



Thorpe Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107832
LEA Leeds
Inspection number 277848
Inspection dates 7 November 2005 to 8 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Jane Hughes CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Dolphin Lane
School category	Community		Thorpe
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF3 3DG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0113 2146317
Number on roll	156	Fax number	0113 282 9248
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs M Daniels
Date of previous inspection	24 January 2000	Headteacher	Mrs E Kus

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

In a socially disadvantaged area, this small school has almost double the national average of pupils entitled to free school meals and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with a minority just starting to learn English. Children join with well below average skills. With 20% of pupils joining or leaving partway through the school year, mobility is high. Planned refurbishments to the four buildings have been postponed. The school participates in a Primary Leadership Programme.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that provides good value for money. Stimulating teaching and enticing activities in the Early Years Unit (nursery and Reception) capture children's imaginations. They blossom from a low starting point, particularly in their personal and social development. Consistently strong teaching in all year groups ensures pupils look forward to school, are keen to learn and behave very well. Assessment information is not yet fine tuned enough to deliver strong enough challenges for some pupils. There is a rich curriculum where art enhances pupils' understanding of the world. Provision for information and communications technology has improved considerably since the last inspection when it was judged unsatisfactory. The strong ethos of care is a direct result of the vision of the headteacher. Pupils flourish under the nurturing care, guidance and support of teachers and mentors. Pupils who risk disaffection become successful learners. The school encourages all pupils to come to school regularly and on time and they are getting better at this. Pupils adopt increasingly healthy lifestyles.

The school is well led and managed although the governing body does not monitor well enough its health and safety policies. There is accurate self-evaluation of the school's performance. Staff and pupils work in difficult circumstances in cramped, run down accommodation that has a negative effect on teachers' work and pupils' learning. Staff and governors have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to continue the improvements achieved since the last inspection. The school has good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

Focus on:

- seeking a sharper focus in the use of available data to support planning, set targets and monitor the progress of different groups of pupils
- continuing already effective efforts to improve pupils' attendance
- ensuring governors meet their statutory obligations with regard to health and safety
- implementing the school buildings' refurbishment once local authority problems with developers are resolved.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. Children make good progress through the Early Years Unit and achieve some of the goals set for children of that age but standards are mainly well below average by the time they enter Year 1. Some pupils struggle with difficult personal circumstances despite the school's best efforts. By the end of Year 2, although standards reached

by most children are below average, all pupils make good progress. In 2005, standards in reading and mathematics rose, with more children attaining the higher levels.

Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2. Levels attained in English, mathematics and science are near the national average. The weakest element of pupils' work remains their writing. The school has identified and is addressing this through improved teacher assessments and targeted support for pupils. The school admits a far higher than average proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and, inevitably, this lowers test results. The school is rightly proud of the support it offers to vulnerable pupils. Effective support from classroom assistants and mentors enables pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress throughout the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. When they arrive, children require support and encouragement to become increasingly self-confident. They respond well to sensitive staff interventions and are soon at ease, choosing their own lunch and chatting happily about their 'playdough dolls'. Pupils enjoy learning and listen carefully to teachers. They behave very well in lessons. Older pupils are stoic as they endure cramped conditions. Lunchtimes are sociable and a testament to pupils' sheer goodwill as they eat hot dinners at their desks.

Generosity of spirit characterises the whole school community and creates a cheery learning environment. Impressive artworks grace the walls. Pupils view seriously their responsibilities as school councillors and monitors. They respond with compassion to charitable appeals and in the way they help children cope daily with particular problems. They have a good understanding of their local culture and an increasing realisation of what it means to live in a diverse modern Britain.

Pupils understand the benefits of healthy eating and an active lifestyle. They learn how to take care of themselves and accept responsibility for their own well-being. Pupils understand teamwork is often desirable and are well set to build for a productive future beyond school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspectors judge teaching and learning as good, as does the school. Lessons are planned well to meet pupils' diverse needs. As a result, standards have improved since the last inspection. The school is rightly focusing on improving pupils' writing skills.

