Thomas Reade Primary School

Inspection Report

Better education and care

Unique Reference Number	123073
LEA	Oxfordshire LEA
Inspection number	281395
Inspection dates	19 October 2005 to 20 October 2005
Reporting inspector	Bernice Magson AI

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

Type of school	Primary	**School address**	Radley Road
School category	Community		Abingdon
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		OX14 3RR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	**Telephone number**	01235 554795
Number on roll	202	**Fax number**	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body	**Chair of governors**	Mrs R Fleming
Date of previous inspection	1 November 1999	**Headteacher**	Mr J Serle

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 11	19 October 2005 – 20 October 2005	281395

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school, where the vast majority of pupils are of white British origin. A small minority are of other ethnic groups, but none are at an early stage of learning English. Socio-economic indicators are varied but average overall. Pupil numbers have declined significantly and, currently, there are 202 pupils on roll. In the Foundation Stage, 30 pupils are in full or part-time education. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. In the last two years the school has experienced considerable turnover in its staffing. There have been changes in leadership and management of the school, which include the recent appointment of a new headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Although the school judges its overall effectiveness as good, it is in fact satisfactory. The school is improving rapidly under the leadership of the new headteacher. Pupil's achievement and standards are average overall. Standards are better in science than in mathematics and English. However there are signs of improvement in all three subjects as a result of recent improvements in teaching as a result of recent changes which are yet to be embedded. Pupils in the Foundation Stage achieve well. Those with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress. Pupils make good progress in their personal development. They feel safe and secure and behave well. There is a good climate of care and support. Teaching quality is mostly good and, in some lessons in mathematics, is outstanding. New teachers are having a positive impact and specialist teachers enhance the provision in modern languages, music and sports. Although assessment is satisfactory, recently introduced systems are developing well. However, there remain some inconsistencies in monitoring the performance of more able pupils in literacy and numeracy. The curriculum is good, especially the very many extra-curricular activities. Good use is made of the wider community to enrich pupils' experiences, raise their confidence and improve their well-being. The headteacher is an effective driving force; he has built a good cohesive team of staff and governors who are developing new skills of monitoring how well they are doing. They recognise that more needs to be done to monitor the progress of more able pupils. Parents, teachers and governors recognise and value his good contribution in providing stability after a period of considerable change. Issues raised in the previous report have been tackled and the school has the capacity to improve further. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

Raise achievement and standards by:* Creating more focused opportunities to use writing and ICT in other subjects* setting appropriately challenging work for the more able * Improving existing links with parents

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average and progress is satisfactory. When pupils enter the Foundation Stage they have average standards for their age, with below average social skills. By the end of the reception year almost all achieve the goals expected for their age, achieving well in their personal, social and emotional development. Standards remain average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and there are a few variations in the achievement of different groups, for instance the more able pupils underachieve in mathematics. By the end of Year 6 standards continue to be average overall and achievement is satisfactory. However, standards in science are consistently above average and, in the most recent national tests, more than half of all pupils exceeded expectations for their age. In English and mathematics, the performance of

pupils varies over time. Provisional results for 2005 indicate improved standards in mathematics especially by more able pupils. Standards in mathematics are above average and average in English. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers and minority ethnic groups achieve satisfactorily.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and provision for the pupils' well-being are good. Pupils are happy, enthusiastic learners who enjoy school and have good attitudes to their work because staff support them well. Their attendance is outstanding. Relationships are good. Pupils are pleased with the positive changes that have taken place over the past year. They feel that their views are listened to and acted upon where appropriate. They have good confidence and a positive self-esteem. In lessons, pupils competently mark and comment on their own work. They are developing good skills of responsibility and self-knowledge. Pupils' behaviour is good overall although there are some instances of inappropriate behaviour, when they are supervised less closely. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. They have a growing understanding of major faiths, helped partially by an international link with Pakistan. There are good efforts to help others less fortunate, such as with charity collections. Pupils are beginning to understand the importance of making healthy eating choices and how to stay safe and healthy. Pupils have recently purchased playground equipment to give greater opportunities for physical and social development. Suitable programmes for sex and drugs education ensure that pupils understand about personal care. The school uses assemblies and circle time to promote sensitive and thoughtful appreciation of others.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that the quality of teaching and learning is good. Strengths and weaknesses in teaching are now identified through regular monitoring and improvements introduced. For example, pupils are now taught in ability groups in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 and this has helped to improve teaching quality and raise standards. Teachers have also helped improve the quality of teaching by using interactive whiteboards skilfully to enliven lessons. Some lessons in mathematics are now outstanding. In the inspection pupils were motivated and challenged to respond to mathematical quizzes and this was having a significant impact on improving their standards. The introduction of specialist staff has improved teaching of modern languages, sports and music. Pupils are now introduced to a good range of learning experiences and through the enthusiasm of staff are keen to use newly acquired skills in out-of-school activities. All lessons are well planned and instructions are clear so that pupils know what they are expected to learn. However, more able pupils are not always stretched sufficiently and this restricts their progress. For example, there are

