



Thurstonland Endowed Voluntary Controlled First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107717
LEA Kirklees
Inspection number 277819
Inspection dates 5 October 2005 to 5 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs June Sharpe CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Marsh Hall Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Thurstonland
Age range of pupils	5 to 10		Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD4 6XD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01484 222818
Number on roll	54	Fax number	01484 222818
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr B Webster
Date of previous inspection	29 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs J Martin

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

This small rural school is situated about five miles south of Huddersfield. Most of the 57 girls and boys come from privately owned homes in and around the villages of Thurstonland and Stocksmoor. Almost all the children are white British and none speak English as an additional language. A few children have learning difficulties or disabilities and a very small proportion claim free school meals. Attainment on entry to the reception year is broadly typical for children at the age of 4. Children are taught in three mixed-age groups in the mornings and in two mixed-age classes in the afternoons. The headteacher teaches for about half of each school week. Since the previous inspection, the Victorian buildings have been extended and refurbished, and there have been several staff changes, including a new headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Thurstonland Endowed First School is a good school, providing good value for money. Since the previous inspection, the school has made good progress, especially by keeping up with the rapid national pace of change, and by refurbishing the buildings. The school has done well to maintain high standards, considering that there are so few teachers to share all the responsibilities, and that there have been staff changes, including a new headteacher. The inspector mainly agrees with the school's views on its overall effectiveness. Parents, rightly, think very highly of the school, and have confidence in the staff to educate their children. The school is led and managed well by the headteacher, who has quickly got to grips with what needs to be done. The school has a good capacity to continue to improve. Children enjoy coming to school because it is a very happy, friendly and well maintained place to be. They trust adults and thrive because of the good standard of care they receive. Children attend regularly and make good progress as a result of good teaching. Although standards are high overall, children do not do as well in writing as they do in reading, mathematics and science. The school has started to rectify this, but efforts last year did not lead to enough improvement. There is further work to do in giving children challenging targets to aim for over time, and involving them in working towards reaching their goals. Standards and the quality of education for reception age children are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing throughout the school, by agreeing robust plans to do so, and by checking regularly that expected progress is being made.
- Involve children more fully in their own learning and progress by setting them clear and challenging targets linked to the National Curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school accurately evaluates children's achievement as good. From average attainment on entry to school, girls and boys of all ages make good progress, and standards are above average at the end of Years 2 and 5. Reception age children make a successful start to their education owing to skilful teaching in the mixed-age class they join. They make good progress in all areas of learning, and especially in reading. Although Year 2 assessments in reading, writing and mathematics in 2005 were below the previous three years' good results, some of the children had a lower starting point than in previous years. Children take voluntary national tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5, and the 2005 Year 5 results confirmed continued good achievement, especially in reading and science. Achievement in reading is very good throughout the school because it is well taught and because children have positive attitudes towards books. The standard of children's writing is not as high, however, because the children find it difficult to put new ideas into words. Previous action taken to raise achievement in writing did not result in sufficient improvement because the school improvement plan

was not robust enough to ensure success. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and children with particular gifts or talents, achieve well. This is because the school is determined to make best use of its staffing and accommodation in order to meet individual needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school's view of children's good personal development is justified. When children start school they quickly settle in and begin to learn. Parents are very pleased that their children enjoy school. One parent commented, 'My children come out of school happy and full of the things they have done that day'. Good attendance, good behaviour and very good relationships all contribute towards creating a purposeful and industrious atmosphere. The problematic behaviour of a few children in the past has been dealt with very successfully. Children take great delight in receiving the 'reach for the stars' awards in assemblies. They are equally pleased about other children's achievements. Children are well aware of the need for healthy eating and they understand what this means. One child explained how school meals have recently become more healthy and why. Children's good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is achieved as a result of the strong sense of belonging to a 'school community' and by thoughtful planning of the curriculum. Children develop skills that contribute towards their social and economic well-being, such as working together in teams and caring for equipment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school's evaluation of good teaching and learning is correct. The headteacher's accurate assessments of the quality of lessons lead to improvements in children's learning. Teachers work very hard to meet the needs of the wide range of ages and abilities in each class. They work closely with positive and well trained classroom assistants, making best use of all the time available for helping children to learn. Teachers manage the children's behaviour very well by setting high expectations and forging positive relationships. Teaching is lively, engaging and interesting, because teachers vary their approaches to encourage continuous learning. Standards in reading are high because it is very well taught from the earliest stages and teachers select good quality books that are likely to make children want to read more. Although there is further work to be done to improve the teaching of writing, teachers have made a good start by setting targets for children to aim for in their day-to-day writing. This good move, however, has not been extended fully into reading and mathematics, and there are times when children's work is not matched tightly to what they need to learn next. Teachers involve children in their learning in several other helpful ways, however, such as explaining the purposes of lessons and careful marking of their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school is correct in its assessment that the curriculum is good. It is broad, balanced, enriching and meets requirements for children of all ages and abilities, so that they make good progress. The specific needs of reception age children, who are taught alongside much older children, are met well as a result of thoughtful planning and improving resources. The school extends the curriculum well, through visits, visitors, extra-curricular activities, and especially as a result of links with other local schools. The recent introduction of a brief, daily physical activity as a whole school after lunch is very popular, and it gets the afternoon session off to a very positive start. Staff work hard to plan a good curriculum for children in mixed age classes. Having three groups of children in the mornings and two classes in the afternoons, for example, makes learning in English and mathematics particularly effective. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is integrated into the curriculum carefully. Health education, for example, features strongly as an integral part of work in science, and children in Year 5 learn about drugs' misuse. For such a small school, Thurstonland Endowed does well to broaden children's horizons so well, and it is always seeking new ways to continue to do so.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Although the standard of care, guidance and support is good, the school thinks that it is outstanding. The reason for the difference is that teachers do not always take fullest advantage of children's keen desire to learn by setting them challenging targets to aim for over time. Teachers keep careful records of children's progress, however, and use these to pinpoint which children need extra help or harder work. Children are very well cared for, and there are good procedures for health and safety. Child protection procedures are good, and children say that they feel safe in school and always have an adult to turn to for help.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The inspection confirms the school's assessment of good leadership and management. Although the headteacher has only been at the school for a year, she has done very well to maintain high standards, as well as securing very good improvements to the buildings. She knows everyone well and has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. She leads by example, which sets a positive tone for staff, several being fairly new to the school. The school runs smoothly as a result of a high standard of office and financial management. The weakness in children's writing, and the lack of the children's involvement in their own learning and progress over time, have been identified, and things have already started to improve. The previous school improvement plan, however, was not robust enough for governors to check progress and to satisfy themselves that spending represented best value for

money. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have taken part in a lot of training recently and are now ready to work with the headteacher in building on the school's obvious strengths, and to see how they can help it to keep moving forward. The school has a good capacity to improve in the future.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I would like to thank you for making me feel so welcome in your school and for answering all my questions so sensibly. I enjoyed talking to you and joining in your lessons and assembly. I think that there are a lot of good things happening in your school.

I agree that Thurstonland Endowed is a good school because:

- you enjoy coming to school and work hard in lessons
- Mrs Martin, the teachers and all the other adults want you to do well at school
- your reading is very good and you love books
- you get along very well together and your behaviour is good
- the school and outside areas are very well looked after.

I have asked Mrs Martin and the school governors to make your school even better by:

- helping you to improve your writing so that you include more interesting ideas in it
- giving you targets to aim for so that you know more about how you need to improve your work and feel pleased when you have worked hard to reach them.

I hope that you will carry on enjoying learning, and that you are able to have the new playground that you told me you would like.