



Thornton Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119148
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291336
Inspection date 23 January 2007
Reporting inspector Delia Hiscock

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Heys Street
School category	Community		Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancashire
Age range of pupils	4-11		FY5 4JP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01253 821128
Number on roll (school)	139	Fax number	01253 821128
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Eric Winston
		Headteacher	Mrs Stephanie Reeves
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2001		

Age group 4-11	Inspection date 23 January 2007	Inspection number 291336
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves a seaside population, which has some social and economic disadvantage. Over a third of pupils are eligible for free school meals and a similar proportion has learning difficulties and disabilities. The attainment of children when they start school is well below that expected for their age, especially the speaking and listening skills of some boys. The proportion of pupils joining the school at other than the usual times is quite high in some year groups, but there has been a two-year falling roll because of fewer births in the local area. A new Children's Centre is planned on the school site and planning is well underway. The school has gained an award for healthy lifestyles and for Investors in People.

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 that provides good value for money. This is because the school meets the needs of its pupils and most pupils achieve well having made good progress overall. Pupils like their school; they enjoy learning, say that they feel valued and that any problems that come up are dealt with quickly. However, their attendance is below the national average. The exceptionally good ethos in school is recognised and commented on by parents and visitors. The very caring staff ensure that pupils' personal development and well-being are central to their work. The school fulfils its aim to nurture its pupils towards their potential and makes effective links with outside agencies to support its work. In addition, the whole staff team work relentlessly to make a positive difference to pupils' lives and skills. With mainly good teaching and plenty of support, the pupils become motivated to work hard. Above all, many of them develop into responsible and helpful individuals who know how to make a contribution to their community.

The children receive a good start in their personal, social and emotional development and although standards are assessed as well below average by the end of Reception and Year 2, the teachers' assessments do not fully reflect the good progress made improving the boys speaking and listening skills and the achievements of the less able pupils. There is scope, however, to use assessment more accurately to improve the pace of learning for the more able pupils. Throughout Key Stage 2, the pupils make good progress, especially the high proportion of pupils with significant learning difficulties, those new to the school and those learning English as an additional language. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards have risen to average, but the more able pupils could still achieve even more in their writing, particularly in subjects other than English.

Leadership and management are good. The new headteacher is successfully building upon the strengths and success of the school through perceptive evaluation and planning for improvement. Supported by knowledgeable governance this strong team provides the school with a good capacity to improve. They work closely together and align their work to implement the good curriculum, which features a good range of activities to enrich the pupils' experiences. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has recently improved substantially so pupils are rapidly gaining the skills they need. In the breakfast and after school clubs, pupils enjoy the activities with others in the locality to make a positive start to the day. Parents too are very pleased with the welcome they receive and feel that their views are heeded as the school continues to move forward.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attendance
- Further develop the accuracy of and use of teacher assessment to ensure that activities consistently challenge the more able pupils in Reception and Key Stage 1.
- Develop the quality of writing of the more able pupils across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards in 2006 were average at the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well.

Pupils start in the Reception with well below average levels of development. They make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. The boys who started school with weak speaking and listening skills and the less able pupils also make good progress. This continues into Key Stage 1 and although standards are assessed as well below average, teachers' assessments do not fully reflect these elements of good progress. More able pupils make satisfactory progress because assessment information is not always used well enough to plan the more challenging activities that these pupils need.