too few links made between subjects to provide pupils with meaningful writing experiences. Teachers encourage pupils to share learning through paired and small group discussions. Although the use of technology is increasing to help pupils develop their thinking skills, there are not always enough opportunities across the subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties are taught well and make similar progress to their peers, because of good levels of support from teaching assistants. Assessment is developing well and there are now suitable checks made on the progress of each individual. However, the information is not yet used consistently to plan learning. Work is marked thoroughly and pupils understand how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum is good and has been reviewed recently to meet the needs of all learners. The well organised provision in the Foundation Stage gives the pupils learning activities that are interesting and relevant. Resources are used effectively to provide pupils with a wide range of experiences. Recent spending has improved the quality and quantity of reading books and dictionaries. Interactive whiteboards in every classroom are used effectively to illustrate and enliven discussions. Good use is made of the computer suite to develop ICT skills, although computers are not used enough to support other subjects. The curriculum is enriched through a very good range of clubs, visits and visitors and these are greatly enjoyed by pupils. Pupils' personal, social and health education is well-planned and a good emphasis on giving pupils a clear understanding of the importance of staying safe and healthy. Young enterprise schemes encourage pupils to identify and develop skills for their future economic well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Provision for care, support and guidance is good and central to the school's ethos. Parents express positive views about care and welfare arrangements. There is a good programme of personal and social education, including an extensive range of well-attended sporting activities. This is a well-ordered community where the pupils feel secure. Thorough procedures are in place for child protection and health and safety. Risk assessments are undertaken regularly. Good links with outside agencies ensure that pupils' needs are fully addressed and they stay healthy and safe.Assessment arrangements are developing well. Pupils are closely involved in reviewing their personal targets, which is helping them to understand how to improve. Although assessment systems have improved they still need further development, for example in tracking pupils' progress over time. However there is increased additional support for pupils with specific needs in order to raise their attainment. For example, gifted and talented pupils have taken part in a project in mathematics with other schools. Parents are pleased with the work of the school, but would like to have greater involvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Inspection evidence shows that leadership and management are satisfactory, although the school judges that they are good. The new headteacher is providing good leadership and his enthusiasm and commitment are instrumental in motivating pupils, staff, and governors. He has organised the staff team into a cohesive group focused on raising standards. Among pupils there is now a keen desire to learn. However, there has been too limited a time for many recent initiatives to be fully effective and bring about consistent improvement. There is capacity to build on recent successes. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have provided satisfactory support during a period of recent and frequent changes. All statutory responsibilities are fulfilled and all key issues of the last inspection have been tackled effectively. Governors have a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are pleased with the impact of recent initiatives in raising standards. Current strategic plans identify appropriate priorities for further improvement. There is good financial planning to maintain staffing and resources at current levels. The school is eager to improve links with parents and is developing strategies to seek their views. Monitoring of the school's performance has been much improved. The effective monitoring of teaching has brought good improvement and is beginning to impact on pupils' achievement. The school recognises the need for further monitoring and development to improve the teaching of more able pupils, especially in literacy and numeracy. Overall the school provides satisfactory value for money.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	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	3	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?	3	NA
The standards[1] reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	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	1	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?	2	NA

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[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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	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	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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

You probably remember that we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and would like to thank you for the help you gave us during the two days. It was good to hear of the exciting activities, which you are involved in, especially about all the sporting and music activities. We have written a full report about our visit which we have sent to Mr Serle.

The inspection team were pleased with the following:* The good standards you achieve in science* Your good behaviour and care given to others * The good teaching you receive which is helping you to do better* Personal targets in literacy and numeracy which help you to understand how to improve* The hard work of pupils, staff and governors to improve resources and the environment* The good direction given by your headteacher to help the school improve further.

We would like to see you do even better by practising your writing and ICT skills more often in other subjects. We have asked your teachers to check your progress thoroughly so that all children are challenged and supported to do their best work. We think that your parents and carers could have a greater role in school and we have asked that links with families are better.

With our good wishes for your future at Thomas Reade School.

Bernice Magson, Lead Inspector