speaking with pupils, staff and parents. The inspector checked the school's recruitment practices and safeguarding records.
- The inspector considered the views of staff, pupils and parents as part of the review of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Alison Stephenson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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