

# Thomas Barnes Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124087
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	359581
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gerald Griffin

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	77
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Phil Robins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jon Baker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	School Lane Hopwas, Tamworth Staffordshire, B78 3AD
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<b>Email address</b>	office@thomasbarnes.staffs.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons taught by four teachers. They observed break times and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Parents and carers at the school gate were spoken to informally. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work, progress records, teachers' lesson plans, school improvement plans, policies and reports. They analysed 32 pupils' questionnaires, eight staff questionnaires and 32 parents' and carers' questionnaires.

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

- How well boys make progress at Key Stage 1.
- If pupils work with a good level of independence.
- Whether teaching provides sufficient challenge for pupils at Key Stage 1.
- The effectiveness of improvement plans in tackling past weaknesses to secure good progress across the school.

## Information about the school

Thomas Barnes is a smaller-than-average sized primary school. Most pupils come from White British families and the remainder come from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Most of these have specific learning difficulties. A larger than average proportion of pupils join and leave the school other than at the normal times. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a Reception class, which is taught together with Year 1. The school has recently gained full international schools status.

**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

Thomas Barnes Primary is a good school. It has some outstanding features and is improving strongly. In its stimulating and friendly atmosphere, pupils grow into articulate and mature young people. Pupils feel extremely safe and behave well. They enjoy all aspects of school, which is reflected in their high attendance.

Since the last inspection, attainment has risen and is above average. Achievement, teaching, the curriculum, the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage and leadership and management have all improved strongly and are good. Care guidance and support are now outstanding. The school has sustained pupils' good overall personal development and improved the areas relating to their feeling safe and contribution to the community. These are outstanding. Improvement plans have remedied the weaknesses found at the time of the last inspection and progress is good. The leaders' drive to improve the school is clearly articulated and enthusiastically embraced by staff. Their rigorous monitoring of the school's performance provides them with secure and accurate information for self-evaluation. This leadership record shows the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Across the school, pupils make at least good progress in lessons because teaching provides them with a good level of challenge. This good teaching provides interesting and exciting work that engages learners well. The best progress is made by pupils in Key Stage 2 and, for many of them, progress is outstanding. Here, teaching provides a consistently good or better level of challenge for all members of the class and pupils work with a good level of independence. Younger pupils and children progress well but not quite as rapidly. This is because some of them are overly reliant on the teacher's help when they get stuck and the more able are not always provided with work that is sufficiently challenging to accelerate their progress.

The curriculum offers a good range of interesting and varied learning experiences that pupils enjoy. It frequently draws on examples from the local area, which adds relevance to pupils' work. Staff use their detailed knowledge of each child expertly to provide outstanding pastoral care. One pupil told an inspector that talking to staff about a worry was like talking to a parent.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Typically, one parent told an inspector, 'My child loves coming to school. Children make good progress in its very caring family atmosphere.'

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

- Secure consistently good or better progress for children and younger pupils by ensuring that:

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- they gain a greater level of independence as learners by encouraging them to work answers out for themselves.
- teaching provides activities that stretch them fully.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year because cohorts are small. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enjoy learning, and their achievement is good. Pupils who join the school partway through the year make similar progress to their peers. The learning observed in lessons was at least good and some was outstanding. Pupils are keen to learn, work hard and take pride in their work. Pupils are curious and enjoy discussing ideas in small groups and with their class, which is promoting their self-confidence, communication skills and understanding. They use self-assessment and peer-assessment well to judge the quality of their work and to make improvements to it.

To accelerate the progress of boys in Key Stage 1, which has been slower than that of the girls recently, the school has changed the curriculum to provide boys with many more opportunities to choose topics and use educational games in their learning. This has improved their engagement, and as a result, their progress now matches that of the girls.

Pupils say that bullying is unheard of. They are confident that any cases would be dealt with immediately by the school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep others and themselves safe, for example on the internet. Pupils try their best to eat a healthy diet and take plenty of exercise. They would like more information about the changes that happen to them as they grow up. Pupils collect generously for charity and are very keen to help the school improve, for example by telling teachers how they learn best. They readily take responsibility, for example as playground buddies. Above average standards in the basic skills and positive attitudes mean that pupils' preparation for secondary school and their future working lives is good. Pupils reflect maturely on their feelings and the actions of others. A strong moral code underpins their good behaviour. Pupils cooperate very well in groups and readily help each other. They have a well-developed understanding of the diversity of world culture, which is reflected in the school's national award.

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*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>1</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>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>	1
<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?

