

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

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111669
Local Authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	325426
Inspection dates	21–22 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Jackie Barnes

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	358
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Maureen Leonard
Headteacher	Mrs Elaine Hughes-Narborough
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Baysdale Road Thornaby Stockton-on-Tees TS17 9DB
Telephone number	01642 763060
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average, popular primary school located in a mixed residential area. Most pupils live close to the school but a significant minority travel a longer distance. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Most families have at least one parent in employment. An average proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school has an above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision includes Nursery and Reception classes, with the Nursery located in an adjacent building. The headteacher was appointed in January 2009.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It has some good features. It has the support of parents, who rightly appreciate the care and support their children receive. 'The staff regularly show a genuine interest in the children', is a typical comment. Pupils' personal development is good. They are well behaved, enjoy school and show great enthusiasm for learning. They are knowledgeable about how to stay safe and healthy, and say they trust staff to look after them and so they feel safe in school. They take good care of each other, and are especially protective of younger pupils. Bullying is very rare and dealt with quickly. Links with the local church, collective worship and religious education lessons ensure that pupils have an understanding of the various faiths and cultures found locally. There are imminent plans to develop community cohesion further through links with global communities, particularly Africa, and a study for older pupils involves the use of the Internet to research the customs, faiths and ethnicities of many races. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Children settle quickly when they start school and make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Standards are above average by Year 6 and achievement is satisfactory. Although progress overall is satisfactory it is not consistent throughout school and standards vary from year to year. There are some anomalies in the quality and use of assessment data and the quality of teaching is variable. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In some lessons seen during the inspection teaching was good or outstanding. In these lessons, all pupils were stimulated and challenged in a way that enabled them to learn quickly and with great enjoyment whatever their ability. In the less successful lessons, the pace of learning was slower, the lessons were less well planned and not enough guidance was given to help each pupil improve. The curriculum is satisfactory with recent changes providing more active and interesting activities which involve the pupils well, and a good range of well attended after-school activities. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught separately at present, with few planned links to develop and practise these skills in other subjects.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, working with the governing body and local authority, has a clear view of the school's strengths and where developments are needed. The shared vision for improvement is captured in a useful development plan. However, the arrangements for senior leaders to promote high quality teaching and learning and to monitor closely the progress pupils make are not consistently effective. As a consequence, there is too much variability in pupils' learning and progress, and this affects the standards they attain. The local authority is providing useful support to improve the situation, with good leadership from the headteacher. Successful improvements have been made since the last inspection in several areas of the school's work, but not yet in ensuring all subject leaders have sufficient impact on their areas of responsibility.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. When children start in the Nursery, overall they have skills that are in line with what is typical for children of this age. They make good progress in their learning so that by the time they start in Year 1 most children are achieving above average standards in all areas of learning. Children settle confidently and enjoy the freedom to play inside and outside as they wish for much of their time in the Nursery and Reception classes. Staff are skilled in responding to their interests and encourage discussion

about matters of immediate interest, for example, the discovery of several snails outside generated much hilarity and investigation. Small group activities are used well to encourage children to learn the basic skills of letter recognition and the associated sounds, helped by illustrations using whiteboard technology. Learning and development are good. Planning has become more consistent between the Nursery and Reception classes. Arrangements to assess children's progress are good, although there are two or three systems running in parallel that would benefit from streamlining. Children are well cared for. They are happy, and become confident and cooperative in their play. Leadership and management are good. Regular team meetings and shared planning means there is effective continuity between the two buildings and plans are in hand to improve provision in the near future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching in all classes leads to more consistently good progress.
- Use accurate and consistent assessment in all year groups and across the ability range to plan learning effectively.
- Provide opportunities for all senior managers to monitor and be accountable for the work of the school, in particular the progress made by pupils.

A small proportion of schools whose overall performance is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are above average by Year 6. As a result of good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage many children start Year 1 having reached above average standards. The school has correctly identified that the accuracy of assessment data is not yet consistent throughout school. However, the assessment information for the current Year 6 pupils indicates standards are above average which represents satisfactory progress from their results in Year 2. This reflects inspection findings from pupils' work and lesson observations.

The national test results for Year 6 in 2008 were significantly above average overall, with results in English and mathematics considerably exceeding those anticipated by the school and indicating good progress for those pupils from their Year 2 results. In 2008 the school's national assessment results for Year 2 were broadly average overall, which was a dip from previous years, with mathematics the strongest subject and writing the weakest. Pupils in the current Year 2 are on target to attain better standards overall, although writing remains the weakest aspect. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effectively supported in lessons and achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy coming to school and show good attitudes in class. They usually listen carefully and cooperate quickly. Attendance is average overall with many pupils attending well. They are eager to take on responsibilities when they are given the opportunity, for example, serving on the school council and acting as buddies for younger children. Behaviour is good. Bullying is rare and quickly resolved. There have been

