

# Thames Ditton Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124968
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	315103
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Coussins

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>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	267
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr D Clark
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs J Espley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Speer Road Thames Ditton KT7 0NW
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 398 5842
<b>Fax number</b>	0208 398 4059

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- Achievement and standards
- Teaching and learning
- Leadership and management.

Evidence was gathered from performance data, observation of teaching and learning, school information and records and pupils' work. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, staff and governors also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average infant school which serves an area of mixed but mainly private housing with the majority of pupils coming from favourable backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. Very few pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. Their specific needs are moderate learning difficulties or behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those with English as an additional language is below average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

One parent described this as 'a fantastic school' and that is exactly what it is. Pupils make outstanding progress because teaching and learning are excellent throughout and, although not inspected in detail, it is clear that pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils develop as well-rounded individuals who are happy, skilled learners and who are confident and excited by all their experiences at school. Their enjoyment of school is infectious and they are very positive about all the school offers. They say they really like coming to school because, 'It's fun, you get to do and learn lots of things.'

Behaviour is exemplary and children are friendly, exuberant and articulate. There is a strong sense of community within the school and beyond because of the school's work with schools in Africa and India. The school council is very active and influential and pupils said that adults listen to them and take them seriously. Pupils relish taking on responsibilities and being involved in decision making. Attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils feel very safe and secure and that they can always talk to an adult if there is anything they are worried about. They understand exceptionally well the need for regular exercise and a healthy balanced diet to keep fit and well. The level of their personal and basic skills prepares them extremely well for their future.

By the end of Year 2 standards are very high. Pupils achieve exceptionally well in reading, writing, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). The staff are totally committed to developing each child to their full potential, both academically and personally. Excellent care is provided for each child and they are very well guided through their time in school. Procedures for safeguarding children are robust. The school works extremely well with parents, outside agencies and other schools for the benefit of the pupils. Themed days or weeks, visits, visitors and other special events successfully enrich the outstanding curriculum. Children in the Reception and Year 1 spoke with great enthusiasm about a recent Book Week where they had used their skills in art, design and technology, mathematics, literacy and ICT to make a Goldilocks book.

Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils and there are excellent relationships throughout the school. Pupils learn exceptionally well because they feel valued and confident to try things out and express their own ideas. Teachers are very skilled at asking questions that make pupils think. This inspires and motivates pupils to develop curious and inquiring minds. Work is very well planned so that it is interesting and fun and the progress each child makes is carefully tracked so that targets are set and reviewed regularly. Teachers use assessment information very well to set challenging targets. They quickly identify pupils who may be at risk of underachieving as well as those who need more challenge in their work. Marking helps pupils know what to do next to improve their work and they are involved in evaluating how well they have done and what they need to do next.

The leadership and management of the school are excellent. All staff and governors realise that the challenge they face is to maintain very high standards and they have been especially successful in this, yet constantly strive to improve things further. The governing body provides very good strategic leadership and the recent changes to its structure has enhanced further its ability to support the school and to hold it to account for its performance.

The energy and expertise of the headteacher inspires loyalty and commitment from the whole staff who work together very successfully as a team. The headteacher is given first class support by the deputy and other senior staff who are full of enthusiasm and ideas for the future

development of the school. Although there was only one improvement point in the last inspection, which the school has successfully addressed, the school has not rested on its laurels and it identified and succeeded in initiating many improvements. These include very successful strategies which are reducing the gap between the performance of boys and girls in reading and writing. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are robust. These enable staff to have a clear view of the school's strengths and initiatives they wish to develop. The school is innovative and forward thinking for the benefit of its pupils and their families. The school's self-evaluation is highly effective and clearly demonstrates its relentless drive for further improvement from its existing secure and successful position.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Children get off to an excellent start in the Reception classes. Children start school with skills which are slightly above average for their age although weaker in reading, writing and linking sounds and letters. They make very good progress in all areas and by the end of the Reception Year they all reach the early learning goals expected for their age and the vast majority exceed them. This is because of a very well planned curriculum and outstanding teaching which help them to achieve exceptionally well. Children benefit from a carefully planned induction process that helps them settle very well once they start school. They quickly learn to work together and develop independence in their learning. All staff work extremely well together to create an environment where children can thrive. A parent wrote, 'I couldn't ask for a better environment for my child. His development has been far greater than I expected particularly in his reading, writing and numeracy.'

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

The school has no major weaknesses and has outlined its priorities for development in its improvement plan. As well as maintaining high standards, these include achieving an International Award and an Eco Schools Award and further developing the role of pupils in decision-making. The inspector agrees that, in order to build on its success, the school should implement these priorities.

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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**

03 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Thames Ditton Infant School, Thames Ditton, KT7 0NW

I am writing to thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed spending the day with you. Thank you for talking to me about your work and telling me what you think about your school. You were all very friendly, helpful and polite.

I agree with you and your parents that yours is an excellent school and I know you really enjoy being there. You are doing extremely well in your learning because you work very hard and your lessons are exciting and interesting. I was very pleased to see how much you enjoy writing and I loved looking at the books you had made in Book Week. Your teachers know you very well and give you work which is just right for you to do. This means that you learn new things very quickly.

I thought your behaviour in class and in the playground was excellent. It was great to see that you get on so well together and help each other in your work and play. Everyone in the school takes excellent care of you and helps you all to do your best. Your headteacher does an excellent job in running the school and knows how to make it even better in the future. I agree that the school has identified the right issues to improve even more.

I was very lucky to be in school to see the Year 2 assembly which I really enjoyed.

Thank you again for all your help and for being so interesting to talk to.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins

Lead Inspector