

Thompson Primary School

School Road, Thompson, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 1PY

Inspection dates

28–29 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Since the last inspection, leaders have ensured that teaching has improved. As a result, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are challenged well to make good progress in most lessons. The teaching of writing is particularly good.
- Children in the early years make good progress thanks to stimulating, well-taught activities.
- Most pupils show very positive attitudes to learning, feel very safe and behave well.
- Across the school, disadvantaged pupils are making good progress, so that the gaps between their attainment and that of their peers, both in school and nationally, are closing.
- Leaders at all levels are highly committed to the well-being of the pupils and constantly seek to improve the education that the school provides.
- Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching and make a significant contribution to driving improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, pupils' attitudes to learning in some years are not yet as highly positive as they are in others.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is not quite as rapid as it is in reading and writing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in six lessons, all of which were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked closely at pupils' written work for the current school year. He listened to some pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, the schools senior and subject leaders, and a parent. The inspector held a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 19 responses to a staff questionnaire, the 27 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and several letters from parents and carers.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documents, including plans for improvement and records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching. He also considered notes of visits from the local authority Education Challenge Partner, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the systems used to check pupils' progress.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Thompson Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. There is a small group of pupils of Gypsy/Roma heritage.
- At about one in every six, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is also about one in every six pupils, but this is below the national average. This additional funding supports pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- There were too few pupils leaving Year 6 in 2014 to make the usual judgement about whether the school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There are four classes. In the Reception class all children attend full time. The other three classes include pupils from two year groups.
- The school offers an after-school care club which was included in this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching in all year groups fully engages pupils, so that their attitudes to learning are consistently positive.
- Monitor pupils' progress more rigorously to ensure that pupils' achievement in mathematics is as good as it is in reading and writing.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders and governors communicate high expectations of staff and pupils. Most aspects of the school, in particular pupils' achievement, have shown significant improvement. All adults are committed to improving pupils' opportunities, ensuring that they are well prepared for later education. Leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate, and the improvement plan includes appropriate priorities.
- The leadership of teaching is effective, so pupils experience mostly good teaching, which challenges them to learn rapidly. Senior leaders tackle weaker teaching promptly in order to secure rapid improvement. Their evaluations of teaching and learning are accurate. Their management of teachers' performance is effective, using evidence from different sources to evaluate the impact of teaching on learning. Teachers' individual targets are closely linked to what pupils should achieve.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic and effective. They have contributed strongly to significant improvements in pupils' achievement, particularly in literacy. They receive regular training and support and are confident in holding staff accountable for pupils' progress.
- Funding to support the progress of disadvantaged pupils has a positive impact on their achievement and personal development. These pupils are making equally as good progress as others and the gap in attainment is narrowing steadily.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Consequently, pupils are kept safe and behave well. British values are promoted well. Outside speakers have talked to pupils about the democratic system and Parliament. There are close links with local historians. Pupils have studied the Breckland woodland heritage to learn about the local environment and how the needs of wildlife and the farming community are reconciled. They recently studied the theme of Remembrance, with a project on the First World War planned for November 2015.
- Leaders have reviewed, alongside other local schools, the way subjects are taught to reflect recent changes to the National Curriculum. Many pupils attend extra-curricular clubs. New arrangements for measuring pupils' progress and attainment have been implemented. These are now being evaluated to ensure that they provide the depth of information the school requires.
- Leaders have made good use of the primary school sport funding. The number of pupils participating in competitions has increased. Additional training is extending and improving the teachers' knowledge of how to develop the pupils' skills through a wider range of activities, such as dance and gymnastics.
- Parents are very supportive of the school, which sits at the heart of its village community. Relationships are positive. Links with other schools are well developed. This has, for example, facilitated a common approach to supporting disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- The local authority has provided the level of support, and frequency of visits, consistent with the schools past status as a 'requiring improvement' school. This has been effective in helping the school to improve teaching and pupils' achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have become increasingly effective. They undertake relevant training and understand how the school's performance compares with that of schools nationally. Governors confidently challenge leaders and help to move the school forward. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of teaching well. Governors ensure that pay increases and promotion reflect individual teachers' effectiveness, and are eager to ensure that all teaching is of an equally high standard. Governors ensure the school promotes tolerance, provides equality of opportunity and tackles potential discrimination.
 - Governors understand the potential impact of additional funding on gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others. They ensure, along with senior leaders, that statutory duties are met,

