

Thurton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121063
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	358919
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Jill Bavin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Clay
Headteacher	Cassandra Williams
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2008
School address	Ashby Road Thurton, Norwich NR14 6AT
Telephone number	01508 480335
Fax number	01508 480478
Email address	office@thurton.norfolk.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2011
Inspection number	358919

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who observed four teachers, visited nine lessons and made four additional visits to classes to focus on work about communities and cultures. Additionally the team met with pupils, staff and members of the governing body and looked at work and teachers' marking in pupils' books. They scrutinised a variety of documentation, including policies and documentation related to safeguarding, data about pupils' progress, monitoring and evaluation records and school development plans. Responses from staff, pupils and 71 parents and carers were also analysed.

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

- How effective the school's strategies are in promoting good progress for all groups of pupils, including the most able, especially in writing and mathematics.
- How well teachers use assessment to meet the varying needs in mixed age classes.
- How far staff contribute to school improvement.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller school than the majority in the primary phase. In all classes two year groups learn together, including children in the Reception year. Typically the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities, including those who have statements of special educational needs, is lower than is typical in most primary schools. Most of these pupils have difficulties related to speech, language and literacy. A very large majority of pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much lower than is usually found and there are no pupils speaking English as an additional language.

Since the previous inspection there have been significant changes in staffing. Both teaching and teaching support staff have changed by 50% and between September 2009 and March 2010 there was a temporary headteacher in post. The current headteacher, who teaches for two days each week, joined the school at Easter 2010.

The school gained the Activemark award in 2008 and Healthy School status in 2009 in recognition of its work to promote physical education and healthy lifestyles.

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

This is a good, well-led school. Care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding. Parents' and carers' comments such as, 'I have noticed a dramatic increase in their confidence' and 'Since joining Thurton our children have thrived emotionally and educationally' represent the views of many. Pupils value their school highly, are entirely confident of adult support and attendance rates are good.

The school has improved well since the previous inspection and also since the appointment of the current headteacher. Teaching and learning have improved. Good teaching accounts for the good progress made by all groups of pupils, including the most able. Teachers make good use of assessment information to address the varying needs within their class. Teaching and learning are best when pupils have extremely good opportunities to deepen their understanding with independent work at various stages throughout the lesson. This is not a consistent feature in lessons, and examples of this practice are not shared routinely among staff. The curriculum has improved and is now good, although it does not fully support pupils' understanding of cultural diversity within the United Kingdom. Pupils have increased opportunities to apply their key skills in a variety of interesting topics. This is a major feature in improved attainment, which exceeds national expectations in literacy and numeracy. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from their various starting points because they have better opportunities than previously to learn through practical experience.

These strengths contribute to pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes. In some lessons behaviour is exemplary. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. They develop a good sense of right and wrong, and display considerable sensitivity to each other when someone is facing particularly difficult circumstances. Pupils' knowledge and experience of communities, faiths and cultures that differ from their own are limited because plans to address this are at an early stage of development.

The headteacher provides a strong and ambitious steer for the school. In this, she is ably supported by the governing body and the assistant headteacher. Previous systems for checking how well each pupil is achieving have become even more detailed and are used more rigorously and comprehensively. This has contributed to increased equality of opportunity with the successful closing of previous gaps in the achievement of different groups of pupils. Teachers are better informed about how well pupils are doing, and welcome increased accountability. Staff and the governing body share an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and next priorities for further development. This united approach combined with the considerable improvement to provision and outcomes for pupils, in spite of significant staffing changes, indicates that the school is in a strong position and has good capacity for sustaining its strengths and developing further.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching and learning by:
 - giving pupils more consistent opportunities to work independently
 - sharing the features of outstanding teaching in school more routinely.
- Improve the promotion of community cohesion and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of communities that differ from their own by:
 - giving pupils more direct experience of people with different faiths
 - developing relevant topics within the curriculum that inform pupils about other cultures.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Most pupils join the school with the levels of skill and understanding that are expected for their age in most areas of learning, but below expectations for their age in some key literacy and numeracy skills. Boys and girls, including those few who are eligible for free school meals, the very few pupils from minority ethnic groups, the most able and those with special educational needs and/ or disabilities, make good progress as they move through the school. In 2010, attainment for pupils in Years 2 and 6 was above average in tested subjects. School data indicates that most pupils in most year groups are making good progress and already exceeding expectations for their age in literacy and mathematics. Lesson observations during the inspection endorsed this picture of good achievement.

