

Throckley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108446
Local Authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	335398
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Brian Blake HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Helen Richardson
Headteacher	Mr Colin Lofthouse
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector and one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons, including an extended observation in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Discussions were held with the chair and two other representatives of the interim executive board/shadow governing body, headteacher, deputy headteachers, teachers and other support staff who work in the school. The inspectors also spoke with the pupils in lessons and around the school. The inspectors observed the vast majority of the school's work, and also looked at the most recent school-initiated parents' questionnaire. A range of school documentation was read, including details relating to safeguarding procedures in place at the school.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the issues raised in the previous inspection in May 2008, when the school was placed in special measures. These were:

- improve the progress of pupils in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2, by improving the quality of teaching and learning
- improve attendance with a particular focus on the high proportion of children who take authorised absence
- improve communication with, and involvement of, parents, carers and the community
- improve the leadership of the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 2 and the core subjects
- improve the capacity of the governing body to evaluate the work of the school and hold it to account.

Information about the school

Throckley Primary School takes pupils from three to eleven years of age. The school is smaller than an average size primary school. The percentage of pupils entitled to take free school meals is above the national average, as is the percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The school holds a number of awards for its work including: Investing in Children, Healthy Schools Award, Activemark, Artsmark and the International School Award-Foundation Level.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

When the school was last inspected in May 2008, it was placed in special measures. Since that time, a well formulated plan of action has been implemented and good progress has been achieved in three of the identified issues, with satisfactory progress in the remaining two. The success of these actions is related directly to the significantly improved capacity of senior managers, including the interim executive board/shadow governing body, to address weaknesses and bring about necessary improvements. As a result, Throckley Community Primary School now offers a satisfactory and improving standard of education for its pupils.

Although standards are low, they are improving; this also includes children's attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, standards in mathematics are currently much lower than the other two core areas of English and science, although even in science, improvements are still needed. Robust challenge to inadequate teaching from senior managers, together with targeted support, has brought teaching up to a consistently solid level of satisfactory, with some that is good. This overall improvement in teaching has resulted in pupils with improved attention and concentration in lessons, and good standards of behaviour. All of these factors are helping the pupils to enjoy attending school more often, and to participate more regularly in the many activities on offer. There is, however, some inconsistency in the marking of pupils' work, and a lack of clear objectives in teachers' planning of what all pupils will learn in lessons.

The overall quality of care, guidance and support provided by the staff is good. A caring atmosphere creates enjoyment and a feeling of safety by the pupils because they know that there is always someone to whom they can turn, if the need arises. Better links with parents are also contributing to this overall improvement in these aspects.

The school has good capacity to bring about further improvements and to raise standards to a level that is more commensurate with the abilities and potential shown by the pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards at Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics and science by July 2010, and maintain these improvements in succeeding years.
- Raise the overall profile of teaching from satisfactory to good by:
- -regular marking of all pupils' work as an aid to them knowing how well they have

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done and what they need to do improve further

- improving the quality of teachers' planning to identify more clearly what pupils are expected to learn
 - providing suitable learning challenges to all ability groups in all lessons.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The most recent unvalidated data for Key Stage 2 show that overall attainment is low, as it has been since the previous inspection. The school's English improvement strategy, implemented after last year's national tests, has brought about a marked improvement in performance in 2009. However, pupils' performance in mathematics has declined and is now much lower than seen in the other two core subjects, both of which are broadly average. Pupils' performance in science remains lower than in English. Attainment at Key Stage 1 also declined marginally in 2009, but remains broadly average overall. The school remains very alert to these issues and has implemented an improvement strategy in mathematics to help raise standards. The early indications are that slow improvements are being made across the school, but it is too early to evaluate fully the impact of this school-based initiative. Pupils' progress overall, is satisfactory, including those with identified special needs and/or disabilities. The overwhelming majority of pupils are making satisfactory gains in acquiring key literacy and numeracy skills, in preparation for the next stage of their education. In lessons, pupils generally show good levels of concentration and positive attitudes to the different learning activities set by teachers. Good individual and group work are seen. These characteristics, which are common to most lessons, contribute to the good standard of behaviour seen across the school.

Pupils feel safe and secure in school. Generally, pupils show good awareness and consideration for others. The school's focus on improving the general well-being of its pupils is characterised in its promotion of healthy eating and the many opportunities for some form of regular exercise. The school has received recognition for its work in both these areas by achieving the Healthy Schools Award and Activemark. Since the previous inspection, when attendance was judged to be low, the school has made good overall progress in tackling persistent and/or long-term absence from school. Attendance is now broadly average, with a decreasing number of pupils whose attendance is below acceptable levels.

Pupils know the difference between right and wrong, and show good social skills when working in whole-class or group work in lessons. Pupils behave kindly towards each other, with older pupils enjoying their experiences of looking after the younger children in school. Pupils' understanding of different cultures and others' beliefs is satisfactory.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some that is good. This represents a marked improvement from the previous inspection, when inadequate teaching was a significant reason for the below average standards seen at that time. Teaching is now engaging the pupils more purposefully in a range of planned activities, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Lessons are planned satisfactorily, and teachers are able to follow a range of learning tasks to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning. However, the emphasis on what will be taught, as opposed to what pupils will learn, limits the potential for more accurate lesson evaluation as an aid to ongoing assessment of pupils' progress. Pupils are keen learners and are able to work well as individuals or in small groups. In whole-class plenary sessions, the overwhelming majority of pupils listen carefully to questions and most are able to respond appropriately. This 'question and answer' strategy is occasionally less effective when the teacher asks questions in such a way that only those quickest in the class have time to respond before another question is posed. This limits the potential of some pupils to answer questions because they take a little longer to formulate their answers.

