



Thorpe Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110774
Local Authority PETERBOROUGH CITY OF PETERBOROUGH
Inspection number 288767
Inspection dates 11–12 October 2006
Reporting inspector John Paull

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Atherstone Avenue
School category	Community		Peterborough
Age range of pupils	4–11		Cambridgeshire PE3 9UG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01733264340
Number on roll (school)	405	Fax number	01733267135
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Nigel Darby
		Headteacher	Mr Nick Guest
Date of previous school inspection	10 September 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors over two days.

Description of the school

Thorpe is much larger than most primary schools and serves a socially and culturally mixed area. The largest ethnic groups within the school are from White British and Pakistani backgrounds. Many other groups are also represented. About half the pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is average. Children's attainment on entry is below that which is normally expected, although records indicate that it is falling, and is lower now than a few years ago.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Thorpe Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education and has some good features. A new headteacher took over at the beginning of the term of the inspection and has made an impressive start, supported well by senior staff. A review of the school's systems for checking performance has already produced a clear view of what needs to be done next. It provides a secure basis for improvement linked to increasing pupils' rates of progress. For example, the school has reviewed the procedures for assessing pupils' progress and concluded that they are many and varied and are carried out very conscientiously. However, the amount of information produced is too extensive and its effectiveness in helping to improve achievement is not consistent. Currently, standards are broadly average. However, the results of Year 6 national tests have at times fluctuated sharply from year to year, rising to above average and then dropping back again. Standards also vary between subjects, and between groups of pupils. For example, boys' writing has been identified as significantly weaker than that of girls. In the present Year 6, performance in mathematics is not as strong as in other subjects. The school has responded adequately to such variations. There are programmes to boost standards and to rectify weaknesses and, bearing pupils' starting points in mind, achievement is satisfactory. For pupils reaching the expected standards for their age, challenging yearly targets for each subject are nearly always met. This is not consistently the case for pupils predicted to reach higher than expected standards, especially in English. In literacy and numeracy lessons older pupils are taught in groups of similar ability ('sets'). Adults who support pupils in class are nearly always deployed to the lower attaining sets. This works best for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils who are at an early stage of acquiring English tend to be placed in the lower sets, because that is where extra support is available. As a result, the work that is set for them is not always at the correct level of difficulty, particularly for those who are more able. Good provision in the early years prepares children well for Year 1 and most reach the standards expected at the end of Reception. All staff at the school have worked hard to develop a good, varied curriculum. A particularly important feature is how work in Year 1 is planned to provide a very smooth transition from the Reception classes. As a result, pupils do not mark time unnecessarily whilst adjusting to new ways of learning. This provision contributes effectively towards their progress in Years 1 and 2, and standards by the end of Year 2 are broadly average. While care, support and guidance are satisfactory, aspects of personal care, including social and moral guidance, are particularly good and contribute effectively to pupils' good personal development. Pupils are very willing to explain why they enjoy school and behave very well. They show responsibility towards property and know many ways to keep safe and healthy. They acquire the knowledge and skills they need for the next stage of their education adequately.

What the school should do to improve further

- Rationalise the amount of information that is gathered about pupils' progress, so it can be used more effectively to plan their work and raise standards.
- Ensure that higher attaining pupils, including those with English as an additional language,