Different groups of pupils are equally well motivated. Typically, pupils respond well to good opportunities to voice their ideas; for example, they deepen their understanding of measurement and data handling by sharing mathematical ideas. Pupils persevere extremely well when work is highly challenging and stimulating. This was exemplified in an outstanding mathematics lesson when pupils were inspired to challenge themselves to find as many computations as possible to reach a given number. They leapt ahead of the teacher in determining how to use division to find fractions. On occasion, when there are fewer opportunities for pupils to make independent discoveries, they await a direct question rather than volunteering ideas, which slows their pace of learning.

Pupils develop a good understanding of how to make healthy choices, reflecting the school's awards in this area. They largely apply this knowledge to themselves, especially in their willingness to participate in sports. They willingly accept responsibilities in school, such as being play-leaders or school councillors. They respond sensibly to the recent opportunities afforded them to participate fully in learning conferences with their parents and teacher. Their writing demonstrates empathy, for example with characters in frightening situations. Although their experience of cultural diversity within the United Kingdom is limited, older pupils understand issues about racism and are condemning of it. Pupils are interested in the world around them and contribute to a harmonious school community. They have a good understanding of their immediate community and have been actively involved in petitioning to keep speed cameras on the busy road that dissects their village. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ 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?

Strong relationships between adults and pupils contribute to invisible behaviour management and lessons proceeding smoothly. Teachers plan well to take account of pupils' needs and abilities which take precedence over their age. This is a major factor in the good rates of progress for all groups of pupils. Lessons are routinely and successfully planned to modify tasks and expectations to suit pupils' differing needs during group work. There are missed opportunities to use a wider range of strategies and extend pupils' understanding further, with greater independence and active participation, throughout the lesson. The strongest teaching maintains a very high level of challenge throughout the lesson, which involves a variety of independent tasks, so pupils are less passive and learning is more actively promoted throughout. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, especially for those pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities.

Interesting topics, such as 'the island' or 'the window' provide plenty of imaginative opportunities for pupils to apply literacy, numeracy, scientific, artistic and information and communication technology skills. The curriculum successfully fosters an interest in different parts of the world, and different customs, often through special events, such as celebrating Diwali for a day. However, it does not sufficiently develop pupils' awareness of cultural diversity in their own country. Enrichment activities are varied and there are many clubs which add enjoyment for pupils and support both academic and social development.

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

Pastoral care is extremely strong. Parents and carers remark on how much they value the close attention paid to every transition: into school, within school and in preparation for pupils moving on to secondary school. Much work has been undertaken to enhance the learning environment, which, with new libraries and a new music area, is very welcoming, stimulating and supportive of learning. Special events are often used to bring pupils of different ages together. This contributes significantly to pupils' well-being and their preparation for joining their next classes. The school responds extremely flexibly when pupils are facing particularly challenging circumstances and as a result there are examples of individual pupils making exceptional progress both socially and academically over particular periods of time.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides enthusiastic and supportive leadership. She has successfully promoted a shared vision of school improvement in a short space of time, and is well supported by the school community. Accurate and shared school self-evaluation underpins recently streamlined school development planning, so priorities are well-chosen. They provide a clear basis for a common sense of purpose. Rigorous systems to check the progress of each pupil contribute to the closing of previous gaps between the attainment of pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities and other pupils. A close analysis of the progress of boys and girls and different groups of pupils contributes to a good level of equality of opportunity for all and helps eliminate discrimination.

