



# Thornaby-on-Tees Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 111669  
**LEA** Stockton-on-Tees  
**Inspection number** 278744  
**Inspection dates** 14 February 2006 to 15 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Eric Jackson

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Baysdale Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Thornaby
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Stockton-on-Tees, TS17 9DB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 763060
<b>Number on roll</b>	346	<b>Fax number</b>	01642 751002
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Maureen Leonard
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 October 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jane Sutcliffe

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 14 February 2006 - 15 February 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 278744
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is a larger-than-average and popular primary, with 357 children on roll, aged 3 to 11, including 52 who attend part-time in the nursery. Below average numbers of children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and none learn English as an additional language. A small number of children are of Indian or mixed heritage. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is average. Attainment at entry is broadly average. Fewer children than average leave or join the school during the school year. A new headteacher was appointed to the school in January 2006.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school's view of itself as satisfactory is confirmed by the inspection. It has declined from being very effective at its previous inspection. There are good features, but also important areas for development, recognised in recent analyses by the experienced new headteacher and the local authority. The school gives satisfactory value for money. Significant change is underway, and there is a satisfactory and growing capacity to improve. School self-evaluation has not been rigorous enough until recently, and some staff do not yet lead their areas of responsibility effectively enough.

Provision and achievement are good in the nursery and satisfactory in reception. Provision and achievement in Years 1 and 2 have improved and are good, ensuring high standards. Provision in Years 3 to 6 has declined to be satisfactory. Standards were above average overall in 2005 for Year 6, but far fewer children than expected reached above average levels in English and mathematics. Progress was uneven for this cohort of children after Year 2, and below average compared to similar schools. Progress is now satisfactory in Years 3 to 6, though still uneven. Children in Year 6 are on track to reach the moderate targets set in national tests. Children behave well, and relationships at all levels are good. They enjoy their work, and the school is strongly supported by most parents. There are examples of good teaching and learning across the school, most often in the nursery and Years 1 and 2. However, lessons are often too slow, and tasks do not always challenge or motivate children enough, especially potential high attainers.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that children make consistent progress from year to year, and build on their prior attainment so as to achieve higher standards by Year 6.
- Involve all staff, particularly those with management responsibilities, in:
- rigorously monitoring and evaluating the progress children make and the quality of education they receive;
- setting and achieving challenging targets for progress through effective improvement planning in consultation with all stakeholders.
- Make sure that, in Years 3 to 6, planning consistently meets the needs of all learners, and that children:
- understand more clearly how to improve;
- become more independent in their learning.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Attainment on entry to the nursery is broadly average, falling slightly year by year. Children achieve well in the nursery and satisfactorily in reception. An average number reach expected levels by the end of reception, although the range of achievement is wide. Children make good progress in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2 in 2005, they reached significantly above average

levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is a good improvement since the last inspection, and is maintained by the current Year 2. By the end of Year 6 in 2005, standards in English were broadly average, although a significant number who were expected to reach higher levels did not. In mathematics, standards were slightly above average, but again, some children achieved lower levels than expected. Standards in science were above average. However, compared to progress in similar schools nationally, children's progress here was below average between Years 2 and 6. Taken over three years, this comparison is broadly average. Boys made less progress than girls in 2005. Targets set for higher achievement were missed significantly in English and mathematics. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities generally achieve satisfactorily, as do those from minority ethnic groups. Currently, Year 6 children are making satisfactory progress and on track to achieve the moderately challenging targets set by the school.

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

### **Grade: 3**

This aspect is satisfactory, which is lower than the school judges. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, although good in its social and moral aspects. Cultural development is too narrow. Attendance is average. From the nursery to Year 2, children's personal development is good and welcomed by parents. It is satisfactory from Years 3 to 6. Children behave well and are friendly to visitors. They enjoy school, have good attitudes to their work and develop good relationships with the staff. The school's satisfactory emphasis on safe and healthy lifestyles benefits children, although older children would rightly like more physical education. Children help willingly round the school, performing tasks sensibly. The headteacher has recently surveyed children's views and acted swiftly on their request for a School Council. As children progress through the school, they say that they find their work less demanding and have little homework. They are unsure about what levels they are achieving or how progress targets influence their work. One parent wrote, 'I don't know if my child is expected to achieve Level 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 in the SATs.'