Pupils respond well to teachers' consistent expectations so that little time is wasted in managing unsatisfactory behaviour. Most lessons are fun and pupils enjoy learning. Changes in activity help to maintain their interest in the best lessons. Very occasionally,

the momentum of pupils' learning slows when time is not used well. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, learn equally well. Teachers and classroom assistants are skilled at providing sensitive individual support and matching work well to pupils' needs. However, the same expert use of assessment is not yet in place to challenge and support those with particular gifts and talents.

Teachers cope well with unsatisfactory accommodation and lack of suitable storage. Nevertheless, restrictions are placed on possible activities and ways of working, particularly in classrooms used by older pupils. The ways in which they can learn are restricted at times because teachers do not have the physical space to accommodate certain activities such as elements of art and crafts.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and provides well for all pupils. Statutory requirements are met. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their awareness of living in a multicultural society. The recent 'One World Week' illustrates the school's commitment to racial harmony. Effective links between curriculum areas support pupils' personal development and social learning well. This approach is particularly effective in dealing with complex issues such as relationships, the resolution of conflict, and personal responsibility.

Innovative 'focus' weeks offer additional breadth to pupils' experiences. For example, pupils enjoyed practical sculpture workshops at the West Yorkshire Sculpture Park. A wide variety of visits and visitors enliven pupils' learning. A positive reminder of this work is evident in high quality art on display. There is a good range of clubs and after school activities, including some for younger children as requested by parents. Pupils particularly appreciate frequent visits to drama productions.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This aspect is good, with some outstanding features. Pupils say 'School's been a lot nicer place since we've had circle time - and it was nice before'. Pupils feel safe here. The school nurtures children's emotional health with a passionate determination led by the headteacher. Mentoring support is a reassuring presence in the turbulent lives of more vulnerable children. The 'worry box' is a comfort to pupils; they express relief that their concerns are addressed the same day. Child protection procedures are secure. There are policies to support health and safety systems but the school is unsystematic in its monitoring of some of these. Effective links with support agencies and other schools give children access to helpful guidance.

Assessment of pupils' progress is comprehensive although data is not always used well enough to support every pupil's learning. Cramped accommodation has a detrimental effect on the quality of pupils' life in school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school judges leadership and management as satisfactory but inspectors judge them as good. The headteacher has a clear and achievable vision for the school's improvement that is communicated well and shared by staff. As a result, the school provides a caring environment for learning. There is a consistent approach to promoting pupils' social learning across the school that works well. Strengths and weaknesses are identified accurately in the school's self evaluation. A focus on the quality of teaching and learning, through formal professional development and continuous informal monitoring, has led to improvement since the last inspection. Parents are full of praise for the school - 'Fantastic!' wrote one.

Staff with management responsibilities are clear as to improvements that are needed in areas of the school's work but much of their work has been too recent to have had a positive impact. Links with other schools through the Primary Leadership Programme are used well to identify good practice and to inform planning for improvement.

The school has a wealth of assessment data that is analysed well. However, it could be used even more effectively to plan work, set targets and monitor the progress of some groups of pupils.

Governors are well informed about the school's work. They set suitably challenging targets and hold it appropriately to account. In an otherwise positive picture, where the governing body supports the school well, governors do not fully meet their statutory obligations in relation to health and safety.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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

We were delighted to meet you during our recent visit to your school. Thank you so much for being so friendly and telling us all about your school.

There were so many good things to see. Here are some we liked the most.

- You behave very well and work hard which means you make good progress.
- You are getting much better at coming to school every day.
- You all listen carefully when your teachers are explaining things in lessons.
- You learn a lot about healthy eating and keeping fit.
- The school organises lots of fun activities and trips for you and we know you enjoy these very much.
- We agree with you and your parents that Mrs. Kus and all the staff take good care of you and always help you with any worries.

This is what we have asked your school to do now so it will be even better.

- Look even harder at all the information teachers collect about how well you learn so you can become even more successful learners.
- Keep making sure you come to school every day so you do not miss work.
- Be sure that the school is as safe as possible.
- Improve the school buildings as planned, so that you are more comfortable in lessons and can go to the library in winter without getting wet!

Carry on working hard and enjoying school!