The governing body has a good understanding of the issues facing the school and a strong focus on outcomes for pupils. The governing body is prepared to challenge staff and make tough decisions in order to influence the school's strategic development. It contributes to good safeguarding procedures. Particular strengths lie in the policies, practice and training related to child protection and first aid, which exceed requirements. As a result, the school is proactive in contributing to pupils' well-being.

Much work has been undertaken to strengthen pupils' understanding of their own community and to develop an awareness of wider community issues such as conservation. The school actively and successfully promotes positive, tolerant and anti-discriminatory attitudes. While addressing other priorities, plans to give pupils more direct experience of communities that differ from Thurton have remained at an early stage of development. Parents and carers appreciate increased channels of communication with the recently introduced home-school book and the headteacher's accessibility on a daily basis.

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

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in all areas of learning in Reception because staff have a good understanding of how children at this age learn best and meet their individual needs well. Children are safe and secure. The headteacher and Reception class teacher work closely together to ensure good leadership of this provision. As a result, the school has made effective use of external expertise in order to develop more exciting and interesting activities both inside and outside, and provision has improved since the previous inspection. Staff make greater use of children's interests to support planning, especially in providing stimulating resources for children to initiate their own learning. During the inspection a small group of children made good gains in developing mathematical and creative ideas while dealing with weight, shape and size. They manipulated large crates, wooden planks and tyres in order to construct a police car or ship. During activities such as these adults record snapshot observations but do not always include 'next steps', so opportunities to identify these on a daily basis are missed. Opportunities to extend learning even further in such activities are missed when there is no adult deployed to extend children's thinking without over-directing them. There are more routine opportunities for children to develop early writing skills than previously because paper and clip boards are freely available to be used alongside any activities.

Children make good progress in adult-led sessions because adults make good use of incidental learning to reinforce key skills in relevant contexts for children. For example, after listening closely in order to repeat numerical music patterns, children were praised and told to give themselves a, 'p-a-t' on their 'l-e-g', which ensured they used their knowledge of phonics. A good variety of teaching approaches, which include physical exercise after sitting on the carpet and using song to manage transitions from one activity to another, all successfully keep children happy, focused and ready to learn.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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

More parents and carers returned questionnaires than is usual in primary schools. The vast majority were highly appreciative of the school's work. The inspection investigated the individual concerns of a very few parents and carers, while preserving anonymity. For example, a few expressed concerns about the leadership and management of the school. The inspection found the school to be well led and managed. Parents and carers unanimously agreed on several issues, such as that their child is kept safe, makes enough progress, and teaching is good. All were happy overall with the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Thurton 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 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 93 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	70	20	28	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	58	82	13	18	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	43	61	28	39	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	58	30	42	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	70	21	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	68	20	28	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	68	21	30	2	3	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)	38	54	30	42	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	63	25	35	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	49	69	19	27	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	63	23	32	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	53	75	14	20	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	53	75	17	24	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

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).

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



10 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thurton Primary School, Norwich, NR14 6AT

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school recently. A special thank you goes to those pupils who met with me, shared your ideas and the work you were proud of. We enjoyed meeting you very much and can understand why you enjoy school so much. We agree with you that you go to a good school. Here are some of the best things we found.

You make good progress and reach higher standards in literacy and numeracy than most children of your age. Well done!

You feel safe because you know that adults take extremely good care of you.

You behave well in lessons and around school and you are friendly with each other.

You enjoy really interesting topics, such as 'the island', which help you to use many different skills.

Your attendance is better than most pupils in primary schools.

The governing body and all the adults in school work well together to keep making the school even better.

We have asked the governing body, headteacher and staff to give you more opportunities to make links with people in other communities in the United Kingdom whose faith and culture differ from your own. We have also asked them to make sure the curriculum topics give you a greater understanding of these different communities. We have asked the teachers to share their very best ideas more often, especially about how to give you more chances to work independently throughout different parts of the lesson. All of you can help by offering ideas more often and not waiting to be asked. You can also help by continuing to behave and attend so well. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bavin

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.