

# Thornley Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114146
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	357487
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 September 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ann Wallis

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	154
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr James Scurfield
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jennifer Pearce
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Cooper's Terrace Thornley Durham DH6 3DZ
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<b>Fax number</b>	01429 820280
<b>Email address</b>	thornley@durhamlearning.net

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 12 lessons and saw eight teachers teach. They held meetings with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, pupils' progress data and other documentation. They analysed 56 questionnaires from parents and carers and also those from pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The effectiveness of the school's efforts to improve attendance.
- How effective the school's efforts to improve the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good and from good to outstanding are.
- To what extent the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is restricted by difficulties with accommodation.
- Whether pupils' behaviour and their contribution to the school and wider community are strengths of the school.

## Information about the school

This is a below-average-sized primary school. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. A below average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and a similar proportion speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average but those with a statement of special educational needs is well below average. The school has gained Activemark, Eco Schools, International Schools, Healthy Schools and Basic Skills awards.

The privately run on-site provision for childcare, 'Early Learners Thornley, is subject to a separate inspection and will receive its own inspection report.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Thornley Primary is a good school where pupils make good progress from Year 1 to Year 6 and achieve well. Areas identified for improvement at the last inspection have been addressed successfully. For example, attainment of the more-able pupils has risen and attendance, although still average, has improved. Leaders and managers are firmly focused on raising standards. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well and evaluates the success of its work accurately. Consequently, it has good capacity to improve further.

Pupils' attainment has been broadly average overall for the last three years. More-able pupils attained particularly well in English in the 2010 tests. Pupils achieve well because in most lessons teaching is good so pupils are interested in their work, behave well and are keen to succeed. The good and occasionally outstanding lessons, particularly in Years 5 and 6, are briskly paced and challenging so pupils make good progress and really enjoy learning. The quality of teachers' questioning in some lessons is very good and extends pupils' understanding well. However, this good practice has yet to be shared across the school. The quality of teaching does vary across the school and in some lessons the pace of learning is slower, expectations of pupils are not high enough and teachers talk for too long so some pupils lose interest in their work.

A strength of the school is its good curriculum. It has been organised into 'Key Tasks' which make it both relevant and exciting for pupils and gives them good opportunities to practise their literacy skills across a range of subjects. The school has a very caring ethos and both pupils and staff feel that they are listened to and that their views are valued. Consequently, morale is high and most pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils feel safe, know how to stay fit and healthy and most are polite and respectful to staff, visitors and each other. Pupils are keen to contribute to their community both in and out of school. They speak enthusiastically of the responsibilities they have as monitors and buddies and how they 'get things done' as members of the active school council. Both pupils' behaviour and their contribution to the community are strengths of the school. Children settle quickly and happily into the Early Years Foundation Stage where they make satisfactory progress. Despite the limitations of the size and layout of the accommodation, adults try to make the environment as stimulating as possible in order to engage and interest children. However, some areas within the classroom are not used as well as they might be, particularly to develop children's mathematical understanding. Assessment data are not used sufficiently regularly and effectively to plan the next steps in children's learning.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - ensuring pupils in all classes are fully challenged and that the pace of learning is fast enough
  - sharing best practice, especially that in high-quality questioning of pupils, more widely across the school
  - reducing the amount of time pupils spend listening and give them more time to work independently.
  - Further develop the Early Years Foundation Stage provision by:
    - ensuring that the learning environment is used fully to develop children's mathematical understanding
    - making the best use of the limited accommodation and the resources available to ensure all areas of the classroom are used effectively
    - making more regular and better use of assessment data to identify the next steps in children's learning.

## ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Most pupils enjoy learning and achieve well. In lessons they concentrate, are keen to answer questions and work hard. In a Year 6 lesson pupils were engrossed in their learning as they wrote very imaginative endings for a novel. Work in pupils' books and the schools own tracking data confirmed the good progress that all groups of pupils are making and that they are on track to reach their targets this year. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve as well as their peers because they receive constructive individual help from teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils enter Year 1 with attainment which is below that expected for their age and progress well to reach broadly average standards when they leave Year 6. In tests in 2010, Year 6 pupils attained best in English where an above average number of pupils achieved the higher levels.

Pupils clearly understand right from wrong and have a good awareness of communities and cultures which are different to their own. Their work on projects such as the 'Feel Good Café' supports their good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Most pupils attend school regularly. The school's efforts to raise attendance have been successful and attendance is now average. They share ideas and information sensibly, enjoy working as part of a team and have satisfactory basic skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology. Hence, they have a sound preparation for the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

### How effective is the provision?

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning are good, although this does vary across the school. Strengths in teaching are the very perceptive and challenging questioning that some teachers use to elicit thoughtful answers from pupils and develop their deeper understanding of the subject. This good practice is not shared as fully as it might be across the school. In some lessons teaching is not as effective because the pace of the lesson is too slow, work is not challenging enough for all pupils and there are not enough opportunities for pupils to work independently.

