

# Thythorn Field Community Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119993
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	358662
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rodney Braithwaite

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>	4–10
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	154
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jill Gore
<b>Headteacher</b>	Cary Ralph
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Bideford Close Wigston LE18 2QU
<b>Telephone number</b>	0116 288 9040
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons and observed six different teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, the chair of governors and members of staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to the school's self-evaluation, provision for safeguarding, the school development plan, the attainment and assessment of pupils' progress, minutes of governing body meetings and school policies. They analysed 66 parent and carer questionnaires and other written responses from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The skills of children over time on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the accuracy of the school's evaluation of the effectiveness of provision for this age group.
- How successfully leaders are raising the attainment of boys in reading and writing, especially in Key Stage 1.
- The accuracy of the school's evaluation of the quality of learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The effectiveness of the contributions to the management and improvement of the school made by senior and middle leaders and the governing body.

## Information about the school

Thythorn Field is smaller than the average primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average, and their needs include a wide range of learning and complex difficulties. The school has an arrangement with the nearby Birkett House special school which enables seven of its pupils to be integrated full time into various year groups in Thythorn. These pupils are accompanied by support staff from Birkett. The headteacher was new to the school 18 months ago, and there have been a number of new staff appointments recently. There are clubs on the school site both before and after school, but these are privately run and were not inspected. The school holds Healthy School status and the Activemark award.

**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?**

**2**

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

**2**

## Main findings

Thythorn Field is a good school. An enthusiastic and dedicated team of staff, led determinedly by a caring headteacher, provides a good standard of care and guidance for the needs of all pupils, especially those whose circumstances make them most vulnerable. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enjoy school, have good attitudes to learning, and make good progress in their learning and achievement. Exceptional partnerships, especially with the local special school, contribute strongly to the personal and social development of the pupils. There have been significant improvements recently in teaching, the assessment of pupils' progress, the attainment of boys in reading and writing, and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school's self-evaluation of its performance is realistic and accurate, and based upon very solid and convincing evidence. These factors demonstrate that the school has a good capacity to continue improving.

Links with parents and carers are good and many praise the school, a typical comment being, 'The school is an exciting, stimulating and caring environment where my child has flourished.' A few, though, have concerns about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour, and how it communicates with them. Behaviour management is effective, but the school accepts that it has not always done enough to explain its policies and allay parental misconceptions. It is rightly planning new initiatives to ensure that parents and carers are better informed and can engage even more positively with school leaders.

Children make a good start to their learning and personal development in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This good progress continues in Years 1 to 5. Many pupils do particularly well in their basic skills and in art and music, and by the time they leave their attainment is above average in the key subjects of English and mathematics. Teaching is consistently good across the school, because teachers have a good understanding of the pupils' needs and make learning interesting and often fun. The introduction of rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher has helped improvement. A varied and stimulating curriculum is helping pupils to develop good skills of inquiry and research. Pupils are lively and friendly, and behave well. They have good relationships with staff and are developing good skills of independence, teamwork and initiative. Their involvement in the school and local community is good. However, they do not have enough opportunities to learn about other faiths, ethnicities and cultures, elsewhere in the United Kingdom or further afield.

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

- Enable parents and carers to have a clear understanding of school procedures and communication channels by;

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- strengthening information for parents and carers, especially about behaviour management strategies and the inclusion policy for the education and well-being of all pupils
- ensuring that parents and carers are all aware of how they can bring concerns to school leaders and work in partnership with the school to achieve mutually acceptable outcomes.
- Increase the provision for promoting community cohesion so that;
  - pupils develop a wider understanding of the range of communities and cultures in the United Kingdom
  - pupils enjoy more opportunities to learn about cultural diversity in the wider world, and are able to develop links with other communities abroad.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils respond well to stimulating and well-planned teaching. They behave particularly well in classrooms, and this enables good learning to take place for all pupils in a large open plan area where all classes are in close proximity to each other. Pupils are happy with this arrangement and clearly enjoy their activities. This was observed when Year 4 pupils were involved in intensive reading and studies of the text of *The Iron Man* next to Year 3 pupils who were involved in practical group activities learning about fractions. Pupils from both classes showed no sign of lack of concentration or distraction. All pupils make good progress, including the increasing number with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils benefit in their personal development from the full-time presence of pupils from a special school, because as one boy explained, 'I see how hard they try, which makes me try harder too.'

