



Inspection report

Thrussington CE Primary School

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 120164
LEA Leicestershire

Inspection number 273458
Inspection dates 19 and 20 January 2005
Reporting inspector Mr P Brooker HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Type of School	Primary	School address	Hoby Road
School category	Voluntary Controlled <i>Diocese of Leicester</i>		Thrussington Leicestershire LE7 4TH
Age range of pupils	4 to 11 years		
Gender of pupils	mixed	Telephone number	01664 424421
Number on roll	47	Fax number	01664 424421
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Reverend K Shepherd
Date of previous inspection	June 2003	Headteacher	Mrs E Moore

Age group	Published	Reference no.
4 to 11 years	23 February 2005	273458

Introduction

When Thrussington CE Primary School was inspected in June 2003, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools (HMI) subsequently visited the school on three occasions to monitor its progress, and reinspected the school in January 2005.

Description of the school

The school serves the village of Thrussington, although a few pupils travel from outside the catchment area. It is a very small primary school with 47 boys and girls on roll, aged from 4 to 11, in 3 mixed-age classes. The pupils come from a wide mix of socio-economic backgrounds. No pupils are eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage. No pupils speak English as an additional language. There are five pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, including one pupil who holds a Statement of Special Educational Need. Children start school in the year in which they are five, either in September or January. The number on roll has decreased in the last 12 months. A small number of pupils leave the school before the end of Year 6 to gain places in nearby private schools. The school has experienced a significant turnover of staff in recent years.

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Overall effectiveness of the school

In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils.

Since the school became subject to special measures there have been significant changes in staffing, and in school leadership and governance. Under the calm and purposeful guidance of the headteacher, the school is now providing a good education for its pupils. The quality of teaching is good. The pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress in lessons. Standards of attainment are rising and are broadly in line with age-related expectations.

Improvement since the last inspection

The inspection of June 2003 required the school to address key issues on improving the quality of teaching and learning, planning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation and communication with parents. In January 2004 an acting headteacher and three new teachers took up post, two of whom were on temporary contracts. Under her determined leadership, and with the hard work of the staff and the judicious support of the local education authority (LEA), the school was transformed. Effective systems were put in place to improve provision and to address the specific weaknesses identified in the last inspection. The substantive headteacher took up post in September 2004 and further accelerated the school's improvement. There has been good progress in addressing the key issues from the last inspection, although the impact of these improvements on raising standards has yet to be fully realised.

Capacity to improve

The school is well placed to sustain its recent improvement. The headteacher has a clear overview of the school's strengths and the priorities for development. The staff work well as a team and morale is good. There are effective systems for monitoring the day-to-day work of the school. Subject co-ordinators have worked hard to develop teaching and learning resources in their respective curriculum areas, but their strategic leadership roles are underdeveloped. The governing body is supportive and is effective in holding the school to account. However, the school has yet to draft its strategic development plan.

What the school should do to improve further

The school recognises where improvement is needed. However the key priorities are to:

- put in place a clear strategy for long-term development;
- raise standards of attainment;

- improve provision for the more able pupils;
- increase the effectiveness of subject leadership.

Achievement and standards

The ability profile of the pupils when they enter the school is broadly average. They make a sound start in the Foundation Stage and acquire the necessary social and learning skills to achieve well. The pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 and 2 in recent terms has been good. However, the legacy of uneven teaching has left gaps in their basic skills and subject knowledge, for instance in information and communication technology (ICT), spelling and mental mathematics. This is reflected in results in national tests. Taken over time, standards of attainment in the end-of-Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 tests are broadly in line with those seen nationally. However, standards are regularly below or well below other schools in similar socio-economic contexts, and often below that indicated by the pupils' prior attainment. The school is aware that there has been underachievement in the past and has taken suitable steps to ensure that all pupils achieve well.

Standards in English, mathematics and science lessons are broadly in line with age-related expectations, although they are below the level expected in ICT. Standards are beginning to rise as the school has a more consistent approach to curriculum planning and teaching.

Personal development

The pupils have very good attitudes to school and they behave very well. Around the school, in assembly and at break periods the pupils follow routines, interact well and show consideration for others. The school has a positive climate for learning. Relationships between adults and pupils, and between the pupils themselves, are very good. There have been no recent exclusions. In lessons, pupils of all ages follow instructions quickly and are keen to learn. The occasional fussiness is due to the pupils' enjoyment of their lessons and their eagerness to answer questions. In general, they listen attentively to their teachers and are courteous and responsive. Even the youngest pupils take a mature attitude to organising their own resources and settle to their activities quickly. They work together co-operatively, sustain their concentration well and show persistence when they have difficulties. The pupils move around the school in a calm and sensible way, and tidy up willingly. The older pupils have a variety of responsibilities that they carry out seriously. The school promotes attendance well: attendance continues to be well above the national average and unauthorised absence is rare. Punctuality is very good.

Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Acts of worship provide good moral, social and spiritual experiences and have moments for prayer and reflection. The end of each session of the day is marked by prayers. The school has a very good range of extracurricular activities that enhance the pupils' personal development and are very well attended. These include clubs for Spanish, football, cross-country, science, ecology and music; a range that is rare in a school of this size. The pupils have

valuable opportunities for visits that extend their understanding of other faiths and cultures, for example to a Sikh temple and museum.

Quality of provision

The overall quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and is good. It was at least satisfactory in all lessons and good or very good in two thirds. The staff have worked hard to overhaul the curriculum and have responded positively to advice from consultants and lesson observations. There has been a significant improvement in lesson-planning and in the quality of learning resources, including the new ICT suite, the interactive whiteboard, reading resources and a good range of other equipment to support teaching and learning. These have broadened the range of learning activities in lessons and are used well to ensure that all pupils are engaged in learning and that their progress is routinely assessed.

The lessons were well planned and prepared, with an interesting range of resources and activities that presented the pupils with a suitable balance of structured input and independent learning. Teaching assistants provided good support for individual pupils and for small groups. Lessons had clear learning objectives that were suitably shared with the pupils. Teachers managed and directed the pupils' work confidently and purposefully, and sustained a good pace. In the best lessons, the teachers presented varied tasks and targeted good support for individual pupils and small groups. However, meeting the wide range of different needs within mixed-age classes is an ongoing challenge. In some lessons, the more able pupils were not presented with sufficiently challenging or interesting work to extend or apply their understanding.

Procedures for identifying and supporting pupils who have special educational needs have been properly revised since the last inspection and provision is now good. The pupils' special educational needs are accurately assessed and suitably supported with well-focused individual educational plans. They make at least satisfactory and often good progress.

Systems for assessing and recording the pupils' progress and achievement have been suitably developed and are sound. The school has an overview of pupil progress, and uses this assessment data to inform end-of-year targets. All pupils have short-term targets for literacy and numeracy, and these are beginning to be used to guide their work. Routine marking is conscientiously undertaken and is occasionally very good, but the pupils are not always clear what they need to do to improve or how to achieve their targets.

Since the last inspection the curriculum has been revised to ensure that it is suitably broad and balanced. Systems for curriculum planning are embedded and are consistent. The school is conscious of the need to extend the pupils' experiences and offers a good range of extracurricular opportunities and enrichment activities, such as trips and visiting speakers, which enhance the pupils' wider learning.

The school pays due regard to the pupils' safety, health and general well-being. Issues such as road safety are well integrated into the curriculum.

Home-school links are good. The school has made every effort to improve communication with parents. The regular and open dialogue keeps parents well informed about developments in the school, its procedures and expectations, and provides useful feedback for the headteacher and governors.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides very good leadership and management. She has sustained the school's improvement well by addressing key weaknesses, and also by developing the school on a broader front. The headteacher's monitoring and evaluation has given her a clear overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and this has been used to target effective support for individual teachers and other staff. The staff work hard, are cohesive and have a shared sense of purpose. The school has used its budget surplus to purchase much-needed resources, and the headteacher has been resourceful in extending the school's curriculum provision in order to enrich the pupils' learning. She has been mindful of the need to build confidence in the school, and has effectively exploited avenues for positive publicity.

The management roles of subject co-ordinators have been clarified. Curriculum improvements are suitably guided by subject action plans, and teachers assume responsibility for auditing curriculum needs and for managing developments. However, the monitoring and evaluation roles of subject leaders remain underdeveloped.

Support from the LEA has been well judged and effective in meeting the evolving needs of the school. The appointment of good temporary staff averted a crisis at the school, and secured a rapid and effective transformation in provision. The LEA training and guidance for the headteacher, staff and governing body has been good.

The governing body has received suitable training in order to develop its monitoring responsibilities. Governance is good: governors make regular visits and are well informed about the school's provision. However, the school has not yet developed a strategic plan to guide its longer term development.

Appendix – Information about the inspection

Thrussington CE Primary School was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in June 2003. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in January, May and October 2004 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of June 2003.

In January 2005, one HMI and one Additional Inspector returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Nine lessons and three assemblies were inspected. The pupils' conduct was observed around the school and on the playground at break and lunchtimes, and samples of their work were inspected. Discussions were held with the headteacher, nominated subject co-ordinators and the chair of governors, and informally with other staff. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of June 2003 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.

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