



# Throston Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 111612  
**LEA** Hartlepool  
**Inspection number** 278731  
**Inspection dates** 21 March 2006 to 22 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Eric Jackson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Flint Walk
<b>School category</b>	Community		Hartlepool
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		TS26 0TJ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01429 288291
<b>Number on roll</b>	361	<b>Fax number</b>	01429 288291
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Cllr Harry Clouth
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Jean Hart

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This is a larger than average primary school. The number of children entitled to free school meals is above average. Attainment at entry to the nursery is well below average, particularly in speaking and listening. An above average number of children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Almost all the children are white British, with a very small number of Asian British children. The school has achieved a number of national awards for the quality of its work.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. This judgement matches the school's own view of its effectiveness, and that of parents and children.

Inspectors agreed with the comment from a parent that, 'the staff have a personal interest in all the children receiving the best education'. This approach is exemplary and includes every child: those from minority ethnic groups, those with learning difficulties and those who are identified as gifted or talented.

The teaching is good overall and accounts for the pupils' good overall progress. Pupils' attainment on joining the school is generally well below average for their age. The provision in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes) is effective and enables the children to make good progress. However, these children need more opportunities still to develop their speaking and listening skills. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1, although the results of Year 2 national tests are below average, particularly in writing. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2. Standards are rising and the Year 6 national test results are broadly average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good overall progress.

Provision for pupils' personal development is excellent. Their behaviour is superb, and they are exceptionally well motivated to learn. Care, support and guidance are also outstanding. The curriculum is good. Links with other organisations add to the extensive curricular enrichment activities provided. However, children have insufficient regular access to information and communication technology (ICT) resources.

The high expectations set for children's achievement stem from the headteacher's excellent leadership. She is strongly supported by other senior staff and governors, so that leadership and management are good overall. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses through sound monitoring and evaluation procedures. Value for money is good. The school has improved considerably since the last inspection, particularly in standards achieved by Year 6 pupils, and demonstrates that it has the capacity to continue to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

The school should:

- raise standards in Key Stage 1, particularly in writing
- raise standards of speaking and listening in the nursery and reception classes
- improve pupils' access to computers as a vehicle for learning.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good overall. Pupils make good overall progress from a well below average start to reach average standards at the end of Key Stage 2.

Attainment at entry to the nursery is well below average and, although it is below average at the end of the Foundation Stage, pupils have made sound overall progress. However, they could make better progress still in speaking and listening. Pupils make satisfactory overall progress in Key Stage 1. In 2005, the national test results for Year 2 were below average, particularly in writing. The results have declined steadily over the past three years, in part because of a rising proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and also because of the weakness in their writing. The school has now taken action to help those children, who find learning difficult, to make better progress by arranging for them to be taught in a smaller group in Year 3. This is having a positive effect. Indeed, all children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do well and make good progress towards their individual targets. Standards in Year 6 have risen strongly since the last inspection, when they were well below average. In the 2005 national tests, the results were average in English, mathematics and science, which represented a considerable achievement for the pupils. The small number of children from minority ethnic groups make good progress. Specific provision is also made by staff for gifted or talented children: they also progress well in their learning. The school has rightly identified speaking, listening and writing as development targets to raise standards even further.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Children's personal development and well-being are outstanding and have improved since the last inspection. Children say that school is wonderful. They feel that they learn a great deal because the lessons are very interesting. They have exceptional attitudes to their work, and all Key Stages, behave extremely well. The staff provide excellent role models, treating the children with respect; this has a strong effect on the children's respect for each other. For example, when asked to discuss ideas in class, children value each other's contribution, and know how to take turns and be helpful. The school deals firmly with unacceptable behaviour and parents feel that their concerns are swiftly and fairly dealt with. Overall, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Children have a very clear understanding of right and wrong, and develop a strong sense of themselves and others in the world. Children learn how to be safe and develop healthy lifestyles, which are recognised through the school's Healthy School award. They also make a good contribution to the school and local community. For a primary school, their preparation for the later world of work is outstanding. The school has the Basic Skills Quality Mark and very good links with local businesses, even choosing a child as 'Young Entrepreneur of the Year'. Attendance is in line with the national average.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. The high quality of relationships between staff and children leads to good concentration and excellent behaviour in lessons. The grouping of children, based securely on an accurate assessment of their prior attainment, enables teaching staff to focus effectively on children's varying needs in the core subjects. This was clearly exemplified in a Year 3/4 mathematics lesson when all pupils made excellent progress because the work was carefully planned to meet their different needs and abilities. Support staff contribute well to lessons, particularly for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, whilst teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good, staff miss opportunities to extend children's communication skills, particularly speaking and listening, through, for example, more paired and group conversation. The school has correctly identified the teaching of writing as an area for improvement in Years 1 and 2.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is enriched by visits, visitors and a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Links with local schools and colleges and the use of specialist music and sports staff add considerably to children's experience. There is an understandably strong concentration on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This has helped raise standards by Year 6 in national tests from well below average at the last inspection to average levels now. Some progress has been made in response to national guidance to widen the children's learning opportunities. For example, the Year 3 children are to fly to Belfast in March to visit children in two linked schools there. Currently, ICT facilities are mainly confined to the ICT suite. This restricts children's access to valuable learning resources as part of their general work. However, the use of interactive whiteboards has been useful in helping to broaden curriculum delivery.

