



# Thrapston Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number 122111  
LEA Northamptonshire

Inspection number 274802  
Inspection dates 17 - 18 May 2005  
Reporting inspector Rajinder Harrison

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

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Type of School	Primary	School address	Market Road
School category	Foundation		Thrapston
Age range of pupils	3 - 9		Northamptonshire
			NN14 4JU
Gender of pupils	Boys and girls	Telephone number	(01832) 732 512
Number on roll	468	Fax number	(01832) 732 275
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr D Weston
Date of previous inspection	20 - 23 September	Headteacher	Mr C Morrison
	1999		

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Age group	Published	Reference no.
3 - 9	June 2005	274802

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of Thrapston Primary School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Thrapston is a large primary school in Northamptonshire. It serves the growing town of Thrapston and its immediate area and few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below that in most primary schools and there are no pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need. The school has very few children who are learning English as a new language or are in care.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

This is a good school with several outstanding features and the school agrees with this view. Pupils are encouraged to develop a wide range of interests and achieve well socially and academically. They make good progress. Standards are better than those of similar schools because teaching and learning are good. Attention to ensure their well-being is good and pupils are prepared well to become responsible young citizens in the future.

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. They make an excellent start and quickly develop a lively and enduring interest in learning. Good attention is paid to meeting pupils' needs throughout the school and all pupils have full access to everything the school provides. The school has a satisfactory understanding of how well it is doing but recognises the need to check pupils' progress more rigorously and give them greater responsibility for their learning.

Links with other organisations, including pre-school groups and the neighbouring middle school, are good. This helps to ensure that pupils make good progress at each stage of their learning. Most parents are very pleased with all that the school provides to ensure their children are happy and well cared for. However, a significant minority, (17 per cent of those who replied to the questionnaire) felt that the school could take more account of parents' views, suggestions and concerns.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Governors and staff acknowledge that they need to become more involved in planning for improvement and checking the impact of their decisions on pupils' learning. They are well placed to do so. The school environment is of high quality. It is vibrant, very well equipped and a place where pupils feel valued. The school is led and managed well and gives good value for money.

### **Grade: 2**

#### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Monitor pupils' learning and evaluate the work of the school more rigorously.
- Identify individual targets for pupils to improve in their work and involve them in taking greater responsibility for their learning.
- Involve governors more in the long-term development of the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

Pupils make good progress. From an average starting point in the nursery, pupils attain above-average standards in English, mathematics and ICT at the end of Years 2 and 4. Standards in science are average and in art and design they are very high. Standards are rising and are above those of similar schools. Pupils of all ages make good progress and lower-attaining pupils make very good progress when they receive high quality additional help from support staff. Challenge for the higher-attaining pupils and provision for pupils identified as gifted and talented are good. Provision for the very few who learn English as a new language is satisfactory and they achieve as well as other pupils. Challenging targets are identified for all pupils, although procedures to check that pupils are on track to achieve these could be sharper. The school identifies that boys in the nursery are sometimes more advanced than the girls and works effectively at narrowing the gap so that there is no significant difference at the end of Year 4. The school prepares children well for their next school.

### **Grade: 2**

## **Personal development and well-being**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The school is a happy and harmonious community where every child can thrive. Attendance is satisfactory and pupils are keen to come to school. They are confident; most contribute enthusiastically and form very good relationships. Behaviour is good overall. The occasional lapses from a few pupils are managed well. Pupils respond enthusiastically to all that the school provides and make excellent contributions to their school community and beyond. They are proud of their school and effective systems are in place for them to offer suggestions for improvements. The school council plays a significant role in lobbying for improvements on behalf of the children. Individual pupils are keen to help in the efficient day-to-day running of the school and many take a lively interest in a rich variety of clubs and events.

Pupils' understanding of the need to live healthy lifestyles and keep safe is outstanding. Many choose well-balanced meals and participate in a range of sporting activities. They are very well informed as to how to deal with bullying and show a mature sensitivity in their respect for others. They help to keep the school environment attractive. They care for and consider the needs of others and assist in fund-raising and social events and thus come to appreciate their role in the community. Although they have a good understanding of other cultures, their understanding of the rich variety of modern British society is limited.

### **Grade: 2**

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well. Examples of outstanding teaching was seen as well as one lesson which was satisfactory. Strengths in teaching include strong subject knowledge; very respectful relationships between children and staff; and lessons that are well planned and enthusiastically presented. Where teaching is satisfactory, work is not always well matched to individual needs in order to challenge all pupils appropriately. The use of assessment information to identify individual targets is inconsistent but where it is good, for example, in English, pupils know what they need to work at to improve. Similarly, the quality of teachers' marking to provide feedback to pupils is inconsistent.

The school has invested heavily in providing an attractive and well-resourced environment where teachers provide a creative range of experiences to engage pupils' interest and develop their enthusiasm for learning. The introduction of interactive whiteboards enables teachers to make learning more visual and dynamic and this helps lower-attaining pupils particularly become more actively involved. Partnerships between teachers and support staff are very good and pupils requiring additional help, including those with special educational needs and English as a new language, are identified early and managed very sensitively. This careful regard for individual needs ensures pupils' good achievement and parents are kept well informed of progress so they can offer their support at home.

**Grade: 2**

### Curriculum and other activities

Curriculum provision for children in the Foundation Stage is outstanding and is good in the school overall. Provision for art and design and pupils' creative development is a particular strength. The school has a flexible approach to the timetable so that pupils who are withdrawn for specialist help do not miss what their classmates are doing. Themed events and cross-curricular activities are regular features in teachers' planning. The school ensures all pupils have full access to everything that is provided. A wide range of out-of-class activities, including use of visitors and visits, enriches learning well. An effective programme for supporting pupils' awareness of staying safe and being healthy underpins many lessons. The learning environment is lively and vibrant. Pupils are very happy at school and recognise the value of working hard; enjoying the praise they receive when their efforts are acknowledged. Because pupils feel valued they gain in confidence and are not reticent in seeking help when they have worries or concerns.