Children enter the Reception class with skills that are below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress which continues in Key Stage 1, and pupils reach above average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. In Key Stage 2, in recent years boys have not attained as well as girls or their peers nationally. The school has taken steps to improve boys' attainment, including regular teaching of how to link letters and sounds, and the provision of more stimulating books combined with one-to-one reading tuition. This has been effective and boys are now making better progress across the school in reading and writing. As a result pupils leave Year 5 with above average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. The most able pupils are also reaching their potential as a result of good learning challenges.

Pupils think school is 'fantastic' and 'exciting', or as one explained, 'Here you learn without really knowing it.' They respect their teachers, feel safe and enjoy taking responsibilities. They try hard to lead healthy lives, and can explain in considerable detail the importance of cleaning their teeth. Pupils report occasional instances of bullying but think that 'most' adults deal with these fairly and quickly. Their attendance has traditionally been good but in the last year, for a variety of reasons, this has fallen and is now average. They are proud of the school council and name several of their initiatives, including the provision of benching and canopies in the playground. Pupils are involved well with the local community and schools, and are developing a good knowledge of environmental issues. They have good basic skills and enjoy opportunities to work together, for example on 'Friday Challenge' problems. This was observed when they worked in family teams to

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design and make flags and then excitedly sold them in a market situation. This and many other opportunities help to make their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development good.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
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>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</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>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<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

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good relationships with pupils, encourage them to speak and think, and have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Importantly their planning and management of pupils are good, enabling good learning in a large environment which is always a hive of activity. Teachers use information on pupils' progress effectively to plan for their different individual needs. This was seen to good effect in Year 1 when pupils were involved in a wide range of interesting challenges when making biscuits and recording their observations. Teaching assistants provide good support and guidance to pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most pupils can recall their learning targets and have good knowledge of how they can improve. Sometimes, though, teachers accept untidy presentation of work. Their marking is usually accurate and frequently helpful, but is not always rigorous enough in correcting simple errors of grammar or spelling.

The school provides a stimulating curriculum that is well matched to pupils' interests, such as in the Arctic study where pupils were making clay penguins. There is a strong emphasis on the use of literacy and numeracy across all areas of the curriculum. Provision for

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information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory and this helps pupils reach average skill levels. The new ICT suite is a helpful addition to promote learning. The provision for both music and art is good, helping pupils to achieve well. Pupils are glowing in their appreciation of extra-curricular activities such as residential visits for Year 5 and the many visitors the school receives. This has recently included puppeteers, a 'mad scientist' and theatre groups. The school is rightly reviewing provision for the study of other cultures.

This is a very caring school where pupils in potentially vulnerable circumstances benefit from particularly good provision. The school provides a welcoming and colourful environment for pupils, which is reflected by their enjoyment of school. The integration of pupils from the special school increases pupils' understanding of the needs of others and enhances their social skills. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is very well managed and includes early identification of pupils with problems. Provision for child protection, risk assessment and health and safety is good. Attendance procedures have been tightened and attendance is beginning to rise again.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<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 has made a good start to a comprehensive review of the school's development and its priorities for improvement. The staff share her ambition that pupils should receive a high quality of care, and that teaching ensures that all pupils reach their full potential in their learning and personal development. The school has a thoroughly competent team of motivated leaders, teachers and support assistants who understand and provide for the needs of all pupils. At present, though, not all leaders are fully involved in pursuing their management responsibilities, partly through lack of time in this small school. For example, the monitoring of teaching and learning, while effective, is conducted almost exclusively by the headteacher. The school leaders recognise this and are planning to distribute leadership roles to more staff. Challenging targets for pupils are realistic, and the school is accurate in its self-evaluation.

The governing body, which has several new members but is led by an experienced chair, supports the school strongly and is determined to play a more active role in challenging school leaders as its members become more confident as a result of training. It ensures that safeguarding procedures are robust and follow good practice, and has recently introduced an action plan to ensure that all policies are regularly reviewed.