The vast majority of the pupils attain the standards expected for their age by the end of Year 6. In the 2006 national tests, standards in English and mathematics were average and in science, above average. Most pupils make good progress, particularly the high proportion of pupils with significant learning difficulties, those who have joined the school late and those learning English as an additional language. Often these pupils make big strides forward as a result of effective additional teaching and this ensured that the school met its targets for performance. In some instances, the challenge set for more able pupils in writing does not always move these pupils on quickly enough.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well being of pupils are good, as is the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Harmony and calm are features of the exceptionally good ethos in the school that nurtures very good relationships between pupils and with staff. In response to being asked, one child, who started at the school late in the junior years, said that she loves the school 'because at playtime, everyone comes out laughing and smiling'. She is right that the pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to each other, and that behaviour is good in lessons too. This is because learning is interesting and pupils feel that adults are there to help and keep them safe. They say that any instances of misbehaviour are dealt with immediately. This is of particular importance to older members of the school council who pursue anything that causes a child to be upset or worried. Pupils' have a clear understanding of what it is to lead a healthy lifestyle, and are aware of potential dangers that they might encounter in their lives. Good achievement in their basic skills for the workplace is tempered by adequate but improving skills for ICT. There are good plans to improve attendance from below average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good quality of teaching and learning enables pupils to make good progress overall. There is copious and detailed planning, very good relationships, good use of new technology and effective support from well trained teaching assistants who lead the many additional teaching sessions that quicken learning for the pupils who require more support. Above all, lessons are engaging and encourage all the pupils to contribute and question. Activities are very well matched to the high expectations the teachers have of the lower attaining pupils and the pupils themselves are clear what they have learned. Sometimes, and in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 in particular, the pace is adequate rather than good. This is because although the basic skills that pupils need are correctly identified the activities planned do not always move more able pupils on quickly enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, including provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. It meets requirements and features a good range of additional and extra-curricular activities that widen and enrich the pupils' experiences. Pupils are taught well to know how to live healthy lives and how to keep safe and there are good links with the local community to help the pupils to understand how they too can make a contribution as responsible citizens. Good emphasis on English, mathematics and science now includes ICT, and meets the needs of most pupils, including those who have additional needs. Though provision ensures that pupils' acquire the skills they need for the workplace, that provided for the ablest pupils is adequate rather than good, for example in the opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects. Provision for the Foundation Stage is adequate with good transition activities as children work alongside Year 1 where effective practical work engages the interest of boys and girls equally.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. This is because the quality of pastoral care for pupils is exceptionally good in supporting those who face difficulties in their lives, and/or have additional or different needs in learning. All the procedures are in place for safeguarding pupils including child protection. The school has good procedures in place for tracking progress and this information is generally used well to organise support to boost the progress of many pupils. It is not used as productively to support pupils who can learn quickly. Some older pupils know what they need to do to improve their work, but are not told what they might work towards to achieve higher standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The new headteacher has ensured that the momentum of development has continued smoothly and with a renewed direction that builds well on the strengths and successes of the school. Her perceptive start has begun to utilise the existing expertise within school to take it forward. The next stages of development are clearly defined in succinct and measurable plans for the future that include preparations for the proposed pre-school and additional care facilities. Evaluation is accurate, includes everyone, and changes made as a result are sharply focused on tackling aspects of provision needed to bring benefits to learning, including that for the ablest pupils. This is the result of effective monitoring and analysis of teaching and of pupils' progress that highlights the need to develop the accuracy and use of assessment. Subject leaders manage their responsibilities well for the most part, and as a team they have embraced recent developments and proved that their shared approaches are successful. For example, in making lessons better suited to the learning needs of boys.

Above all, leadership's emphasis on the personal development and well-being of its pupils is very successful in dismantling any barriers to progress that pupils have in their lives. This is achieved through an exceptionally determined approach to meet the needs of the school community and families too. Governance is strong, very committed and wise in the challenge and support it provides.

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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	3
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	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

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?	2

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	3
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

Thornton Primary School

Heys Street

Thornton-Cleveleys

Lancashire

FY5 4JP

23 January 2007

Dear Pupils

Hello again. Thank you very much for being really helpful when I visited your school. It was very interesting listening to what you had to say. I was impressed by the way that you all felt that the school and your classmates care about each other and behave well. I agree and I think that the work of the school council helps you to feel safe too. That's very mature of them.

I am writing this letter to tell you that I found your school to be a good one – just like you said when I chatted with you in the playground. All of the teachers and classroom helpers try really hard to make sure that you are well looked after when you are in school and help you all do well in your work, including those of you who are new to the school.

Can you guess what else I found? When I asked what would make things better in the school – nobody could think of anything! If you don't think of things to make things better, things don't get better! Have a go. Perhaps the school council could arrange for you to make a list of all the good things in the school (and what could make it better!)

I think to make your school even better:

- you all need to come to school every single day
- those of you who perhaps learn things quickly can work even faster
- some of you could improve your writing by practising it more in all subjects.

I can already see that you know how to keep safe and healthy and that some of you choose healthy food to eat. Keep up your good work, look after each other, and good luck for the future!

Yours sincerely

Mrs Delia Hiscock

School Inspector