Older children have little independence in lessons, and have few opportunities to work in cooperative groups to solve problems. However, they learn satisfactorily the basic skills that equip them for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Relationships are good, and support good behaviour even when teaching is uninspiring. Teachers generally have a secure knowledge of the curriculum. Lessons are consistently good in the nursery and in Years 1 and 2, and occasionally good in other classes. For example, all the Year 2 children took great delight in writing imaginative stories about an invisible lion in school! Where

teaching is good, plans take children's needs fully into account. Whole-class sessions are focused and interesting, only lasting as long as needed to set the scene, or summarise learning. In these lessons, support staff are deployed well, often to give good help to children with learning difficulties. Too often, however, lessons are slow paced, particularly in the juniors, and the staff put too little pressure on children to stretch themselves, especially the higher attainers. This partly explains children's variable progress and achievement across the school. Another factor is the inconsistent use of marking and assessment information. Where children make good progress, the staff use this information well to plan new learning. However, some useful information is not analysed to check whether children are achieving well enough, or to set appropriately challenging targets for their further progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

Curricular provision is satisfactory. It meets requirements. Recent analysis showed that time for physical education was too short, and this is being remedied. The school emphasises basic literacy and numeracy skills appropriately, and provides a range of enrichment activities to enliven learning. For example, visitors dressed as Vikings or Victorians bring history to life. Teachers plan the curriculum largely from the first round of national guidance. Newer guidance has not yet been used well enough to review the curriculum and make it more relevant and interesting by linking ideas across subjects. Provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. Where local authority support is available, children's individual learning plans are precise and effective in promoting progress. However, some of the plans generated by the school are too vague. There is satisfactory provision for out-of-school activities, including music at lunchtime.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Staff work hard to ensure that children are well cared for and supported. Children (and parents) say that bullying is not tolerated and that they can discuss any problems with a trusted adult. Child-protection and risk-assessment procedures are effective, and a health-and-safety audit is currently in hand. Systems for tracking and supporting children's progress and setting learning targets are satisfactory, but inconsistent across the school. Induction procedures for nursery and reception children are good, as are arrangements to help Year 6 transfer smoothly to secondary school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school is orderly and runs smoothly; most parents are very satisfied with it. It provides a sound education, and adequately includes all children in its work. It gives satisfactory value for money.

Whilst there have been improvements for younger children since the last inspection, the slow recent progress of older children has not been checked. The recently appointed headteacher has acted swiftly to identify aspects of the school's provision that require improvement. Her analysis accords with the local authority's view and with inspection findings. She has set out an effective action plan to make immediate progress in line with her clear and progressive vision for school development. This rightly focuses on quality and standards for the children. The staff appear to have welcomed the proposed changes, and seem keen to take on revised responsibilities for the improved monitoring and evaluation of the school's work. Those with management responsibilities have not previously been fully involved at this level. A significant group of parents feel that the school has not effectively consulted them in the past about its development and they welcome the changed atmosphere. Governors also feel that they did not know the school well enough in the past to be 'critical friends'. They have begun an ambitious training programme in order to fulfil their roles more effectively. This is already enabling them to work more closely with the new headteacher, staff and parents.

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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>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	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>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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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Mrs Jane Sutcliffe

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TS17 9DB

17 February 2006

Dear Children

Thank you all for welcoming Mrs Bennett, Mr Rodger and me when we visited your school in February. You know that we came to check whether your school helps you to learn as well as you can. Your friendliness and willingness to talk to us helped us a great deal in making our decisions.

You told us that you enjoy what you have to do at Thornaby CE Primary, and that you like the staff. It was clear to us that you enjoy school, because you behave well and take a full part in what you are asked to do. Your parents also told us how popular the school is, and how difficult it is to get places there. I would be careful if I were you, because Year 2 have an invisible lion in their classroom. I fell over it! No wonder Year 2 do so well – I'll bet the lion (and the staff) see to that.

Some of the older children told us that some of the work is 'pretty easy'. We have asked the staff to make sure that your work stretches you, so that you have to think and work hard to solve problems and make and do things. We have also asked them to let you and your parents know more clearly what you have achieved already, and what you need to do to achieve even more. This will involve them in checking regularly where you are up to, and planning new ways to help you make more progress. You can help them (and yourselves) by trying to do your best, and working to reach your learning targets.

With best wishes for your futures.

Yours sincerely

Eric Jackson (Lead Inspector)

Maureen Bennett and Iain Rodger (Additional Inspectors).