The school promotes equality of opportunity well, and has been successful in ensuring that some underachievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities



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has been eliminated so that these pupils make the same progress as other pupils. The school has an excellent range of partnerships, and the links with Birkett House provide many opportunities for the personal development of pupils at both schools. The induction arrangements with the local middle school are of especially high quality. There is good engagement with parents and carers, especially those with children in the reception class, although a small number are concerned about the way the school communicates with them. The contribution to community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily by the school. Although pupils have opportunities for contributing to their school and local community, links are only now being established with other communities further afield, such as a school in the Netherlands. Provision for improving the knowledge and awareness of pupils of the cultural diversities of different communities is a school priority, and is slowly developing.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>1</b>
<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>2</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>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children achieve well and are improving their skills, which are average by the time they join Year 1. Some children in the recent past have made less progress in calculation and linking sound and letter skills, but the school is taking appropriate steps to remedy this. Their progress is good because of good and occasionally outstanding teaching. There is a good balance of child-initiated learning and more structured adult-led learning. Teachers ensure that the individual needs of children are being met as their 'Next Steps' assessments are robust and detailed. A wonderful record of progress is illustrated in the children's 'Learning Journey' books, which include comments by parents and carers. Teachers endeavour to make learning stimulating, practical and enjoyable. This was observed particularly in the story of the Three Little Pigs, where puppets and other props were used and children were involved in role play. This encouraged good language development and much laughter and delight at their performances. The outside area is big

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enough to promote good physical development, and the school plans to make it more stimulating for other learning activities. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good, and staff work exceptionally well as a team, promoting a very caring and safe environment. Parents and carers are welcomed, and they are very pleased with the induction of their children into the school, the progress they make, and the transition arrangements into Year 1.

*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

A large majority of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire show strong support for the school and what it does for their children. All of them feel that their children enjoy school and most say that they are kept safe and healthy, and that the teaching is good. Typically a parent commented, 'I cannot praise the school enough. My child is cared for educationally and emotionally and is kept safe and secure.' A minority of parents and carers have concerns about how the school manages challenging behaviour, and how the school leadership deals with their concerns and communicates with them. The inspection team judged that much helpful information is offered to parents and carers on a regular basis through a variety of media, and they do have opportunities to express their views. However, the team also judged that some parents and carers are not sufficiently informed by the school about its behaviour management strategies and inclusion policy, which can sometimes lead to misunderstandings.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Thythorn Field Community 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 66 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 154 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	68	21	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	70	16	24	4	6	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	33	50	25	38	5	8	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	55	25	38	4	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	40	61	22	33	3	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	53	26	39	4	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	53	28	42	3	5	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)	39	59	21	32	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	59	24	36	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	27	33	50	12	18	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	35	34	52	6	9	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	22	33	27	41	11	17	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	65	19	29	3	5	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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 pupils' 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.**



31 January 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Thythorn Field Community Primary School, Wigston, LE18 2QU**

Thank you all for making us so welcome when we visited your school. You were all very friendly and we liked hearing about what you enjoy, such as all the visitors you have, and how you think you are doing in school. We especially liked seeing how you and the pupils from Birkett House work so well together. The inspection team believes you go to a good school, and are very well looked after by staff. By the time you leave your attainment is above average in writing, reading and mathematics. We are pleased that you feel safe in school and liked hearing about how you try to keep your bodies healthy, especially your teeth. You have many interesting clubs and activities and some very good chess players. You have good teachers and their assistants who help you to make good progress in all you do, and are there for you if you have a problem. We also think your school is led and managed well, and the leaders know exactly what needs to be improved.

We have suggested to your school leaders some ways in which they can help improve the school even more. Most of your parents and carers are very pleased with the school, but a few of them are not sure that the school deals well with some behaviour, and would like the school to take more notice when they say this. A few also think they do not receive enough information from the school. We think that this can be improved by the school making sure that all your parents and carers know exactly what is going on, especially if it is to do with your behaviour. You can help by telling them regularly what is happening at school, how you are expected to behave, and making sure they get those letters you are sometimes given. We have also asked the school to help you know more about the lives of other people in this country and abroad.

We are confident that with your help the school will continue to improve. Keep selling those flags you made!

Yours sincerely

Rodney Braithwaite

Lead inspector

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