



Thursby Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112123
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289181
Inspection dates 7–8 February 2007
Reporting inspector Mary Sewell

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Road
School category	Community		Thursby, Carlisle
Age range of pupils	4–11		Cumbria, CA5 6PN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01228 607801
Number on roll (school)	92	Fax number	01228 607801
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Helen Honeyman
		Headteacher	Mrs Rita Yeowart
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	7–8 February 2007	289181

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Thursby is a small rural school serving a village community and outlying homes. The majority of pupils are White British but a very small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below average. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception Year is average. The school has the Activemark Award for physical education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Thursby is a good school with outstanding features and a strong capacity to improve. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and say, 'Thursby is a fabulous school; the children come on in leaps and bounds.'

The whole ethos of this welcoming school is of a sharing and caring community in which everybody, be it pupil or staff, is truly valued. This starts with effective governors who ensure that all aspects of life in school are good or better. Governors are overwhelmingly supportive of the dynamic headteacher and her focus on empowering all who work here. The recent development of the role of subject leaders has resulted in a rigorous and robust system of monitoring. Teachers are reflective, self critical and constantly strive for improvement. The school's own evaluation is good, but errs too much on the side of caution.

Pupils love coming to school. Their attendance is high and their behaviour and attitudes to work are excellent. They understand the nature of democracy well for their age and through the school council have already initiated considerable improvements.

The school is very much a part of the neighbouring community. Contacts with the Church are strong and the school readily shares its sports facilities with local families. Pupils show responsibility in the community by recycling and working in the environment. Pupils are also well prepared to lead active, healthy and safe lifestyles. As a result of these positive attitudes and consistently good teaching, pupils make good progress and attain above average standards in Year 6. However, sometimes teachers provide insufficiently challenging work for higher attaining pupils. Provision for the Foundation Stage is good. Very young children gain confidence quickly because they are taught in a good atmosphere conducive to good learning by teachers who are well focussed to meet individual learning needs. As a result, pupils of all abilities make good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all teachers' provide challenging work for higher attaining pupils

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards. Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage and most reach the expected levels by the end of the Reception Class. They build on this learning effectively in the infant and junior years because teaching is good and pupils are keen to learn. The 2005 national test results represent a blip in attainment caused by pupils joining the school in Years 5 or 6. These children did not do as well as those who joined the school as infants. Results in 2006 were average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. The school has met its challenging targets and pupils now in Years 2 and 6 are well on track to meet their targets in 2007.

Throughout the school, pupils are particularly confident in investigative science and some excellent work was seen on investigating springs. The school has correctly focussed on writing and standards are improving. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress. However, a few higher attaining pupils failed to achieve as well as well as they should.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils love coming to school and this is well evidenced in their above average attendance and their very positive attitudes to learning.

Behaviour is excellent. No pupil has ever been excluded for inappropriate behaviour and pupils insist there is no bullying or 'naughty' behaviour in class. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They respond really well to their lessons on personal, social and health education [PSHE]. By the time they leave, they are confident and articulate and know about the benefits of healthy lifestyles and the importance of regular exercise.

They use their growing confidence and leadership skills very well to make a good contribution to the school community. This is well evidenced at playtime when older pupils help to ensure that younger children are well cared for. The very impressive school council are aware of the process of democracy and insist that their views are listened to.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, in particular the way 'school reaches the surrounding community'. A particularly good example of this was the Christmas production in which every single pupil took part. Such activity creates a highly positive family atmosphere, which embraces the wider community. It is this link that helps pupils develop well their awareness of the world of work and other environmental issues.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Pupils learn well because teachers make lessons interesting and exciting. Teachers know their pupils very well and as a result plan effectively to build upon each pupil's previous knowledge. They do this particularly well in numeracy; pupils are taught in groups specifically matched to their needs rather than in age related groups. The focus on developing the pupils' self esteem is a strength which encourages enthusiasm and independence. As a result, pupils successfully rise to the challenge of thinking for themselves and working responsibly in pairs and groups. Marking is clear and accurate and is understood by the pupils. In the best lessons, pupils assess their own work and discuss what they

