



Inspection report

Throckley Primary School

Unique Reference Number 108446
 LEA Newcastle Upon Tyne

Inspection number 269345
 Inspection dates 19 - 20 October 2004
 Reporting inspector Jill Arnold HMI

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the school Inspectors Act 1996, and was deemed section 12(3) under the same act.

Type of School	Primary	School address	Coach Road
School category	Community		Throckley
Age range of pupils	3 - 11		Newcastle Upon Tyne
			Tyne and Wear
			NE15 9JN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 267 5311
Number on roll	208	Fax number	0191 264 2204
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Linda Wright
Date of previous inspection	June 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Lesley Winlow

Age group 3 - 11	Published November 2004	Reference no. 269345
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Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the staff of Throckley Primary School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Throckley Primary School serves an area of private and local authority housing on the outskirts of Newcastle. Until September 2004 it was a first school, so there were no children in Year 6 at the time of the inspection. There are 208 children at the school, including 28 in the nursery. When they start school, many children do not have the skills or knowledge typical of three and four year olds. The number of children entitled to free school meals is above average. Almost all pupils are of white ethnic origin. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is about average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

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Overall effectiveness of the school

This is a good school that puts children first. The school is inclusive and successfully promotes a strong sense of community. Parents appreciate what the school does for their children. By the age of seven children reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are better than those found in similar schools, and they make good progress over time. Good teaching and care contribute to their success. The improvements needed in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2 are already being dealt with. Children are enthusiastic and well behaved; their personal development is good. Leadership and management are good and the school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for further development. Assessment procedures are thorough, but better use needs to be made of the information gained to help children understand how to improve their work. Value for money is good.

Grade: 2

Improvement since the last inspection

The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has addressed most of the key issues identified for action. Standards in information and communication technology have improved. All pupils are encouraged to take part when there are discussions during lessons. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 have been consistently higher than those found in similar schools across the country. The quality of teaching continues to be good.

Grade: 2

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is accurate, realistic and based on systematic review of its performance. The headteacher, deputy head and governing body are united in their intention to improve the quality of education provided whilst maintaining a focus on raising children's achievement. They have a clear view of the school's priorities for its future development as a primary school. The school is well-placed to improve further.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

In order to build on its strengths and improve standards further, the school should:

- build successfully on the high standards achieved in Key Stage 1, by continuing the work being undertaken to improve children's writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2
- develop the use of assessment so that children understand how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

When children begin in the nursery, their knowledge and skills are much lower than those usually seen at this age. Therefore, it is a considerable achievement that, by the time they leave the reception class, most of them reach the standards expected for children of their age and all achieve to a good level in their personal, social and emotional development. By the age of seven, children reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are higher than those found in similar schools. Standards in writing and mathematics have been well above the national average since the last inspection. Overall, children make good progress to reach this level and the more able children do very well.

The school is rightly concerned that some children in Key Stage 2 are not doing so well. Progress overall is satisfactory, but it is clear that standards in writing and mathematics are not good enough. The school is aware of this and has started to make the changes necessary to improve.

Children's personal development is good. They are enthusiastic, proud of their school and particularly enjoy extra-curricular activities. Most children enjoy coming to school and their behaviour is good. They say that the isolated incidents of bullying are dealt with straight away by staff who are supported by children who are 'bully buddies'. Attendance is satisfactory and most children are punctual. The school works hard to promote good attendance. Provision for social and moral development is good and children have a strong sense of right and wrong.

Spirituality is developed through school assemblies where children are helped to reflect and make sense of the world in which they live. Elected members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and are eager to discuss suggestions for improvement. The school prepares children well to make a significant contribution to the local community. They regularly visit a local home for the elderly and the choir sings there at Christmas. A partnership with a large, inner-city school in the midlands enhances children's awareness of communities in other areas of the country and of cultural differences in the wider world. Commitment to the 'Healthy Schools' award promotes a good understanding of ways to develop a healthy lifestyle.

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

Children are well taught. This was clear in lessons, and in discussions with children about what they had learnt. Where teaching is particularly good, the activities are planned carefully to match the children's needs and they make good progress as a result. Interactive whiteboards are used well to engage children's interest and to develop their learning. Questions are used effectively to assess children's progress during the lesson and, if necessary, teachers give further explanations to develop understanding. Attractive displays create a stimulating learning environment for the children. There is some highly effective teaching in the Foundation Stage, where staff are very clear about the next step in learning for individual children.

There are some areas for improvement. Assessment while thorough, is not used effectively to help children to improve their learning. The planning of activities and support in lessons for less able children is insufficiently well focused to help them take the next step forward in their learning.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Many subjects are taught through topics and this works well. In the Foundation Stage, children's independence is developed well. There is a sound match of the curriculum to the children's needs and interests. The provision for children with special educational needs (SEN) is good. Recently devised systems for identifying the specific learning needs of individual children are being used effectively by staff to raise standards and develop children's self-confidence. Parents feel that they receive good information about their children's progress.

Children are provided with a good range of learning activities. Good use is made of the natural environment and of first-hand experiences to stimulate learning. Visits to support class topics are effective in promoting children's interest and language skills. 'Brain gym' activities and the development of thinking skills help children to be more actively involved in their learning. Talking partners help them to explain their thinking. Children benefit from working alongside artists. The school is right to be proud of its provision for the creative arts.

Inspectors agree with the school's view that it takes good care of its children and provides a safe environment. Relationships between children and adults are very positive. Children report that they feel comfortable to approach members of staff with their concerns at any time. They feel safe and know the routines well. The school places a high priority on child protection and all staff are trained and updated regularly. Vulnerable children are very well supported. The 'nurture club' is appreciated by the children who like having a place where they can go at break times and lunchtimes, 'to sort themselves out'. Parents and carers agree that children are well cared for. They say that teachers are dedicated to the well-being of the children. The school has developed good working relationships with various agencies and provides conference facilities for social services, health workers and foster carers to ensure specialist support for children and their families. Provision for children looked after by the local authority is good.

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the school are good.

The school runs smoothly on a daily basis. The headteacher provides good strategic leadership which has resulted in a reflective culture, with staff sharing a common purpose. The headteacher and deputy work well in partnership with the governors. The governing body is effective. It is fully involved in strategic planning and ensures that the school meets its statutory responsibilities. Finances are managed effectively and as a result the school's staffing and resources meet the needs of the children well.

The school monitors its work effectively and has an accurate understanding of its main strengths and relative weaknesses. It takes appropriate action to improve its performance. Substantial amounts of information are generated by the school to analyse its performance and to set priorities for improvement. It does not yet make the fullest use of this information to systematically improve the quality of teaching and learning.

The headteacher, deputy head and governors have a clear idea of the school's future priorities for its development as a primary school. The school's aim of 'Children First' is evident in its commitment to the promotion of the social and emotional well-being of children. Attention to health and safety is scrupulous.

Grade: 2

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