consistently reach the standards of which they are capable. - Review the work and deployment of adults who support pupils in class, ensuring that they are employed to meet the full range of pupils' needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Owing to good provision in the Foundation Stage, children make good progress and many reach the expected goals by the end of Reception. A good curriculum, together with sound teaching, ensure satisfactory standards and achievement by the end of Year 2. Standards are broadly average in the present Year 6. Recently, the proportion of pupils at an early stage of acquiring English, as well as the number of other first languages has risen. Senior staff have correctly identified that this factor is a contributory cause of the pattern of inconsistent standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress towards targets that are set to meet their individual needs. Higher attainers, including those with English as an additional language, do not always reach the standards of which they are capable.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is a consistently good feature. Pupils respect other people's beliefs and values. They are genuinely shocked when any behaviour falls short of a good standard. A typical comment was made by a pupil in Year 5, '...once or twice some bullies started last year, but no one liked it, and it's been stopped'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although the full range of pupils' cultural heritage is not consistently drawn upon to enhance other learning. Children's personal, social and emotional development is good in the early years. Attendance is below average. Nevertheless, the school employs a good range of methods to tackle low attendance and recently signs of improvement are evident. Pupils are well aware of the need for a healthy lifestyle and many are choosing to eat an improved range of foods on offer during break and lunchtimes. Pupils take their class and school council responsibilities seriously. A good number act as playground helpers and hear younger children read. They are also keen to organise and participate in fund raising activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage, where teachers consistently ensure that activities are well matched to all children's interests and needs. Throughout the school adults manage pupils' behaviour well and encourage pupils to have good

attitudes to work. Pupils' attainment and progress is assessed regularly. While such information is analysed conscientiously, it does not consistently result in work that meets all pupils' needs, nor does it always lead to the deployment of support staff to the best advantage. More able pupils do not always reach their targets for reading, writing and mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. In Reception, what children are offered is highly practical and a strong partnership with the on site Nursery is clearly apparent. All children, including those for whom English is an additional language, receive good opportunities in all areas of learning, with an appropriate emphasis on 'talk' and their personal development. From Year 1 onwards, the planned development of skills in all subjects of the National Curriculum is thorough and clear, although not always planned sharply enough for pupils with particular gifts and talents. Since the last inspection, good improvement has been made in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT). Links between subjects are strong and visits and visitors are used inventively to arouse pupils' interest. Art and design is promoted particularly well and pupils' work in this subject is often of high quality, as indicated in many fine displays.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides good levels of personal care for its pupils and looks after their safety well. Effective procedures are in place for child protection, the safeguarding of pupils and health and safety. Possible risks are identified and dealt with promptly. Pupils confirm that they feel very safe and well cared for. They feel that they can trust the staff with concerns or when distressed. Partnerships with parents and local agencies are constructive, so pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are served satisfactorily. More able pupils are not as well provided for and the detailed procedures for assessment are not easy for staff to manage and to use to guide their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher, ably supported by other senior leaders, has acquired a clear understanding of the school in a very short time. New ideas have been shared effectively with the school's supportive governors, and an action plan has already been produced to address weaknesses in staff deployment and to simplify monitoring procedures. These strengths indicate that the capacity to improve is good. The school's self-evaluation is sound. Monitoring undertaken to date, for example, agrees with inspectors that assessment procedures are not as efficient and effective as they might be.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

¹ Grade 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.

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

12 October 2006 Dear Children Thorpe Primary School, Atherstone Avenue, Peterborough, PE3 9UG Thank you for being so friendly when we visited your school. It was really good to have so many of you tell us that you like your school. You helped us a lot by talking to us so clearly and politely. Lots of you said that your teachers look after you well and that they are willing to listen to you about things that are important to you. We agree with you about these ideas. We believe that your work is satisfactory. Although we believe that what your school provides is satisfactory overall, we think that there are good things about it as well. Here are some good things about your school: - Nearly all of you behave well both in your classrooms and around the school. - Your new headteacher has managed to get to know you and the school very quickly. - Many of the older children are good with younger ones. For example, they enjoy helping with reading and acting as helpers in the playground. - Your teachers, teaching assistants and other adults in school care a lot about you and give you good personal advice and support. - You know a lot about how to keep healthy and to be safe. We have asked your headteacher, teachers and school governors to: - find more effective ways to gather information about your work and progress, - ensure that all those of you who can do harder work always have it set for them, - make sure that there are adults in class to help you in all the different ways that you need. I hope that you will carry on being proud of your school. Mr Guest and your teachers want to know your ideas about how to make it better, so share your thoughts, work hard and help them. Yours sincerely John William Paull (Lead inspector)