need to do to improve. Teachers ensure that pupils benefit from a wide range of stimulating learning experiences. Teaching assistants are very effective and have a clear role to play. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported with additional sessions, which enable them to make similar progress to their peers. However, teachers' planning does not always have sufficient focus on providing work to challenge higher attaining pupils. Foundation Stage planning is very thorough; teacher and teaching assistant ensure that children make good progress through the good quality of the provision.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Thursby provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which meets the needs of all learners, including the children in Reception. The staff have already moved towards tailoring the curriculum to meet individual pupils' needs. Although a strong emphasis is given to the basic skills, pupils are encouraged to develop their own talents and interests. This is well evidenced in the school's high quality drama, music, dance, art and physical education. The curriculum is enhanced by the huge uptake of a wide range of extra curricular activities and visits, which extend pupils' understanding and enjoyment of their work. As a result, pupils obtain places to compete in national and county competitions; for example, in chess and gymnastics. The school also makes excellent use of a range of opportunities offered by the community. Every effort is made to develop pupils' awareness that they live in a multicultural society with diverse faiths. There is good coverage of health and safety issues, particularly through whole school initiatives such as Heart Start, which contributes to pupils' personal development. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved considerably since the last inspection and as a result standards have risen. However, the unsatisfactory accommodation is impacting on some areas of learning; for example there is no library for research.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well met as a result of the support they receive in their classes, the extra support of a specialist part time teacher and where needed by other professional support agencies. Care is very good because the school has strong links with home, the extended family and the village community. Parents are also overwhelmingly appreciative that pupils have 'home cooked' lunches, milk and fruit at playtimes, and easy access to water. There is a very good system of academic guidance, which all teachers use effectively and all pupils understand. The assessment system is understood and appreciated by parents who share an understanding of their child's progress. Child Protection and safeguarding procedures are in place and meet current requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. As a result, standards are rising. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is responsible for the community's continued confidence and support for the school over the last two years. Governors know the school well and are its enthusiastic advocates. The governors say that they are now well informed and have become challenging partners in managing the school. The headteacher is supported by very effective, dedicated and committed teachers, and teaching assistants. As a result of the headteacher's clear leadership, morale is high and every member of staff knows what is expected of them. The roles of subject coordinators are an emerging strength because they have begun to observe teaching, which enables good practice to be shared. Equality of opportunity is strongly promoted and this is a school in which every pupil and adult really matters.

The school has been a little self effacing in judging its own strengths and has underestimated its teaching and leadership input. According to the governors and the teachers, this is due to the high expectations they all have of each other. There is an appropriate range of good quality resources to support pupils' learning and the school provides good value for money.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thursby Primary School

School Road

Thursby

Carlisle

Cumbria

CA5 6PN

7th February 2007

Dear Pupils,

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school this week.

I would particularly like to thank those of you on the school council who took some time at lunchtime to come and speak to me. You were keen to tell me you knew how to stay safe and healthy and that many of you took up extra sports and games after school. You especially wanted me to know about your involvement with things outside the school such as embroidery with the Thursby Craft club.

I was very impressed by how very smart you all looked in your uniforms and how exceptionally well you behaved. You have developed some excellent methods of working and work together with your partners to solve more difficult problems. I was very pleased to see how well you cared for each other, especially during playtime when the older pupils looked after the younger ones and made sure they were involved in the games.

Your headteacher and governors lead your school well. They know all of you very well and make the correct decisions about what the school needs to do to help you do even better. All the staff who work at the school give you excellent care and help you reach your targets. I found that the teaching you receive is consistently good and as a result you make good progress and leave school with test results that are above average.

I have asked your teachers to do just one thing. This is to make sure that all of you have work that challenges you to reach the highest level you can.

I will always remember my visit to your school and that lovely 'home-cooked' lunch. I wish you all the very best for the future,

Yours sincerely,

Mary Sewell

[Lead Inspector]