Throughout the school, new arrangements to provide time for teachers to perform non-teaching tasks work well. During these sessions, children enjoy a wide range of sporting, musical, arts and ICT activities led by part-time teachers and support staff. During the inspection, for example, Year 6 children produced high quality leather-backed notebooks and hand-printed presentation bags of sweets. Parents rightly feel that, 'the staff genuinely care about the children's learning'.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

The school's arrangements for its pupils' care, guidance and support are excellent, based on thorough, well-understood systems and a safe, supportive environment. There are simple rules that are followed by all, reinforced by consistently applied and

very effective rewards and sanctions. Children's positive attitudes are encouraged at all times. The warm-up Brain Gym sessions for all children and staff at the beginning of the day wake everyone up with a smile. These ensure that staff and children are keen and ready to work. Assessment of learning supports children well: they say that they know clearly what they have to do to improve. Progress and provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, for those from minority ethnic groups, and those identified as gifted or talented are good. Parents of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities praise the school for its outstanding care of their children.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good overall. Discrimination is not tolerated and all children are fully included in the work of the school. The headteacher leads the school exceptionally well, ensuring that all staff and children strive for the highest standards. She is strongly supported by her active and influential senior staff, and by the chair of governors. The whole staff work well together as a team to the benefit of the children, evidenced by the good progress made. The staff are also vigilant in their care, and young children in the nursery and reception classes settle well. Staff also monitor and evaluate their own and others' work well. This is leading to more accurate whole-school self-evaluation and more confident planning for improvement. Parents' and children's views are sought and acted upon. For example, the school is currently in discussion with parents about the best position for new fencing. Recent improvements in teaching and learning have been effected with help from the local authority's support team, welcomed by the school. The school's partnerships with parents, other schools and local businesses are generally good and contribute well to children's learning.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	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	1	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	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	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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

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24 March 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for welcoming Mrs Lock, Mrs Richardson and me when we visited your school recently.

You told us that you really like your school and that the staff make your lessons very interesting to help you learn; both your parents and the inspectors agree. Throston Primary is a good school with some outstanding features. You are a strong part of that. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour during the inspection and how hard you try with your work. Add that to the good teaching, and that's why you make such good progress. We also feel that the way the staff care for and support you is outstandingly good. I was impressed by the printed bags and leather books made by Year 6 – I'll bet those who get them as presents will be pleased.

To try to develop yours into an excellent school we have asked the staff to focus on some things to help you to reach higher standards. We would like the nursery and reception staff to encourage the younger children to talk more to them, to one another, and to their parents – they should like that! For those of you in Years 1 and 2, we have asked the staff to concentrate more on your writing. We also think, as some of you said, that you need more computers and other ICT resources in classes or near where you are working, as well as in the ICT suite. That might cost a lot of money, though, and take some time.

With best wishes for your future

Yours sincerely

Eric Jackson (Lead Inspector)