no recent exclusions. Healthy eating and regular exercise feature strongly in the lives of the majority. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They benefit from studies of several faiths apart from their own. Links with the local library, places of worship, rural schools in Norfolk, a school in Africa and the shoebox appeal enable them to understand that life and beliefs are different in other parts of the United Kingdom and abroad. Pupils have a good understanding of their role in protecting the environment because of the priority given to recycling and composting and their understanding of why this is important. Pupils are developing the qualities that will enable them to contribute effectively to the community, the next stage in their education and eventually to the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning, although satisfactory overall, vary considerably from lesson to lesson. In all lessons relationships are good which encourages pupils to contribute their ideas and views in class discussions. Careful attention is paid to the preparation of resources which helps lessons to run smoothly, and there is a clear sequence of teaching points. When teaching and learning are most effective, such as in an outstanding lesson where Year 6 used computer programmes to create films of their underwater explorations on a recent visit to the nearby coast, pupils are highly motivated because their work is interesting, the level of challenge is well matched to the different abilities, and staff have good knowledge of the subject. Where learning was less successful, the planning of teaching and tasks was not sufficiently well matched to the pupils' abilities and assessment was too rarely used to guide pupils towards improvement. Pupils throughout the school respond well to teachers' high expectations for behaviour. Occasionally there is a little restlessness when teaching does not engage the pupils sufficiently. Skilled classroom assistants support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well and make a good contribution to their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. Pupils enjoy learning, especially the range of visits that are currently taking place, for example celebrating their own version of a baptism in the local church. A recently introduced scheme to link subjects together into themes such as 'Home and Away' and 'Rise of the Robots' is in place, but its impact on applying basic skills is inconsistent throughout school. This is because literacy and numeracy lessons are planned separately and arrangements to check how those skills can be incorporated into the recently introduced thematic approach are limited. There are good enrichment opportunities offering a broad range of additional activities with a successful emphasis on promoting healthy lifestyles, such as cookery and gardening clubs. Pupils develop good skills in information and communication technology (ICT) because they have access to school sites at home and regular lessons in school. All pupils learn to speak French, work in partnership with local schools and develop links with schools in a contrasting United Kingdom locality. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are well supported in and out of classes. More able pupils generally have their needs met in the ability groups arranged to teach literacy and numeracy sessions.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and support provided for pupils are good. Staff are particularly successful in encouraging pupils to enjoy school and to be confident in their work and play. Parents are very appreciative of the care their children receive. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early, and make good progress as result of the effective support provided by identified staff and external specialists. Arrangements for safeguarding are robust and meet requirements. Pupils' safety is supported by comprehensive risk assessments, and they say staff take any of their personal concerns seriously and respond quickly. Pupils' academic guidance is satisfactory. The system to track their progress throughout the year is detailed but is sometimes unreliable in the assessment judgements made. However, the quality of teachers' marking has improved significantly and is generally providing useful day-to-day advice on what pupils need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Inspection findings confirm the school's self-evaluation that leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently appointed headteacher provides good leadership and, together with the local authority and governing body, has accurately identified the school's development needs. A useful plan for improvement is in place. Substantial improvements have been made since the last inspection, especially in the pupils' achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage, in the provision for their personal development throughout the school, and in the communication with parents. However, limitations in the effectiveness of the arrangements for leadership and management remain. Despite successful examples, not all staff with leadership responsibilities are sufficiently involved in the monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress, and the promotion of higher standards. Accountability has too low a priority. The local authority has provided well targeted support and guidance to enhance staff's skills, especially in improving the quality of marking and checking that assessment judgements are accurate. This has had some success, but without robust monitoring by all subject leaders there remain anomalies in the assessment of pupils' progress and standards through school. As a consequence there is not always clarity about whether every pupil is making the best progress they can, and the variability in the standards attained in different year groups remains too wide. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are very supportive of the school and are aware of its strengths and those areas which need to be improved. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The work the pupils undertake demonstrates an awareness of the three strands of faith, ethnicity and culture. The school provides satisfactory value for money and has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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Annex A

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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

26 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thornaby-on-Tees Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School,
Stockton-on-Tees, TS17 9DB

Thank you for making me and my colleagues so welcome when we inspected your school. We judged that your school provides you with a satisfactory quality of education. You helped us to see how well you behave, and take care of each other. You clearly enjoy school and are keen to learn. Your parents are very pleased with you. The staff take good care of you, and those of you who need extra help with your learning get good support in lessons. You know how to keep safe and healthy, and you have good personal skills which will help you in what you do in the future.

The standards you attain are above average by Year 6, and you make satisfactory progress. Your progress varies a little too much from year-to-year. There are several reasons for this variability. One is that the teaching in some lessons is better than in others and another is that assessments are not always quite accurate enough to plan your learning.

Your headteacher and governors work hard to ensure that you have a satisfactory education. As some of you could be even more successful in your work, we have asked your school to help you by doing three things.

- Make sure that the teaching in every year group helps you make the best progress you can.
- Check that the assessment of your work and progress are accurate so that your teachers can plan activities at the right level for everyone.
- Help the leadership team of teachers to monitor how well the school is doing, and check that you are all making good progress.

I know you will help by continuing to be keen to learn and to behave well.

Very best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Jackie Barnes

Lead inspector