

# Thompson Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120857
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	339792
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Heather Weston HMI

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>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	98
<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 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	School Road Thompson Norfolk
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. One third of the inspection was spent observing learning. The inspectors observed 5 teachers, visited 9 lessons and looked at pupils' work. They joined assembly, observed break-time, held meetings with governors, staff, parents and groups of pupils. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including school data, the school improvement and development plan, records of meetings and 71 parental questionnaires, staff and pupil questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of the school's assessment and tracking procedures, and expectations regarding rates of progress at Key Stage 2
- why standards in English fell so significantly in 2007 and 2008 and whether the school has successfully addressed this decline
- why standards in science were so much lower than standards nationally in 2008 and 2009 and relatively lower than in English and mathematics
- how effectively teachers meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the needs of more able pupils
- how effectively monitoring and performance management hold staff to account
- for pupil progress and for promoting improved practice.

## Information about the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are both low, with no pupils speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average, with a higher than average proportion of pupils having a statement of special educational needs.

An after-school club is run on-site and managed by the governing body. This was included in the inspection.

The school has the Healthy Norfolk Schools Award, the Active Mark, the Becta ICT Mark and The Basic Skills Quality Mark.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

### Main findings

Children thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They think that their learning is fun, particularly the wide range of inspiring enrichment activities, which bring the curriculum to life. The school has benefited from funding from the Creative Partnership Project which has provided good opportunities for in-depth learning. Pupils say they feel very safe and well supported both by staff and by each other. Most parents too are very happy with their child's experience at school. Careful attention is paid to promoting pupils' personal development and to developing their thinking skills. Pupils show great skill in working out the answers to challenging questions and their attitude to learning is outstanding. Relationships between everyone, staff and pupils alike are very positive and the school has a very purposeful atmosphere. Other outstanding aspects include pupils' behaviour, the extent to which they adopt healthy lifestyles, and their contribution to the community. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is strongly promoted by the rich curriculum with pupils thinking deeply about the cultural issues discussed during 'Passport Week'. The support given to pupils with particular needs is outstanding, with the school going more than 'the extra mile' to meet their needs.

However, despite this, the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory because both pupils' attainment and their rate of progress from entering to leaving the school are satisfactory. Pupils make good progress in the Reception Year and in Key Stage 1, but progress slows in Key Stage 2. The headteacher and governors have appropriate expectations regarding standards and have paid great attention to developing the enriching and exciting curriculum. They have not recognised that more needs to be done to improve the quality of teaching and the use of day-to-day assessment in order to accelerate progress in Key Stage 2. Although teachers use assessment to pitch learning at the right level, they are not tailoring the learning sufficiently to meet the needs of different groups of pupils within the wide ability range in their classes. In addition they are not designing clear learning outcomes to make sure that each group of pupils know precisely what it is that they are expected to learn. As a result some pupils, particularly those who are more able, do not make sufficient progress in Key Stage 2. Too many pupils fall behind and need to take part in intervention activities to catch up. The use of personal targets and the quality of marking are too inconsistent and so pupils and their parents are not given enough information as to how they can make better progress.

The headteacher and subject leaders have identified some important areas for improvement, but the monitoring of provision has not been sufficiently frequent or rigorous to identify inconsistencies and key aspects for improvement in teaching. Self-evaluation is too generous because leaders have paid insufficient heed to the fact

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that achievement does not align with other outcomes. Positive action has been taken recently to improve whole-school assessment procedures, and these are being used very effectively in some classes. The school is aware that once systems are used consistently these procedures have the potential to be a valuable tool for promoting progress. This action demonstrates that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Accelerate progress and raise standards in English, mathematics and science by:
  - improving consistency in the use of assessment data to match learning to pupils' needs, particularly for more able pupils
  - ensuring that clear learning outcomes are planned for each lesson so that different groups of pupils know exactly what they are learning
  - ensuring marking and the use of targets enable all pupils to improve their work and know the next steps in their learning
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - improving the quality of monitoring processes by leaders so that they have greater impact on improving the quality of teaching.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Children's attainment when they join the school is broadly in line with expectations. The good progress they make in the Early Years Foundation Stage class and in Years 1 and 2 is due to good provision and good use of assessment. Pupil's attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 on leaving school has been significantly below average overall for the last two years, partly due to low standards in science. Rates of progress in Key Stage 2 have been too slow, with pupils failing to reach the targets set for them. Evidence from the school's tracking data, from lessons and from pupils' work shows that current pupils are on track to reach their targets in English and mathematics, that progress is satisfactory and that standards are due to be just above average overall. Standards in science appear to remain lower than in other subjects with less emphasis being placed on science for older pupils and little evidence of these pupils recording science at age appropriate levels. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the effectiveness of intervention strategies.