The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs is satisfactory, but developing to include more creative aspects; this is helping to increase the levels of enjoyment shown by the pupils. There is a good range of curricular visits and visitors to the school, both of which are enhancing the range of learning opportunities for the pupils. The excellent

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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display work around the school shows how much the school has developed its broader approach to curriculum delivery.

The effectiveness of the care, guidance and support provided to the pupils is good overall. Teachers are supporting the pupils well in lessons, including teaching assistants working with pupils requiring additional learning support. The effective close-working relationships between adults and pupils have contributed significantly to the good quality behaviour seen and the improvement in overall attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are good, with senior managers showing drive and ambition for the school to improve and move out of special measures. Senior managers and members of the interim executive board/shadow governing body have shown good capacity to address successfully the issues raised in the previous inspection report; they know clearly the strengths and areas for future improvement in the school. Good progress has been made in three of the five areas for improvement, and satisfactory progress in the remaining two; improvement strategies, overall, remain clear and well focused. There is a clear and well used structure for evaluating and monitoring the quality of provision, including teaching. Self-evaluation is accurate. The composition and structure of the senior leadership team have developed well since the previous inspection. Roles and responsibilities are now clearly defined, and link well with identified actions in the school's improvement plan. The school provides a learning environment, within which the contributions and place of all associated with the school are recognised and valued. In this sense, the school implicitly embraces equality of opportunity. Safeguarding is satisfactory overall.

Governance is good. The interim executive board, now working alongside a shadow governing body, has worked effectively with senior managers and the local authority in addressing the key issues for improvement. Clear and effective strategies have been put in place to hold the school to account for its progress against the five issues. The move to a shadow governing body is moving on at a pace, and plans are well formulated for a final transfer to a full governing body from 1 April 2010. The school has established good relationships with the parents, and has made good overall progress in improving communication with them since the previous inspection. Weekly newsletters and improved attendance at teacher/parents' evenings evidence well these improved links.

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These improvements are also at the centre of the school's greater awareness and provision for developing community cohesion. Local links with other schools, especially the local secondary school, are strong, and there is an increasing awareness of the need to develop further links with other local, national and global communities. The school has a good understanding of the religious, ethnic and cultural factors that define its immediate community, and it is making satisfactory attempts to develop the pupils' greater understanding of life outside of school through the study of other cultures and religions within the curriculum. A recent example was the work with Chinese lanterns that followed on from school-based work with a visiting Chinese artist.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Outcomes have improved steadily since the previous inspection, although creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world remain the weakest areas of learning. Staff know every child extremely well, and they respect their uniqueness when planning activities across the six areas of learning. The environment is stimulating and creative, which enables the children to work independently with much to interest and engage them. The quality of care, guidance and support is good and, as a result of positive relationships and high expectations, behaviour is excellent. Leadership and management, overall, are satisfactory, and the staff work well together as a team to promote the children's learning. Teaching is often good, particularly in phonics, which is a strength of the early years unit. Ongoing assessment and observation of the children's progress are now systematically in place and are helping to directly inform future

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planning and provision.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The most recent parents' survey carried out by the school was in November, with a response rate of just over 30%. The overwhelming majority of parents are generally positive about the school. A small but significant minority disagreed with two statements on the questionnaire; namely, that their child is well prepared for moving on to the next school, and that they (the parents) understood the procedures for dealing with complaints.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2002 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Throckley Primary School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE15 9DY

You will know that I recently visited Throckley, along with another inspector, to find out how well you are doing at school. This was my fourth visit since your school was placed in special measures in May 2008, and during each of these visits I have been impressed with the improvements being made. During this last visit, inspectors again watched you and your teachers in lessons, and chatted to you about your work and life at school. We were impressed with the overall improvements across the school and have judged that Throckley no longer requires these special measures to help it improve.

I should like to highlight some of the important things that we found out about the school. These include the following:

- attainment at the end of Year 6 is low but improving, especially in English. We are asking the school to continue improving upon these standards, particularly in mathematics and science
- you say that you feel safe in school and that you enjoy your lessons
- your behaviour is good, and attendance for almost all of you is what we would expect to see
- you have a good understanding of what it means to be healthy, and many of you take advantage of additional school activities to participate in sporting exercise
- teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now consistently satisfactory, with some that is good. However, we are asking teachers to improve the following:
 - the marking of your books so that you know, very clearly, how you can make your work even better
 - that they identify in their planning exactly what they are expecting you to learn, and
 - that work in lessons challenges all of you to achieve the best of which you are capable

all the staff and governors associated with the school have worked hard to help it improve, and all are still very keen to ensure that all of you do even better in the future.

We are extremely grateful to all of you for making the inspection so enjoyable. We would encourage you to continue working hard and to attend school regularly.

We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Brian Blake

Her Majesty's Inspector

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