

# Thorpe Hesley Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106923
<b>Local Authority</b>	Rotherham
<b>Inspection number</b>	309263
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marie Cordey

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	228
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Francis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sue Kaskiewicz
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Upper Wortley Road Thorpe Hesley Rotherham South Yorkshire S61 2PL
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 2570730
<b>Fax number</b>	0114 2494733

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is of average size and serves an area of mixed housing. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage identified with additional learning needs is also below average. A new school building is being built on the site. The school has Healthy Schools status, gold Artsmark, gold Activemark for its sports provision and is an Investor in People.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Thorpe Hesley is an outstanding school. Pupils and their parents value the school highly, commenting upon what an 'excellent' and 'happy' place it is. Excellent leadership and management, and outstanding teaching and learning contribute to pupils' excellent progress. They reach high standards in English, mathematics and science. Nevertheless, the school has accurately identified improving standards in writing for higher-attaining pupils as a priority, because these are not as high as their standards in other subjects. Pupils who have learning difficulties also make excellent progress, due to the very swift identification of their needs, and skilled and knowledgeable support. Children get off to an excellent start in the Foundation Stage and settle down very quickly and happily.

Outstanding care for the pupils' personal development ensures that they quickly learn to value themselves and become considerate of others. Excellent links with parents include joint partnerships between school and home to benefit their children's education. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about school and 'feel lucky' that their children are pupils at Thorpe Hesley. They also feel that building works will result in a further improvement to the school's very attractive environment. Disruption has been minimal because of the very effective management by senior staff and governors.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding: pupils think and reflect; respect and value people from different faiths and cultures, and have a keen knowledge and understanding of local, national and international affairs. The school's emphasis on speaking and listening not only improves standards in English, it also helps pupils become articulate and confident young people. The very positive relationships between staff and their excellent relationships with pupils are central to the school's character. The innovative curriculum links learning across subjects so that pupils make connections between, for example, music and English, and sport and science. This enhances their progress across all areas of the curriculum.

Leadership and management inspire staff and pupils to perform at their best. A clear vision for pupils' personal and academic development sets a positive, caring atmosphere where pupils are protected and nurtured. Leaders understand the school very well and have a strong and realistic appreciation of what needs to be done to make the school successful. Monitoring of pupils' individual progress is regular and informative, leading to significant improvements. Governors are very active and fully involved in school life. They support staff and pupils in lessons, and question and evaluate the school's performance in regular meetings.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Children begin school with a range of early experiences which are broadly in line with those expected for their age but in writing are below typical expectations. By the end of the Foundation 2 class, children's levels are above those expected for their age. Planning is exceptionally well suited to meet the different needs of the children. Exciting and challenging opportunities for learning lead to children making excellent progress in the Foundation Stage. Their physical, personal, social and emotional development is emphasised, and children are extremely considerate of others. Central to the leadership of the Foundation Stage is a successful focus on ensuring that children become more independent, collaborate with others and develop in confidence. Children become absorbed in all the interesting activities they take part in and look

forward to extending their knowledge. They could not wait to examine a treasure chest and match it to their learning 'of piracy on the high seas'. Early writing is demonstrated in a variety of interesting and enjoyable ways and children are proud of their work. Parents welcome reading the small books, poems, posters and diaries written by their children. Teachers and their assistants are very knowledgeable about how children learn and planning is sharply focused. They plan carefully for the needs of those children with learning difficulties who make also make rapid progress.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in writing for higher-attaining pupils.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' make outstanding progress and attain high standards from their broadly average starting points in the Foundation 1 class. Year 2 pupils' work and current teacher assessments show that standards in mathematics have improved significantly for this group of pupils. The school is diligent in tracking the pupils' progress and acting swiftly if there is the slightest indication that pupils are not achieving as well as they should. The school's latest successful initiatives to improve pupils' reading skills are based on rigorous planning and teaching of letter sounds. Between a third and a half of higher-attaining pupils reach the highest levels in science and mathematics. However, their attainment in writing is not as high with fewer reaching the higher levels. Skilled and exceptionally knowledgeable staff challenge pupils through complicated investigational work and tough problem-solving exercises.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils show excellent attitudes to their work and their behaviour is exemplary. They enjoy all aspects of school life and take advantage of the outstanding range of after-school sporting activities. In a moving whole-school 'Voices Assembly' pupils sung in harmony in a complex musical arrangement and their happy faces showed that they loved every minute of it. Children in the Foundation Stage accompanied their singing with lots of appropriate gestures, and demonstrated its rhythms and beats to show links to mathematics. Pupils eat healthily and organise the distribution of fruit to all classes. They know how to keep safe and who to turn to if they are worried. Pupils have an outstanding level of tolerance and respect for others. Attendance is slightly above average and shows steady improvement because of good systems to promote and record it. Pupils are active and generous fund-raisers for charities in this country and abroad. They are very involved in their local community through their singing, sporting activities and participation in local events such as the galas. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their future economic well-being through high standards in the basic skills, and confident, articulate speaking and listening.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Lessons are very lively and interesting and are thoroughly enjoyed by pupils. Lesson objectives are shared and pupils speak confidently about how they are going to learn. Exceptionally good

