



# Thurnham Church of England Infant School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 118629  
**LEA** Kent  
**Inspection number** 280360  
**Inspection dates** 27 June 2006 to 28 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Susan Orpin AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant	<b>School address</b>	The Landway
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Bearsted
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 7		Maidstone, Kent ME14 4BL
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01622 737685
<b>Number on roll</b>	268	<b>Fax number</b>	01622 630173
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr John Wale
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 October 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Freda Denyer

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 7	27 June 2006 - 28 June 2006	280360

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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.

## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Thurnham is a large Church of England infant school. Pupils are mainly White British and none are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average. The number eligible for free school meals is also well below average.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

Thurnham is an outstanding school. It is an exciting place to learn, where all adults work hard together to ensure pupils are happy and succeed. As a consequence, pupils excel in their work. Good teaching, combined with an excellent partnership with parents, helps pupils to achieve in an outstanding way. Consequently, by the time they leave standards are exceptionally high.. Parents are exceedingly pleased with the work of the school. One commented, reflecting the views of many, that "home-school communication is excellent." Parents are encouraged and supported by teachers to help improve their children's progress. The school's level of care and tracking of pupils' progress are outstanding. Pupils know their targets and use them very effectively to learn. The curriculum is exciting and stimulating, so pupils have a passion to learn and think for themselves. They love coming to school. Occasionally pupils have to listen for too long so there is less time for them to fully benefit from the exciting tasks planned. Provision for children in Reception is outstanding, as is their progress. They excel in all areas so, by the time they start in Year 1, children's attainment exceeds the goals expected for their age and they are already working at the next level. The outstanding progress continues in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' personal development and their well-being are outstanding. Pupils care for each other, enjoy school and behave impeccably. Leadership and management are outstanding and the school's self-evaluation is accurate in identifying what needs to be done, although a little modest. The school provides outstanding value for money and has improved very well since the last inspection, demonstrating exceptional capacity for continued improvement.

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

- Improve the use of time in lessons to make sure that pupils always have time to benefit fully from the activities set and spend less time listening.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Children start school with attainment that is often higher than might be expected, especially in their social and language skills. Their progress in Reception is outstanding, so that by the time they join Year 1, they exceed all the goals expected for their age. Pupils make exceptional progress in Years 1 and 2, so that by the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are very high. Over recent years, standards have been steadily improving. A slight dip in mathematics results was identified and acted upon, so mathematics results have shown particular improvement. Pupils' writing is a notable strength, among boys as well as girls, and this is reflected through their work in other subjects. Pupils' skills in problem solving and thinking for themselves are very well developed. Higher-attaining pupils are working at levels usually expected from older pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make outstanding progress towards their individual targets. The school

