

Thorpe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132180
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	293972
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2007
Reporting inspector	John Ashton

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Judith Turner
Headteacher	Mr Nigel Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	24 February 2003
School address	Albion Road Idle Bradford West Yorkshire BD10 9PY
Telephone number	01274 414126
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school which pupils join from a wide range of nursery settings or from none at all. It serves a mixed community of private and council housing. There are more boys than girls in almost every year group. Free school meals entitlement is slightly above average. Mobility is high. A below average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are no children for whom English is an additional language.

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. It has many outstanding features and it gives good value for money.

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. They have a good start in Reception where, from a below average starting point, children exceed the levels expected of them for their age. Standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and remain so until the end of Key Stage 2. This good progress is the result of at least good, often excellent teaching throughout the school. It is also due to the pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to their work, the rich and well planned school curriculum and the excellent care and guidance they receive. Of particular note is the very good work taking place in science, partly the result of a productive partnership with another school.

Parents are very happy with the school and sometimes illustrate this with interesting comments. 'Since coming here my children never pretend they are ill,' said one. Others speak warmly of the helpful and approachable staff, the wide range of extra school activities, the very positive feel to the school and its excellent leadership. Both parents and children love the idea of the well-staffed and well-resourced lunchtime haven which gives pupils who need it a respite from the playground.

Pupils feel safe and demonstrate that they have a good understanding of the need to keep healthy. They relate very well to each other and to the staff. Their awareness of Britain as a diverse society is particularly well developed. They show their care for each other and a growing sense of community responsibility by how well they cooperate in class, by their good work on the school council and excellent work as playground friends. Their good preparation for the future and enjoyment of school is shown by increasingly good attendance and good progress in the key areas of learning, especially writing, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology (ICT).

The school has built itself up extremely well from very small beginnings in the few years since it was redesignated as a primary school. It makes magnificent use of its completely refurbished buildings. Above all, it is well led and managed by an excellent team of head and senior staff who are taking the school from strength to strength. This team dealt exceptionally well with the issues for improvement left at the last inspection and with other areas needing improvement and has outstanding capacity for further improvement. Governor support and guidance is satisfactory on the whole but governors are rightly planning to improve their capacity to be critical friends of the school. The school has plans to apply for accreditation for some of the excellent work they do, in developing the pupils' health, for instance.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase governors' knowledge and skills in order to improve their capacity to be more effective critical friends of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class with standards expected for children of a similar age, although this varies from year to year and is sometimes lower than is usual for this age group. Most children reach or exceed expectations by the end of their Reception year. By the time they leave Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards at

