



Thames View Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118528
LEA Medway
Inspection number 280338
Inspection dates 15 June 2006 to 16 June 2006
Reporting inspector Roger Sadler AI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Bloors Lane
School category	Community		Rainham
Age range of pupils	3 to 7		Gillingham, Kent ME8 7DX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01634 361129
Number on roll	188	Fax number	01634 263475
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr T Croucher
Date of previous inspection	8 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs P Milton

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

In September 2005 the school established a new Foundation Stage unit, and began admitting children from the age of three. The number of pupils on roll has increased to 218. Almost all are of White British heritage, and English is their first language. Children enter the school with broadly average knowledge and skills. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average, and none has a statement of special educational need. An average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Thames View Infants is a good and improving school, where all pupils progress well. Good quality education in the Foundation Stage ensures that children progress well to achieve above-average standards at end of the Reception year. Throughout the school, standards are rising as outstanding leadership and management, and careful analysis and consistent use of assessment, improve pupils' rates of progress. Standards have risen significantly over the past two years and most pupils leave the school with above-average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are not as good, but are satisfactory. The school is planning carefully to ensure improvements in the use of ICT in teaching and learning. Teaching, based on secure subject knowledge and careful planning and preparation, is good overall but sometimes teachers do not indicate early enough to pupils in lessons how work will be assessed.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils attend regularly, enjoy lessons and feel secure at all times. They make a good contribution to the school and wider community.

The inspection endorses the school's accurate, comprehensive understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors and staff are fully aware of areas requiring further development. Past improvement planning has been excellent, and has significantly improved achievement and the quality of education. High quality leadership provides the school with outstanding capacity for further improvement. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning in all subjects.
- Further improve teaching by ensuring that the criteria used to assess work are made clear from the beginning of lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The significant improvement in standards during the past two years is attributable to improved teaching and outstanding leadership and management. Attainment is now above average, and pupils of all abilities and needs achieve well and make good progress. Most children in Reception make good progress and, by the end of the Reception year, the vast majority at least achieve the expected levels for their age. A significant proportion of children exceed the expected levels. In the strongest area of learning, personal, social and emotional development, most children concentrate for extended periods, and cooperate well with adults and with each other.

Pupils continue to make good progress in Year 1, and many exceed national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2005, National Curriculum assessment results for 7-year-olds improved significantly over the previous year to above-average levels, and the improvement has been sustained in 2006. All writing

results, and especially those of boys, improved significantly in 2006. More pupils now attain the higher levels in tests because the school has ensured that higher-attaining pupils reach their full potential. Standards in ICT are satisfactory.

Pupils with learning difficulties, the very small number of pupils for whom English is not the main language at home and higher-attaining pupils make good progress as a result of very careful assessment and effective teaching by teachers and teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good overall. Social, moral and spiritual development is good, and cultural development outstanding. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are confident, polite and caring. Attendance is good. Pupils arrive punctually for morning school, and settle quickly to work. They enjoy lessons and behaviour is consistently good in the open areas of the school and in classrooms. Pupils respond cheerfully to consistently good teaching and a variety of other activities suited to individual strengths and needs. They are respectful to each other, and to adults, and always remember the school's emphasis upon 'caring and sharing.' They know that they are treated fairly, and that adults respond promptly to any concerns. The school council successfully promotes pupils' views, and is closely involved in projects to improve the school environment, although chances are sometimes missed to give pupils more responsibility for running council meetings. Pupils have good understanding of the requirements for a healthy lifestyle, know how to act considerately and safely and show some knowledge of deprivations suffered by children in the developing world. They greatly enjoy physical activities at PEGS club, and they know the preferred foods to be included in their packed lunches. They are very generous of spirit, readily supporting and complimenting each other, and contributing to a variety of local and national charities. Their improving skills in English, mathematics and social development are a good foundation for success in the next stage of education and the adult world.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are consistently good. Teachers make good use of assessment to help pupils learn. Careful monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning ensures that the senior management team has a clear view of where teaching is already strong, and where further improvements are needed. All teachers carefully use information gained from assessments in planning lessons to make sure that all pupils make good progress in their learning. Pupils' learning targets help them to focus their efforts, and, in lessons, they receive continual feedback on their work. Teachers' consistently good marking shows pupils how to improve their work. Pupils with learning difficulties, and the few for whom English is not their main language, are supported consistently

by teachers and teaching assistants to enable them join their peers in whole-class sessions and in group work.