relationships between pupils and their teachers provide a strong foundation to challenge and extend pupils' learning. Very well managed systems are in place to support children with learning difficulties. Support staff plan work very well with teachers to cater for the needs of different groups and individuals. Teachers' marking and the consistent use of self-evaluation by pupils provide them with good knowledge of how well they have done as well as clear guidance for further improvement.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

Staff share the planning of the very well balanced and interesting work which supports pupils in both their academic and personal development. The school's very effective topic-based approach to learning is enjoyed by pupils who find it relevant and exciting. A clear focus on the development of basic skills improves their standards in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology. Pupils with additional learning needs receive very sharply focused support which is tailored to their requirements. Personal, social and health education helps to ensure all pupils understand the importance of staying safe and being healthy, and prepares them exceptionally well to make an effective contribution to the local and wider community. Pupils' growing involvement in the Schools' Sports Coordinator Programme enriches the many opportunities open to them ranging from gymnastics to ballroom dancing. Planned visits bring learning alive. Pupils used a trip to Whitby to improve their knowledge and understanding of science, geography, English and history. A large number of invited visitors include librarians, the school nurse and representatives of the emergency services. Pupils write and speak knowledgeably about how these visits make a difference to them and the local community.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school places a very high priority on supporting pupils' varying needs and promoting excellence in their learning. The provision of family learning workshops is very much appreciated by parents who enjoy the chance to share in what their children are learning. They say that it makes it much easier to help them with their work when they are at home because, 'This is an excellent school that works with parents and children.' Pupils are safeguarded through rigorous procedures. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties are exceptionally well supported because of the close and high quality links with parents and external services. Assessment systems are used very effectively to accelerate progress and regularly refine pupils' challenging targets.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The headteacher and deputy headteacher set a very clear direction and vision for the school which is shared by all staff and governors. 'Nothing but the best is good enough for our pupils', sums up the attitudes of leaders. Staff are supported sensitively through regular monitoring from senior and middle leaders. A strong and united team spirit underpins very positive and productive working relationships. Excellent systems to monitor the school's performance enable the school to share its strengths with staff as well as to remedy any weaknesses. For instance,

following careful analysis of pupils' performance, swift changes to the teaching and learning of reading led to improved standards.

The governing body provides excellent support and challenges the school to achieve its best. It questions the school's performance through regular meetings as well as in meetings and interviews in school. There has been excellent improvement since the last inspection and the school has an outstanding capacity to improve still further.

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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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

<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.

## Annex A

**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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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**

Inspection of Thorpe Hesley Infant School, Rotherham, S61 2PL

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave to us when we inspected your school. You obviously enjoy coming to school and it was lovely to meet so many of you. We think that your school is outstanding because it does so many things very well. Your teachers enjoy their jobs and make your lessons interesting and fun for you. You get lots of chances to learn things for yourself and you make excellent progress in your work. Your headteacher and deputy headteacher are very keen for you all to do your best and work with all the staff to help you to reach high standards. Your parents are very pleased about your work and the way you are looked after and cared for so well.

School staff told us that they would like to make sure that all pupils get to reach the highest standards in writing that they possibly can. We agree that this would be a good thing for everyone to work towards. We are sure that you will also work as hard as you can to help.

We wish you success in the future.