is likely to exceed the targets set for Year 2 because they have made particularly good progress over recent months.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils behave exceptionally well, show high levels of consideration for others and are enthusiastic about school. Pupils' attendance is good, despite a few families who take holidays in term time. Reception children are extremely caring towards each other and readily share, work together and take turns. Pupils are exceptionally thoughtful, valuing themselves and others, as illustrated by sharing a smile with "the visitor" during circle time. Pupils know how to keep healthy and safe. They choose healthy options at lunchtime and engage in physical activity with vigour. Pupils' awareness of safety is strong and actively promoted by the pupil health and safety representatives. Pupils feel safe, knowing that adults will deal effectively with any problems they may have. Pupils have a very strong influence on life at school through the school council. They enthusiastically contribute to the wider community, for example, in their support for overseas farmers, through a charity project. Their success in learning basic skills and their well-developed ability to work together set them up extremely well for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very high expectations. They engage pupils' attention and motivate their classes to work hard through stimulating activities. Excellent relationships mean that pupils are confident to ask questions. They are all actively involved in tasks, with many varied opportunities to produce ideas independently and develop their skills in problem solving. Teaching assistants work in close partnership with teachers, making a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. However, there are slight variations in the quality of teaching. When pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher, teaching is slightly less effective because the opportunity to benefit fully from stimulating tasks is curtailed. In Reception, teaching is outstanding. Teachers organise exciting experiences for children, in all areas for learning. For example, in a Reception lesson, there were many stimulating tasks, including role play in a garden centre shop, photographing and examining flowers through a microscope and comparing the seeds in different kinds of fruit. The teacher's planning and organisation, together with the exceptionally effective use of questions by adults, helped children learn through their experiences. Effective assessment ensures work is carefully matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers mark and discuss work with pupils regularly, so they are very clear about how to improve. Individual targets in literacy are suitably challenging and used exceptionally well to help improve pupils' progress. Targets for mathematics are not yet quite as specific as those in literacy.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding. Work is very carefully planned to ensure that all subjects are covered through exciting and relevant topics, so learning is fun. The very effective programme of personal, social and health education helps pupils gain confidence, develops their social skills and teaches them to stay healthy and safe. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop and use their skills in information and communication technology as part of their daily learning. Frequent visitors and regular trips enrich the curriculum considerably. This experience is further enhanced through professionally led activities, including interactive pantomimes, problem-solving days, science shows, multicultural dancers and musicians. These events capture pupils' interest and help develop their skills of communication and cooperation to solve problems. The school provides good opportunities for extra-curricular activities such as the physical education club and lunchtime skipping and gardening clubs that are enthusiastically attended by many pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is outstanding. Children are helped to settle into the school extremely well and the arrangements for their transfer to the junior school are equally good. The arrangements for the safety and protection of pupils are secure. The school promotes the importance of a healthy lifestyle extremely well through the curriculum, dining arrangements and the provision of healthy snacks. They are highly ambitious for all pupils and are determined that all pupils should have excellent attendance. Liaison with a wide range of external agencies is very effective. Teachers place a high priority on making sure every pupil feels important and this is reflected in the pupils' comments about why they really like celebrating birthdays 'Because you don't feel left out.' Teachers monitor pupils' progress very closely throughout the year. Teachers guide pupils to improve their work very well through marking and feedback in discussion. They provide highly focussed additional support if a pupil is seen to be falling behind. Liaison with parents is outstanding so they feel extremely well informed about their child's progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher has successfully created an effective team that consistently promotes the school's aims of striving for high achievement and caring for each other. Teaching is being developed very well by analysing any shortfalls and following up any further action. All staff work together to identify and tackle any slight weaknesses rigorously and thoroughly. The success of this approach can be seen in the improvement of mathematics. Careful account is taken of the views of parents and pupils in planning school developments. For example, through the school council, pupils have been able to comment on improving the school

---

environment. The school works with parents in an outstanding way, ensuring that they are well informed and encouraging their contributions. One parent's comments reflect the views of many: "The school works extremely hard to develop our child's full potential and keeps us regularly informed so we are able to be involved." Governance is outstanding. Governors give very good support to the school and have a very clear view of its strengths and weaknesses. The school's selfevaluation is accurate, with an astute grasp of action needed for continuing improvement. They set very high standards for themselves. Teachers are encouraged to be innovative through excellent opportunities for training. As a result, managers at all levels have clear vision and a commitment to further improvement. The school has an outstanding track record in achieving its aims. Its strong capacity to improve is reflected in overall improvement since the last inspection.





## Inspection judgements

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

### 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>	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	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

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

29 June 2006 Dear Pupils Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. Your school is a very friendly and happy place and we enjoyed meeting you. We judged that Thurnham Infants is an outstanding school. This is what we found out:

You enjoy coming to school, work very hard, achieve exceptionally well and reach outstanding standards by the time you leave.

Your behaviour is excellent, you are very friendly and you are making a lot of difference to your community.

You are taught well and the grown-ups are exceptionally good at working with your parents so you learn very well.

Grown-ups are extremely good at keeping you safe and healthy. The people in charge of the school want the best for you and listen to your ideas. We have asked them to make sure that in lessons you do not have to listen for too long, so you get more time to do the exciting work that teachers plan for you. Your school gives you an extremely good start and the grown-ups are rightly very proud of you. You can help to make your school even better by continuing your outstanding efforts. We wish you all the best for the future. Yours sincerely Sue Orpin Lead Inspector  
Alexandra House 33 Kingsway London WC2B 6SE T 0207 421 6800 F 0207 421 6707 [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)