The curriculum is innovative and well matched to pupils needs. An investigative approach to a wide range of diverse topics such as producing a pantomime, learning circus skills and researching the history of the local area have all added to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Pupils speak enthusiastically about after-school clubs they go to and visits they have been on, all of which are enriching the curriculum well.

In this caring school, pupils, particularly those whose circumstances have made them most vulnerable, are well supported. Good use is made of outside agencies to ensure those who need specialist help are given this in a timely and sensitive way. Good transition arrangements have ensured that pupils have settled smoothly into their new classes at the beginning of this school year.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<sup>1</sup> 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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<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>2</b>
	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Governors, leaders and managers know the school well and monitor its work carefully. Clear priorities for improvement have been identified which include sharing good practice in teaching in order to further raise the quality of teaching and learning both in the Early Years Foundation Stage and across the school. Governance is good. The governing body is involved in observing the work of the school and determining priorities for improvement. The school communicates well with parents and has good links with a range of partners. Close links with other schools through a local partnership both enhance the curriculum and help to provide good professional development for staff. The school tracks the progress of all groups of pupils carefully and ensures that all have equal opportunities to achieve well. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Staff are suitably trained and understand the child protection and risk assessment policies and procedures the school has in place. The school promotes community cohesion particularly well in the local community and can demonstrate the positive impact of this work. It also has good links with a school overseas and is developing further links with a school in a contrasting region of Britain.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

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<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>
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## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle well into the Nursery class where key workers ensure there is a safe, calm and caring atmosphere. The good role models they provide mean that children generally behave well and show concern and cooperation for each other. They confidently access the activities they can choose for themselves, both indoors and outdoors.

Most children enter Nursery with skills at levels that are below those expected for their age; some children have communication skills which are well below expectations. They make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning so that when they leave the Reception class, children reach below age-related expectations. Standards in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy are lower than in other areas of learning. Good progress is made in creative development because staff confidently support the development of children's skills in this area.

Staff make satisfactory efforts to maximise the use of limited space and resources. However, the number of children allowed to choose each activity is often unlimited and some classroom areas quickly become overcrowded so there are insufficient resources for children to develop and extend their learning effectively. There are not enough prompts, such as number lines, to help children make better progress in their mathematical understanding.

Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Staff generally use information from observations to plan activities which support children's individual interests and help them make progress. However, the identification of gaps in children's learning is not sharp enough and assessment data are not used sufficiently regularly and effectively to identify what they need to learn next. Although adults provide good support to develop pupils' language skills, they miss opportunities to help develop their independence and to provide them with challenge.

Sound leadership has ensured that relationships with external agencies and with parents and carers have been enhanced and this has a positive impact on children's progress. Procedures to ensure children's welfare meet statutory requirements. Provision has been adapted to meet the needs of the children, for example the development of the block area.

### *These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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



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## **Views of parents and carers**

Most parents and carers are very pleased with the education the school provides. They particularly value the good care, guidance and support their children receive. Inspectors entirely endorse these views. A few parents and carers had concerns that the school did not keep them well-enough informed about the topics children were going to study and about their child's progress and achievements. Inspectors found the schools communication with parents and carers to be good.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Thornley Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 154 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	73	14	25	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	73	14	25	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	66	15	27	4	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	64	17	30	2	4	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	37	66	18	32	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	66	15	27	4	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	70	16	29	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	37	66	17	30	0	0	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	66	16	29	2	4	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	63	17	30	4	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	68	15	27	3	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	39	70	12	21	4	7	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	75	13	23	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



27 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thornley Primary School, Durham, DH6 3DZ

Thank you so much for making us welcome when we came to inspect your school last week. A particular thank you to those of you who took time to talk with us about all the things you do and enjoy at school. Please thank your parents and carers for filling in our questionnaire.

These are some of the things we have said about your school in our report.

¿ Thornley is a good school where you make good progress and reach average standards.

¿ You are taught well, learn about interesting topics and are well cared for, guided and supported.

¿ You behave well, are polite and care for each other.

¿ Your school is well led and managed.

This is what we have asked your school to do now.

Make lessons even better by:

- making sure work is challenging and all lessons are fast paced
- giving you more time to work on your own
- asking you interesting and challenging questions in all lessons.

Further improve the education of the children in the Nursery and Reception classes by:

- helping you to better understand numbers
- making better use of all the spaces available for learning
- checking your progress regularly and using this information to plan what you should learn next.

You can help your school improve even further by attending school regularly and working with your teachers to achieve the very best you can.

Yours sincerely

Ann Wallis

Lead inspector

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