including those for the safeguarding of pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Many demonstrate outstandingly positive attitudes to learning. Those in Years 1 and 2 in particular approach their activities with great excitement, successfully motivated by high quality teaching. Year 6 pupils work extremely hard to produce written work to the highest standard they can and demonstrate a real love for learning. However, in classes where pupils are not fully engaged by learning they occasionally lose concentration.
- Pupils contribute well to the smooth running of the school through taking on tasks. All Year 6 pupils have monitor duties, working as play leaders or buddies to the youngest children.
- The school's meticulous records show that there are occasional behavioural incidents. However, exclusions are rare and pupils' behaviour is consistently well managed. Pupils require little supervision.
- Attendance has improved and is broadly average. Robust systems ensure that pupils attend frequently.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The site is secure and risk assessments are thorough. Staff are fully checked prior to appointment.
- Pupils feel safe in school, certain that adults will support them should issues arise.
- They learn about road safety and safe cycling. The school helps pupils to protect themselves from the dangers of internet abuse and cyber-bullying.
- Pupils are aware that bullying may arise in different forms. They feel that it is not an issue in school, but that staff would respond promptly if problems were to arise.
- Children who stay on after school are cared for well in the after-school club.

The quality of teaching is good

- Rising standards and faster progress reflect the improvements in teaching, particularly of reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' written work are typically high.
- Pupils are highly responsive to imaginatively planned material and stimulating presentation. Established teachers provide challenging work and are particularly skilled in the teaching of reading and writing. This was evident in a successful 'Drama4writing' lesson where pupils were investigating the use of personification in a poem. In pairs, they attempted to bring two line sections of the poem alive in a brief presentation. They did so with flair and engagement, responding confidently to the challenge.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught well. Their progress is carefully monitored. Thorough planning ensures that they receive good help and guidance from learning support staff.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) is effective, with additional support provided for pupils who have not made sufficiently rapid progress. The teaching of reading ensures that pupils have appropriate technical skills and systematically extend their understanding of language.
- The school uses effective systems to check and improve pupils' progress. Teachers' marking of writing, in particular, is thorough and indicates precisely what pupils have to do next. These strengths in marking are not always as evident in other subjects, but marking in Years 3 and 4 is particularly thorough. Targets are

used well to guide pupils' progress. Older pupils respond well to teachers' comments through marking.

- Homework contributes effectively to pupils' learning. Tasks are carefully planned and marked regularly.
- Occasionally, pupils are not fully engaged by the work they are given, so lose concentration and make less progress as a result.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Reception children achieve well, and good teaching ensures that this positive momentum in learning is sustained through Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is generally average or higher, although in these often small year groups the results of any individual pupil can significantly distort the picture of the school's performance, so comparisons against national averages are not always statistically valid.
- A broadly average proportion of pupils attained the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2014.
- There were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2014 to judge their attainment compared to national averages. Nonetheless, standards by the end of Year 6 have risen steadily over recent years, with sustained improvements in pupils' achievement. Tracking data and pupils' work confirm that current Year 6 pupils are working at levels above national expectations for their age. The upward trend in attainment at Year 6 is on track to be sustained in 2015. Writing has been a recent focus.
- School data show that in 2013/14, pupils across the school made mostly good progress. Improvements in progress were also evident in the year groups where it has, historically, been weaker. The proportion of pupils exceeding nationally expected progress has increased considerably. Consequently, standards are rising. However, pupils' progress in Years 2 and 6 in mathematics is not quite as rapid as it is in reading and writing.
- The most able pupils are well supported. A well-above-average proportion attain at the higher Level 5 or above. Pupils have the opportunity, if appropriate, to tackle challenging Level 6 work.
- There were too few disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 in 2014 to comment on their attainment without risk of identifying individuals. Across the school, however, the progress of these pupils is now good and the gaps between their attainment and other pupils are closing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well. Some of these pupils have very complex physical and cognitive needs. They make good progress in line with other groups.
- The few Gypsy/Roma pupils attend very regularly and the majority make similar progress to the other pupils.

The early years provision is good

- Most children enter Reception with skills slightly below those typical for their age. Some have limited pre-school experience. Effective leadership and good teaching ensure that children make good progress so that, on leaving Reception, they are well prepared for entry to Year 1.
- Children are effectively challenged to achieve well, including those who have special educational needs. There is an appropriate focus on developing basic skills in literacy and number. Children select resources with confidence and sustain concentration well. They have positive attitudes to learning.
- Children have regular access to the outdoor learning area. During the inspection, children were absorbed

by the current 'bird-watching' theme, enthusiastically identifying different bird songs in the outdoor 'hide'. Such activities contribute to children's growing knowledge of the world and promote their personal development well.

- Staff ensure that children behave well and that they are safe and well looked after. Good links are established with parents, through initial home visits. Subsequently, parents have a positive involvement with the school and their child's learning.
- Staff know individual children well. Their detailed checks and observations provide accurate information about children's progress. They maintain thorough records of children's development.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120857
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	453581

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Trussell
Headteacher	Joanne Weight
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2013
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