Relationships in lessons are very positive. Teachers use resources such as computers well to engage the class and promote learning. Marking, other feedback and individual targets provide pupils with clear guidance on how they can improve their work. Teaching assistants provide valuable support to learning, especially for pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities. For example, they help these pupils concentrate on their work and provide teachers with feedback on their progress.

The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well. For example, lively assemblies provide many opportunities for pupils to reflect on their behaviour and feelings. Older pupils enjoy the opportunity to choose topics to explore that particularly interest them and this is contributing to their accelerating progress. There is a good range of clubs and educational visits that extend horizons and raise aspirations.

Pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities receive very sympathetic guidance. Their needs are very accurately assessed and their learning programmes closely match them. Pupils who join the school part way through their primary education are made to feel very welcome. They settle quickly into the school's routines and make friends. The school's targeted support for pupils whose circumstances have the potential to make them vulnerable is very effective.

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*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>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's unrelenting drive to improve the school is communicated clearly to staff. The school's targets are challenging. Middle leaders take appropriate responsibility for standards in their areas. There are many examples of how leaders have improved teaching. For example, they have raised teachers' expectation of what pupils can achieve and have improved their skills in teaching writing and mathematical problem-solving. The governing body is very supportive of the school, works hard on its behalf and challenges it robustly over its performance.

The school successfully places a high priority on safety and safeguarding. The checks that the school makes on the suitability of adults to work with children are rigorous. Child protection procedures are robust, regularly updated and fully meet current safeguarding requirements. The school's commitment to equal opportunities and the success of its plans to remedy previous gender differences in progress at Key Stage 1 show that its policies are having a positive impact.

The school is a happy and harmonious society in which pupils from all backgrounds integrate well. The school promotes cohesion in the wider community well. For example, it provides classes that help local people gain qualifications in basic skills. The school's links with schools abroad are making a valuable contribution to pupils' awareness of cultures worldwide.

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*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>2</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>
<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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in all areas of learning because the teaching is good. Best progress is made in personal development. Children are well-behaved and readily share resources and educational games. Boys' progress in writing is a little behind that of the girls. Plans to provide more opportunities for the boys to write are ensuring that this gap is closing quickly. Parents are very happy with the arrangements that have ensured children settle happily and quickly into the routines of school.

Children enjoy their learning and work hard. For example, in a reading lesson they enthusiastically linked letters that the teacher showed them to the sounds they make. Later they did their best to join the sounds of the letters together, which helped them to read words. The outdoor area is well resourced and used regularly, for example, to develop children's physical development. There is an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning. Occasionally, the work provided for more able children is not sufficiently challenging to accelerate their progress.

Leaders plan regular assessments of each child's gains and these are increasingly used well by staff to plan challenging next steps in children's learning. The school recognise that sometimes the direction of children's work by assistants in the setting is not effective and leaders are providing training to remedy this.



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*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

Over half of the families completed questionnaires, which is above the usual level of response from parents and carers. The very large majority of parents are supportive of the school. Many of them commented about how happy their children are at school and how well they are cared for. Many added comments about how the school had improved over the last three years. Several wrote about their concerns over their child's progress in basic skills. Inspectors found that progress in basic skills is good across the school, particularly in Key Stage 2, but inspectors agree with parents that, for some younger pupils, progress could be better still.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Thomas Barnes 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 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 77 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	69	10	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	72	9	28	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	16	50	14	44	2	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	53	13	41	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	47	16	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	56	12	38	2	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	72	9	28	0	0	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)	16	50	14	44	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	50	14	44	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	53	12	38	3	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	44	15	47	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	75	6	19	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	78	7	22	0	0	0	0

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. 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 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.**



8 November 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Thomas Barnes Primary School, Tamworth, B78 3AD**

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. I especially enjoyed joining you for your good work assembly and celebrating all your successes. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on so well together. Thomas Barnes is a good school and it is improving. Here are some of the things we found out.

Your teachers ensure that you get off to a good start in Reception.

You make good progress in lessons.

You told us you enjoy school and feel very safe and secure.

You try your best to eat a healthy diet and take plenty of exercise.

Your behaviour is good.

You are involved well in the school and wider community.

You have good relationships with your teachers and work hard.

The curriculum provides you with exciting clubs and visits, which you enjoy.

Adults look after you very well and are always ready to help you.

The headteacher and staff are working hard to make the school better.

We have asked the school to do one thing to help you do even better in your learning:

Improve the progress of younger pupils by making sure that those of you who learn quickly are always given difficult work and that you all try to work out answers to problems for yourselves.

All of you can help the school by continuing to try your best in lessons, behaving well and attending most regularly. We wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gerald Griffin

Lead Inspector

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