Pupils are keen to learn and show great enthusiasm for the interesting activities provided for them. The emphasis placed by the school on developing confidence and self-esteem means that they are able to tackle challenges with relish. Pupils are very supportive of each other and know that there are very effective systems in place to ensure that any incidents of unkindness or bullying which may occur are dealt with swiftly. They show a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Pupils behave extremely well both in lessons and around the school. A small minority of pupils have behaviour difficulties but they are supported very well and, as a result, their behaviour rarely affects the learning of others. Pupils show a

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very good understanding of the need for a healthy diet, and of other health-related issues. Provision for physical education is very good, and there is a good take-up rate for extra-curricular sport. Pupils are developing good skills for their future schooling and economic well-being. They have well-developed skills in the use of information communication technology and are given opportunities to develop skills relating to enterprise. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and promoted well through the curriculum.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Overall, teaching is promoting satisfactory learning and progress, but the quality of teaching varies through the school. Where practice is good, activities are imaginative and stimulating. Teachers refer to the whole-class learning intentions during lessons and increasingly indicate in their marking whether pupils have been successful in their learning. At times some teachers give clear written guidance for improvement, although this is largely in pupils' literacy work. Targets are used to inform pupils about how to make the next step in their learning and on occasion pupils carry out very useful self

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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assessments. Pupils actively engage in their learning through effective teaching strategies such as the use of personal white boards. Interactive white boards are used well to promote learning. A variety of good opportunities are provided for pupils to work together to develop their speaking, listening and team working skills. Questioning by teachers and by teaching assistants is at times highly skilled and challenging to enable pupils to develop sophisticated thinking skills. However, in some lessons pupils' thinking is closed down as questioning is unimaginative. All teachers have consistently high expectations of behaviour. Although teachers expect pupils at times to produce work of a very high quality, pupils are not consistently required to do so and this inhibits their progress. Where teaching is less effective, planned activities are less interesting, pupils do not know clearly what they are expected to learn and the use of targets, marking, and the use of assessment are not sufficiently leading to improvement. Teaching assistants support pupils well in all lessons. They give good support to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, this is too often carried out through out-of-class support rather than by ensuring that pupils' learning needs are met by matching tasks to their abilities in lessons.

Much work has been carried out to ensure that the curriculum stimulates pupils' interest and provides many opportunities for exciting, creative and purposeful activities. For example those carried out during 'Passport Week' culminated in an exhibition and a presentation to parents. Although key thinking and social skills have been integrated extremely well throughout the curriculum, the school has not yet ensured that the core skills of literacy, numeracy and information communication technology are integrated wherever possible to maximise the use of time and to put the learning of these skills in context. As a result, staff feel some pressure in ensuring that there is a balance between the time spent on enrichment and on the core curriculum. Lessons are planned so that pupils' learning is pitched at the right level overall, but planning is not sufficiently well tailored to meet the needs of all pupils in the class. The school provides a good range of out-of-school activities including those run by the after-school club. The club is well run and much enjoyed by the pupils who attend.

From the outset, the school supports those pupils with specific needs very well. Staff visit 'Teddy Club', the pre-school toddler club run on-site, and start to plan for such needs before children join the school. A very good aspect of the care given to pupils is that children are admitted to the Reception class before the age at which the school receives funding for them. Arrangements for making sure that all pupils can access their learning, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties are very good. The school has made good use of the advice from staff at the neighbouring special school and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are helped to make good progress. The school's strong links with a wide range of agencies ensure pupils at risk are supported well. Staff are well trained and responsibilities are shared well to ensure good support for pupils. Pastoral care for pupils, and frequently for parents in supporting their child, is strong.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>3</b>
	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and governors fully recognised the need to halt the decline in standards since the last inspection and took action to do so. Strategic planning is clear and detailed and some of the priorities for development are highly appropriate. These include improving the use of assessment so that teachers now have the tools to promote better progress, and improving the curriculum. The actions taken meant that the decline in standards was halted in 2009, and standards are showing signs of improving this year. However, the headteacher and governors have focussed too heavily on the curriculum, and not ensured that teaching is consistently of a quality to promote good progress throughout the school. Performance management procedures ensure that teachers are aware of their responsibility for seeking to secure good or better progress for pupils in their class but monitoring has not fully identified key areas for development to help them improve their teaching. The governing body does both challenge and support the school, but governors are aware that action by the curriculum committee stalled and the committee has not become fully functional again until recently.