**Grade: 2**

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## **Care, guidance and support**

Guidance and support for pupils is good. Pupils have 'special books' in which they keep personal records of the achievements they particularly treasure. The school acknowledges the need to involve pupils more in personal target setting so that they understand what they need to do next to improve further. Reports to parents about their child's progress are informative and supportive. Parents and pupils hold very positive views about the school's care and welfare arrangements. Good procedures are in place for first aid and child protection and all staff are aware of their responsibilities. Pupils feel safe and well looked after. The school places a high emphasis on staying healthy and encourages awareness in pupils to exercise regularly. Freshly cooked food from the school kitchen increases their awareness of healthy eating. Pupils are encouraged to look after their environment through litter picking and recycling activities.

**Grade: 2**

## Leadership and management

The school judges leadership and management to be good and the inspection team agrees. The impact of this is that all pupils achieve well, and standards are above average and improving. The headteacher and senior managers provide a high standard of care for all pupils, a high quality environment for learning and good standards of teaching to ensure the learning needs of all pupils are well met. The school is a warm, welcoming community. Partnerships with parents and with other organisations are good. Everyone in the school works hard to safeguard the best interests of all pupils, particularly showing sensitivity to those who are more vulnerable.

The school's leadership, under the strong guidance of the headteacher, responds to needs and manages change well. But in its planning for the future, the long-term vision for the school is not stated clearly. The school's evaluation of its work sometimes lacks rigour. For example, available assessment information is not analysed in sufficient detail to identify individual targets for pupils in order to raise standards further.

Governance is satisfactory and governors ensure all statutory duties are fulfilled. However, governors have tended to rely on the school to provide information rather than finding this out independently. In discussion, it is clear they recognise this and they have begun to monitor the curriculum.

Financial management is excellent. The school is equipped with high quality resources, good levels of staffing are maintained to ensure pupils continue to be well taught, and the accommodation is excellent. Under the strong leadership from the headteacher the school has improved considerably since the previous inspection and the capacity to improve further is good.

**Grade: 2**



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## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<b>Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.</b>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	<b>2</b>	
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	<b>2</b>	
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	<b>1</b>	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	<b>3</b>	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y/N</b>
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y/N</b>

**ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	<b>2</b>	
The standards reached by learners	<b>2</b>	
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	<b>2</b>	
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	<b>2</b>	

**PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING**

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	<b>2</b>	
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>2</b>	
The behaviour of learners	<b>2</b>	
How well learners enjoy their education	<b>2</b>	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	<b>1</b>	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	<b>1</b>	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	<b>1</b>	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	<b>2</b>	

**THE QUALITY OF PROVISION**

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>How well does the provision promote the well-being of learners?</b>	<b>2</b>	

## Annex A

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	<b>2</b>	
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	<b>2</b>	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	<b>3</b>	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	<b>2</b>	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	<b>1</b>	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	<b>3</b>	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y/N</b>

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	<b>Yes/No/NA</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes	
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes	
Learners are taught about sexual health risks	Yes	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes	
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	<b>Yes/No/NA</b>	
Procedures for Child Protection meet the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children	Yes	
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes	
<b>How well learners enjoy and achieve</b>	<b>Yes/No/NA</b>	
Support is given to learners with poor behaviour and attendance	Yes	
Learners' personal and academic development is monitored	Yes	
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	<b>Yes/No/NA</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes	
Learners, individually and collectively, are consulted when key decisions affecting them have to be made and their views are listened to	Yes	
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes	
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	<b>Yes/No/NA</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes	
Learners have opportunities to develop their enterprise and financial skills, and work in teams	Yes	
Education and training for all learners in 14-19 is co-ordinated to give experience of work-based learning	N/A	

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Thrapston Primary School  
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23<sup>rd</sup> May 2005

Dear Children

You may remember we came to visit your school recently to find out how good it was and how well you were doing. Thank you for being so friendly and talking to us and telling us many interesting things! We are writing to tell you what we found out.

- You told us how much you liked school and described so many exciting things that happen there. We think you are very lucky to be at such a good school where the teachers work hard to make your lessons interesting and fun.
- We know you are well looked after. People in the school take good care of you, and we know you can go to your teachers if you are worried about anything.
- You have a beautiful school, lovely gardens and a smashing pond which we know you help to look after so that it looks nice for others to enjoy.
- The children in the nursery and reception classes have a really jolly play area that you older ones must be envious of but we visit so many schools and your playgrounds are some of the best we have seen.
- We were so pleased to see how nicely you play together, look after each other and take care to make friends with children on the 'friendship bench'. That is a lovely idea and one we were particularly pleased to see.
- We are also really pleased you are so kind in thinking about people all over the world who do not have all the nice things you have. It is so important that you think of others in such a loving way and work hard to raise money for charity.
- It was good to see how well most of you behave and how well you listen to each other and your teachers – well done for being so sensible and polite.

## **Annex B**

- We think you must have a really good time at school because there are so many clubs and special events you can join in. But even so you are doing really well in your school work and much better than many children in other schools. We are sure your teachers and parents must be very proud of you.
- Your artwork is brilliant and makes all the classrooms and corridors look really interesting and exciting. We saw some of the best art ever in your school!
- We know you will continue to work hard and your teachers are going to help you more by giving you special targets so that you know what you need to do to improve your work and be the best you can.
- Your teachers and the school governors think you are all really great and are going to do their best to make the school even better for you.

Thank you again for showing us your school and good luck in everything you do.

Kindest regards

Rajinder Harrison  
*Lead inspector*