



Thurlow Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124698
LEA SUFFOLK LEA
Inspection number 281783
Inspection dates 28 September 2005 to 29 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Godfrey Bancroft LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Little Thurlow
School category	Voluntary controlled		CB9 7HY
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01440783281
Number on roll	83	Fax number	01440783281
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.P Capon
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Elizabeth Graham

Age group 4 to 9	Inspection dates 28 September 2005 - 29 September 2005	Inspection number 281783
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector over a two day period.

Description of the school

Thurlow Primary is a small rural school. The socio-economic circumstances of the community are generally favourable. The percentage of children eligible for free school meals is low. Attainment on entry is average. The percentage of children with special educational needs is similar to that found in most schools and there are no children with statements of special educational need. A small number of children come from minority ethnic backgrounds and there are no children who speak English as an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Thurlow Primary is an outstanding school in which children attain high standards and achieve very well. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is very effective. The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are also outstanding. The curriculum provides children with a very good range of opportunities that matches their learning needs very well. This is a happy school, in which children are cared for very well and enjoy their learning. The work of the school benefits greatly from the strong and very effective leadership of the headteacher. Parents and carers think the school is very good. However, the school does not formally seek their opinions about the quality of provision as often as it should. Despite its success the school is not complacent and is always looking for ways to improve. Since its last inspection the school has improved very well. All the issues identified at that time have been addressed successfully. The capacity for further improvement is also very good. The school provides outstanding value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Seek the views of parents and carers about how good they think the school is.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards, at the end of Year 2, are well above those expected for children at this age. The school uses a very good range of accurate testing procedures which show clearly that these high standards are maintained in Years 3 and 4. All children, including those with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, achieve very well. Children in the Foundation Stage also make very good progress. The 2004 test results, for the end of Year 2, are the most recent for which national comparisons are available. In these tests the percentage of children attaining at levels higher than those expected for their age was well above average. Over the last five years standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 have been consistently high. This pattern is being sustained by the children who are currently in the school. They respond very well to the challenging targets set for their attainment. Children of all ages are competent and confident speakers. They communicate well with each other and with adults. This helps to lay the foundation for the very good progress they make. The inspection also found evidence of high standards in music.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This is a happy school with a very good working atmosphere. Children enjoy learning and appreciate the very good levels of support and guidance they receive. Children behave very well. Even the youngest children are mature, skilful and independent learners. Children of all ages continue to work hard, even when they are not directly

supported by adults. Children are very helpful to each other and to adults. They show concern for each other's well-being and are eager to celebrate each other's successes. They care greatly about those less fortunate than themselves. For example, the school sponsors a child in Africa. Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is particularly good and daily assemblies contribute well to this. The school works very effectively to raise children awareness of the beliefs and traditions of people from other cultures. Children also appreciate music and enjoy singing. There is a rota of children who play the piano each day as children come back in from playtime. Children are very much aware of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The headteacher has brought together an outstanding team of teachers and teaching assistants. Teachers plan their lessons carefully with activities that match children's learning needs very well. This is based on very good systems that assess accurately how well children are progressing and identify their future learning needs precisely. Relationships between teachers and children are very good and give children the confidence to learn very effectively. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to children's learning and are very well informed about children's needs. A very good feature of teaching is the clear focus on children knowing what they are going to learn and being aware of how well they are achieving. This helps their learning considerably. Teachers use information and communication technology effectively to support children's learning and to make lessons exciting. The basic skills of speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics are taught very well. This underpins the very good progress that children make.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is very good and meets the needs of the children very well. The range of additional activities organised to enhance children's learning are also very good. There is a good programme of lunch time and after school activities and educational visits. The weekly curriculum enhancement afternoons make a very positive contribution to children's enjoyment of their learning. These are led very effectively by teaching assistants, supported by teachers, and include, amongst other activities, art, cookery, digital photography and French. The children's knowledge of and performance of music are enhanced by the very good work of a visiting teacher. The recently introduced transition programme to support children as they move from the Foundation Stage into Year 1 is very effective and takes account of their learning needs very well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support of children are outstanding. Teachers know the children very well. They provide learning activities which meet children's needs very effectively helping them to make very good progress. Children with learning difficulties make very good progress because of the very good support they receive from teachers and from teaching assistants. The children work very hard to achieve challenging targets set for their learning. Teachers work very effectively to ensure that children are well-informed about what they are doing, how well they are getting on and about what they need to do to improve. There are very good procedures in place for ensuring that all children are safe. The arrangements to ensure child protection are also very good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership of the headteacher is very effective. She ensures that everyone in the school has a clear vision of where it is going and how it will get there. The school is not complacent. It wants to become even better. The areas for development, identified by the headteacher and governing body, are the result of thoughtful and accurate self-evaluation. This provides a clear picture of how well the school is working and is based on the very thorough analysis of standards and children's achievements. Governors give the school good support. The more long standing governors are knowledgeable and well informed about the school's strengths and the areas for development. However, some governors are very new and are not yet involved fully in checking on and evaluating how well the school is doing. Financial planning is good and governors ensure that the available resources are used wisely. Office staff make a very good contribution to the smooth day-to-day running of the school. Parents have very positive views of the school. However, the school does not formally seek parents' opinions about the education it provides as often as it should.

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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?	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	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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?	1	NA
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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

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

Dear Children, Thank you for talking to me and for being so helpful during the inspection. I think, and I know you and your parents agree, that you are very lucky to attend an outstanding school. I like the ways in which your teachers and other staff at school take very good care of you. They also help you to do very well. I was very pleased to see that you are very helpful and caring towards each other. It is good that you all work so hard and do very well in your reading, writing and mathematics. I also think that your headteacher and school governors are very good at making sure that everything at your school works well. As a result of the inspection your headteacher and governors are going to make sure that they have ways of knowing what your parents and carers think about how well the school is doing. Well done. You can be very proud of yourselves and your school,