the end of Year 6 are above average, especially in mathematics. This represents good progress overall, the result of always good and often outstanding teaching throughout the school. The school exceeded its targets for the proportion of pupils reaching the national expected level (Level 4) at the end of Year 6 in 2006. In the case of mathematics and science, it exceeded them also at Level 5. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and higher attaining pupils make particularly good progress because of well targeted individual monitoring and support. Alongside improved standards in mathematics and in writing is good quality science. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have an above average understanding of fair testing, making predictions and testing them out.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding, along with their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Behaviour is exceptionally good because of the excellent and consistent techniques for managing behaviour practised by the staff. Pupils' attitude to their work is very positive, a significant reason for the good progress they make throughout the school. Attendance is now above average, which is a tribute to the hard work of the staff in their efforts to improve attendance and a measure of how much pupils enjoy coming to the school. They thrive in the school's warm and supportive atmosphere. Pupils feel that the school is a very safe place to be and are appreciative of the opportunities to run off their excess energy on the much improved playground areas. Rapidly improving basic skills mean that pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being. Pupils quickly become sensible and reliable members of the school community. They are noticeably polite and eager to hold doors open for others, to be active members of the school council and organisers in the playground.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and occasionally outstanding, ensuring that pupils make good progress and achieve well throughout the school. Planning is particularly thorough and concentrates upon involving pupils actively in their learning as soon as possible. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and of pupils working hard, and pupils live up to these. Pupils are treated with respect and know what they are expected to do from the moment they enter the classroom. The very good use of group work and 'talking with partners' are notable strengths of the teaching and learning. Electronic whiteboards are generally used well. Staff in the Reception class have a good understanding of how young children learn and skilfully provide a good range of interesting activities, a pattern which is built upon well throughout the rest of the school. Very good use of assessment information ensures that pupils' differing needs and abilities are met. Annotation of planning sheets with notes on individual pupils makes it easy for the teachers to modify future work to rectify any concerns for particular pupils. Teachers' marking of pupils' work usually congratulates them for their efforts and often points out why a piece of work is good but less often tells them what they need to do to improve it.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Curricular provision is outstanding. It is innovative and creative and enriched with a wide range of visits and visitors and the teaching of French to every class. Recent focuses have included a drive to improve writing, mathematics, science and ICT. Subjects such as music, PE and the humanities have not been neglected. Focused days and sometimes whole weeks are used to very good effect to allow work across the age groups and across timetable slots. Excellent links with other schools, effective staff deployment and the productive use of outside consultants have all contributed to improving quality and raising standards across the curriculum. The good range of well attended activities beyond the curriculum includes breakfast and after school clubs, out of school sports, arts clubs and sign language teaching. The personal, social and health education programme is imaginative and benefits from the school's involvement in a pilot project across the local authority. The outdoor provision for all pupils is much improved since the last inspection and is very well used.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support for all pupils are outstanding and this contributes strongly to their confidence, enjoyment and good progress. All groups of pupils are well cared for. For example, a lunchtime haven operates, with the senior support assistant, as an opportunity for informal discussion and as an exit from the playground if pupils choose to. The employment of additional receptionist/office staff has tightened absence procedures and led to an upturn in attendance figures. Parents are extremely supportive of the school. Systems to safeguard pupils' safety are fully in place. Skilled support staff provide valuable assistance to pupils' learning and their emotional development. Staff make very good use of the school's excellent assessment systems to monitor pupils' progress very closely and ensure that all pupils stay on track and are sufficiently challenged to do their very best.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good with outstanding features. Chief amongst these are the excellent and extremely focused leadership of the headteacher and the very effective support of his senior leaders. Systems and procedures are now crystal clear and well understood. There is a well-managed focus on the development of subject leadership, the result of which is increasing consistency across the school. Above all, there is clear and firm focus on the whole child as the centre of the school's work. A significant investment has been made in interactive electronic whiteboards for all classes and in modern computers for pupils. Self-evaluation is concise and accurate and confirmed by inspection judgements. Well planned focuses on improving writing, mathematics and ICT have all had positive results. Astute staffing appointments, good use of external support and productive links with other schools have all contributed to the school's rapid development. Governance is experienced, supportive and well able to challenge in a friendly way. The governing body has recently consolidated its numbers and has plans to develop its skills further to give it more understanding of educational issues. The budget is very well managed to enable the most effective deployment of staff and the best use of available learning resources and accommodation.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	2
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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	2
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	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making me so welcome during my visit to your school this week. A very special thank you should go to those children who looked after me during our lunch on the 'top table' and told me so many good things about the school. I think it gives you a good, and in many ways outstanding, education.

I particularly liked the good writing work I saw, the excellent problem solving in mathematics and the brilliant fair testing in science.

I also think your school is well led and managed, the teaching you receive is pretty special and the curriculum is excellent. When you add to all of these strengths the excellent care and guidance the staff provide for you, I can see why you are proud of your school.

I loved your enthusiasm at play time during the football games and the excellent work of the playground friends in their distinctive yellow uniforms at lunchtime.

Your teachers are very clear of what they need to do to keep the school improving. I have asked them to help this process by improving further the skills of the governors.

You can play your part in maintaining and improving on all this by continuing to work as hard and by keeping your attendance levels as good as they are now, especially since attendance has not always been as high.