Teaching in Nursery and Reception is effective because it enables children to learn through investigative and structured play. Teachers and teaching assistants provide many practical activities, and good direct instruction. They have good questioning skills, and are sensitive to individual needs. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 successfully manage relationships with pupils, and their thorough preparation and interesting resources help pupils enjoy lessons. Although pupils in all classes show good awareness of what learning is expected in lessons, detailed criteria for how their work will be assessed are sometimes not made clear enough until the end of lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and their provision of information and ideas is sometimes supported by good use of interactive whiteboards. Although pupils use word processing and the Internet in some lessons, the school is aware of the need for additional use of ICT to improve learning in most subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides relevant and enjoyable learning for all pupils. The Foundation Stage curriculum has a good balance of teacher-directed and child-selected activities, and children develop early skills through a wide range of discovery and investigation activities. In all year groups, provision is good for pupils who have learning difficulties. Parents are fully involved in supporting their children's learning. For example, blocks of weekly sessions are organised for parents to come into school to support their child in either reading and writing or spelling and mathematics. These popular events have a significant effect on pupils' attainment and progress. Theme weeks, such as 'Grounds Week' during the week of inspection, ensure that the learning opportunities provided for pupils are varied and interesting. Numerous visitors are welcomed from the community and enrich the quality of education provided. Some specialists lead subject workshops to extend learning. Students from a neighbouring secondary school are role models for girls in mathematics and boys in English. Pupils participate enthusiastically in a wide range of lunchtime special-interest clubs. A good programme of personal, social and health education encourages a healthy lifestyle and contributes significantly to pupils' development as responsible citizens. Parents rightly commend their children's self-assurance and their ability to sustain good relationships. A good range of information and technology resources is now available, but the school is aware that opportunities are sometimes missed to enhance learning through better use of ICT in some subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Assessments of pupils' progress are regular and thorough. Any potential underachievement is quickly identified and action taken to ensure that all pupils achieve their best. The senior management team has outstandingly good knowledge of each pupil's academic and personal development.

Procedures are good for child protection, and health and safety, and pupils and adults are secure in a clean and carefully maintained environment. Adults in the school respond thoughtfully and sensitively to the needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties. External agencies provide extra support whenever necessary. A good induction system settles children into the Foundation Stage, and pupils in Year 2 confidently look forward to their transfer to junior school. Parents' and carers' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive, and they are closely involved in their children's learning. Procedures to ensure regular attendance are good, and the school's emphasis on the importance of regular attendance helps pupils achieve well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Outstanding leadership and management during the past two years have produced significant improvements in the quality of education and the achievement of pupils. The school is exceptionally well placed to make further improvements. Parents hold the school in high regard. Their carefully gathered views influence change at all levels, and they fully recognise the extent of recent improvements.

The senior management team and subject leaders have developed an excellent system to indicate precisely where improvements are needed. In all subjects, a comprehensive range of information is used very effectively to generate improvement. The leadership and management of teaching and learning are very well organised. Staff readily learn from each other, and are given very good support and guidance to help them improve their work. Subject leaders' expertise contributes significantly to improving pupils' attainment and progress in all subjects.

Staff and governors welcome the clear and ambitious direction provided by the headteacher, and all agree with her vision of how the school should move into its next stage of development. The senior management team continually checks implementation of the improvement plan, and staff are aware of what remains to be done. The governing body works closely with staff, supporting them and challenging them effectively to make the school better.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 June 2006

Dear Children

We enjoyed visiting your school and meeting you. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. We agree with you that yours is a good school and we liked many of the things we saw. Here are some of them:

- You are making good progress with your work and are keeping fit and healthy.
- You arrive on time, attend regularly, enjoy school, work hard and behave well.
- Your teachers help you do your best in your work and help you grow into mature and responsible people.
- Adults look after you very well indeed and your headteacher, staff and governors lead the school excellently.

There are just one or two things that teachers need to do to make your school even better:

- Improve the use of information and communication technology, including computers, in all subjects to help you learn even better.
- Help you see, from the beginning of lessons, how your work will be assessed.

We wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr R Sadler Lead Inspector