



# Thompson Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 120857  
**Local Authority** NORFOLK  
**Inspection number** 291884  
**Inspection dates** 10–11 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Godfrey Bancroft

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	School Road
<b>School category</b>	Foundation		Thompson, Thompson
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Thetford, Norfolk IP24 1PY
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01953 483271
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	87	<b>Fax number</b>	01953 483271
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Simon Long
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Joanne Weight
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 December 2001		

<b>Age group</b> 4–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 10–11 January 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 291884
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The socio-economic circumstances of the community and children's attainment when they enter the school are broadly average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and that of pupils who speak English as an additional language are very low. The percentage of pupils who have additional learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average. The school has recently been awarded 'Active Mark' for its commitment to the provision of sport and exercise activities.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The school's own evaluation suggests it is good. In fact, this is an outstanding school which has the capacity to maintain the high quality of provision in the future. In recent years standards have improved dramatically. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is outstanding and leadership and management are very effective. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is exemplary; consequently they make outstanding progress. In Years 1 to 6 pupils continue to achieve very well. They make outstanding progress and attain standards that, by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, are above average. Standards in English are very high. However, standards in science, while matching the national average, are not quite as good as those in English and mathematics, and there is scope for pupils to undertake further interesting and more independent, investigative work.

The school regards every pupil as 'special' and their personal development and well-being are exemplary. This is because the school provides pupils with outstanding care, guidance and support. Behaviour in lessons and around the school and pupils' attitudes to their learning are excellent. One pupil declared, 'Our school is brilliant. We have to work hard, but I don't mind that at all'.

Teachers are very good at ensuring that work is matched well to the full range of needs and abilities in the classes they teach. Teachers and teaching assistants provide excellent support for pupils who have additional learning difficulties or disabilities. They also ensure that pupils who are identified as gifted and talented are given work that challenges them very effectively. Teachers are outstanding at developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, which underpin the very high standards pupils attain in English. The curriculum is also outstanding and helps to ensure that the learning needs of all pupils are met very effectively. Pupils have access to an excellent range of additional activities, provided as part of the daily programme of after school care.

The enthusiastic and infectious leadership of the headteacher is the main reason why pupils achieve so well. She inspires a very effective team of teachers and teaching assistants who work closely together and are dedicated to raising standards. The governing body provides excellent support and is very knowledgeable about the work of the school. They also ensure that resources are used wisely and that the school provides very good value for money. The issues identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed successfully and the school's capacity for continued improvement is very good. Responses to the inspection questionnaire show that parents and carers are delighted with the quality of education. One parent said, 'I am particularly impressed with the way the school manages the needs of individual children who are all given the opportunity to shine'.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Focus even more closely on improving pupils' investigative work in science.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Children begin school with attainment that is close to that generally found in children of their age. During their time in the Reception class they make outstanding progress and attain standards that far exceed those expected. This pattern of outstanding progress is maintained in Years 1 to 6. Sometimes the very small number of pupils in each year has the effect of distorting the annual test results and some variations are evident between subjects. That said, at the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are currently above average. Over recent years standards in Years 3 to 6 have improved dramatically. By the end of Year 6 standards in English are very high and standards in mathematics are markedly above average. Whilst standards in science are broadly average they are behind those in English and mathematics. Pupils who have additional learning difficulties or disabilities achieve exceptionally well, as do those who the school identifies as being gifted and talented. Pupils also achieve high standards in many other subjects, such as art and design and music.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are exemplary. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exceptionally good and attendance is well above average. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are excellent and they are very caring and supportive towards each other. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The school makes a very effective contribution to pupils' spiritual development through art, music, art and design. Pupils are very aware of how to keep themselves safe. They also have a very good understanding of the importance of eating healthy foods and taking regular exercise. Pupils contribute very well to their community and are very knowledgeable about how to care for the environment. This is typified by the way they undertake their responsibilities to manage the school's environmental centre and to keep the school garden tidy and well stocked. Pupils acquire the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) very well. These skills will help ensure that their future economic well-being should be very secure.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching and learning are outstanding and meet the needs of the full range of ages and abilities in each class very well. Teaching reflects the strong partnership forged between teachers and an extraordinarily talented group of teaching assistants that enables pupils of different ages to be taught in groups very effectively. During the inspection a significant amount of outstanding teaching was observed. When this

occurred teachers ensured that pupils were involved fully in setting targets for their learning and in evaluating the progress they had made. Because of this pupils have a very good understanding of their progress and of what they need to do to improve. Pupils approach all aspects of their learning thoughtfully. They are very capable and independent learners. Throughout the school teachers make very skilful use of questions to challenge pupils and to extend their thinking. This is part of the school's highly successful approach to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and makes a very effective contribution to the very high standards they attain in English.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The Foundation Stage curriculum is outstanding and ensures that children are able to progress seamlessly from the Reception class into Year 1. Teachers make excellent use of the school grounds and also ICT to support pupils' learning. In Years 1 to 6 curriculum requirements are met fully and French is taught to pupils in all years. Time is also allocated very effectively to meet the specific learning needs of pupils across the full range of abilities. This usually takes the form of small groups of pupils working with teaching assistants and doing additional work on aspects of their learning they have not fully grasped the first time around. There is an outstanding range of creative and sporting activities which are part of the school's daily programme of after-school learning. This programme is greatly valued by parents and carers and their children. The programme of support given to developing pupils' understanding of the need for healthy lifestyles, diet and personal development is also very well planned and fully reflects the excellent aims and ethos of the school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Parents and carers are rightly confident about the level of care and support provided for their children. Arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe are very good and comply fully with current requirements. Procedures for identifying and responding to the needs of pupils who have additional learning needs or disabilities are very effective and the support these pupils receive enables them to make outstanding progress. The school's arrangements to assess and respond to the learning needs of all pupils are very good and make a real difference to their progress and attainment. There are very effective procedures, enacted through the school and class councils, to ensure that pupils' views are listened to and that they can influence the work of the school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding. The enthusiastic and infectious leadership of the headteacher, which is clearly focussed on raising standards, is the main reason why pupils achieve very well. Teamwork amongst the staff is another key reason for the school's success. For example, teachers with additional responsibilities, such as

subject leaders, provide exemplary support for their colleagues and are dedicated to raising standards. Arrangements for the headteacher and staff to evaluate the quality of education and to plan for subsequent improvements are excellent. The governing body also plays a full part in these arrangements and is very knowledgeable about the work of the school. Governors do an outstanding job, in partnership with the headteacher, in overseeing the allocation and spending of the available funding. A very good example of this is the allocation of resources resulting in the excellent support for learning provided by teaching assistants. The school is very good at keeping parents and carers informed about its activities and about their children's progress. Parents, carers and family members also make a valuable contribution to their children's learning and to the life of the school.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

11 January 2007

Dear Pupils,

Thompson Primary School, School Road, Thompson, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 1PY

It was a great pleasure for me to visit your school. Thank you for giving your time to talk with me and making me feel so welcome. I know you agree that you are very lucky to attend such an excellent school. There are several things about your school that make it outstanding:

- It cares for you exceptionally well. It makes sure that you are safe and can enjoy your learning.
- It helps you to make very good progress, especially in English.
- Your behaviour is exemplary and you all work very hard.
- You help each other and care for each other very well.
- Your teachers and teaching assistants do an excellent job in helping you to do your best.
- Your headteacher and school governors are very good at making sure that everything is available for your school to be successful.

In order to make your school even better I asked Mrs Weight and your teachers to look even more closely at ways of improving your investigative work in science.

Well done. I wish your every success in your education and for your future.

Yours sincerely,

Godfrey Bancroft

Lead Inspector