The strength of partnerships with a range of outside agencies is having a positive impact on pupils' well-being and learning. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils can access their learning and the school's promotion of equal opportunity and the tackling of discrimination are good. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. All staff are fully informed of procedures and child protection concerns are identified and dealt with effectively. Risk assessments are secure. Although the school has not yet met its statutory duties to evaluate its contribution to community cohesion and setting clear plans in place, the school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b> Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	<b>3</b>
	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>



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<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is effective. Strong teamwork ensures high levels of energy and enthusiasm. Staff have successfully created a nurturing, inclusive environment where every child is valued as an individual. Excellent induction and transition arrangements such as the 'Teddy Club' and home visits support and welcome parents, and help children settle quickly into school. As a result, children are secure and happy, and their confidence, motivation and social skills flourish. The staff know the children well, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and ensure that teaching and learning are good. Children are well cared for. Staff ensure that they tend to children's physical, social and emotional needs well, and requirements for their welfare, health and safety are fully met.

All staff have high expectations about what the children can achieve which results in them making good progress from their starting points to achieve standards which are consistently above average as they enter Year 1. Children enjoy a variety of adult-led activities and those they choose for themselves. On occasions, there is too much adult-led activity and staff miss opportunities to allow children to solve problems and explore at their own pace. Assessment of the children is thorough and on-going. Planning has been reviewed recently and now reflects a more child-centred approach; it is more flexible and reactive to children's expressed interests. This friendly and stimulating learning environment provides children with a very happy start to school life and an enjoyment of learning. Good leadership has ensured that the requirements for children's learning and welfare are met.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

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Most parents are happy with their child's experience at the school. A few parents' responses indicate that they feel that the school is not led and managed effectively, and that the school does not help them to support their child's learning. Inspectors agree that the school has not identified the need to further improve the quality of teaching but feel that leadership and management are satisfactory. A few parents stated that they were not sufficiently informed of their child's progress and a small minority stated that the school does not help them to support their child's learning. Inspectors feel that opportunities are created for parents to find out about their child's learning but feel that improving the use of pupils' next-step targets will help parents to be further involved in contributing to their child's education.

A few parents felt that the school does not meet their child's particular needs. However a number of other parents of pupils with barriers to their learning or with special educational needs and/or disabilities were strongly supportive of the school and felt that staff have made every effort to help their child. Inspectors agree with this view and found that the school support pupils with specific needs very well.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Thompson Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 83 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection of which 71 were analysed. The 14 questionnaires received after the analysis was carried out were all positive in their view. In total, there are 98 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	69	19	27	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	48	68	19	27	3	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	29	41	32	45	9	13	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	45	29	41	7	10	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	44	62	20	28	5	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	41	25	35	16	23	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	65	22	31	3	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	35	49	26	37	6	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	49	25	35	9	13	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	45	35	49	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	48	23	32	7	10	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	45	63	10	14	14	20	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	63	21	30	3	4	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



11 March 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Thompson Primary School, Thompson, IP24 1PY

We thoroughly enjoyed visiting your school recently and meeting you all. Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work. We were really impressed by how well you all work together. You are all very well behaved and polite. As you told us, your school has many exciting things going on. We thought that some of your discussions were really interesting, for example about the problems for endangered species of animals. You have very good opportunities for sport, drama and art, and a number of other stimulating activities. Your school has really helped you to develop very good thinking skills. We were really impressed by some of your explanations! All the staff at the school work hard to help you with your learning and to make sure that any problems you may have don't get in the way of your learning.

However there are some ways in which your learning could be improved, and we have asked your headteacher and governors to help teachers to be even better at helping you learn. We have asked them to:

- help you all make better progress in your lessons, especially those of you who find learning easy
- plan work for you which is neither too easy nor too hard
- make sure that you know exactly what you are expected to learn
- let you know how you can improve your work by telling you when marking your work how to make it even better
- using the targets in your books regularly so that you and your parents know the next steps in your learning.

You can help them with this by making sure that your work is always of your

- best possible standard, that you know your targets and that you learn from the comments teachers make about improving your work.

Yours sincerely

Heather Weston

Her Majesty's Inspector

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