

# Little Thurrock Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114839
<b>Local Authority</b>	THURROCK
<b>Inspection number</b>	290053
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sandra Tweddell

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	510
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs B Rew
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs L Jackson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 September 2002
<b>School address</b>	Rectory Road Grays Essex RM17 5SW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01375 373586
<b>Fax number</b>	01375 371183

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This very large school takes pupils from the residential areas around Grays and beyond. It has a lower proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, a lower proportion from minority ethnic groups and a lower proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities than most schools, although the proportion of pupils in the last group is much higher in some years and is growing. For some years, the school has experienced difficulties in recruiting staff. The school's awards include Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Eating and Sports Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Pupils are given a sound education and value for money is satisfactory. The difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff until recently has affected pupils' achievement, but this year, staffing has stabilised. Good leadership from the recently appointed headteacher and a clear direction for improvement is starting to improve achievement. The inspection team agreed with the school's evaluation of its effectiveness.

Results in national assessments at the ends of Year 2 and 6 are close to average. Children in the reception classes receive a good education and many make good progress to reach standards generally above those expected for their age except in literacy where standards are average. Standards in English, mathematics and science are close to average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Achievement is satisfactory for most groups of pupils but some more able pupils do not achieve highly enough. The inspection found that standards of reading across the school have risen this year because it has been a school priority.

Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well, they enjoy their lessons and attendance is good. They are supportive of one another, exemplified in an assembly where children presented their work to the whole school. Every pupil sat up and listened attentively. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory with a good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils understand about safe and healthy lifestyles. There is still more to do in ensuring the depth of coverage in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but there is inconsistency between years and classes, particularly in how assessment is used to ensure that all pupils achieve as they should. Pupils do not always receive the academic guidance they need to enable them to know how to improve their work. Monitoring by the senior team has improved teaching and learning. Children's personal needs are looked after well, as many parents agree.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The self-evaluation is accurate based on careful monitoring by the senior team, but has not yet raised standards, except in reading. Governors have a wide range of experience and support the school well. They have rightly identified that they need to review their monitoring of the school as they rely too much on the headteacher for information. Many subject leaders are new to the role and are not confident in assessing standards and quality in their subjects. Professional development is being used well to increase their understanding.

There is a strong commitment and willingness from all staff to continual improvement. The capacity to improve is satisfactory and is increasing as staff become involved in self-evaluation.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Make the use of assessment consistent across the school.
- Ensure that more able pupils do as well as they should.
- Give subject leaders the skills to monitor standards and quality in their subjects.
- Improve the depth of coverage of subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an OFSTED inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Children enter school with average attainment overall but below average attainment in literacy, particularly in reading. They make up the ground and standards at the end of the Reception year are broadly average in reading and higher in other areas of learning. Results in national assessments at the ends of Year 2 and 6 are close to average. Achievement from Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory but more able pupils do not achieve highly enough which has depressed results in national tests over the past few years. This is partly due to the difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff but also to weak assessment procedures. Reading has been an area of concern that has been tackled well over the past two years, and standards in reading have risen as a result. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve soundly and often well as the provision is thoughtful and thorough. This is appreciated by many parents. The few pupils for whom English is a new language achieve well in learning English as the school works closely with external specialist support. There are some differences in the performance of girls and boys and action has been taken in English but it is too early to see the results of this. Standards of presentation in a number of classes are poor. The school targets are appropriately challenging.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

This area is good. Pupils enjoy their learning and respond very well to the caring ethos of the school. Relationships between adults and pupils are good and pupils behave very well in lessons, as well as in the playground and around school. As a consequence, children feel safe and are happy to come to school. Pupils are well aware of the benefits of adopting a healthy lifestyle. Attendance is good and has improved since the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory. Spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory and moral and social development good; most children value each other and get on well. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their future economic well being. The problems with the small playground are tackled effectively and children cope well with the small space. Their behaviour in the small hall when the large number of pupils came together for assembly was exemplary. Pupils make a strong contribution to the school community through the school council. They have been successful in bidding for funds from the school association and have improved 'golden time'.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good features but vary across classes and years. Strengths are in the good relationships between teachers and the range of interesting activities planned. Good use is made of the interactive whiteboards in classes to involve pupils in their learning. In the reception classes, younger children work together well and a good range of activities promote children's learning effectively. In Years 1 to 6 many lessons cater adequately for the full range of ability, but in a number there is no difference in the expectations of what pupils should do and all work at the same task. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and this team work is particularly effective in supporting pupils with behavioural problems. The teaching of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is effective and enables them to learn equally as well as other pupils. The quality of teachers' marking varies

and often does not identify what pupils should do to improve. New assessment procedures are in place to help teachers track pupils' progress but these procedures are not yet used effectively enough to consistently challenge pupils of all abilities, particularly the more able.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. It follows national guidance for English and mathematics and throughout this year, staff have been reviewing and refining the curriculum to take account of the move towards single-age classes. The school still has more to do to provide better coverage of subjects other than English, mathematics and science. French has been introduced and has strengthened the curriculum. Creative weeks, such as those involving science and the performing arts, enrich pupils' learning. The curriculum is supplemented well by a good range of clubs and extra-curricular activities and visits to places of interest such as museums and art galleries. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about the importance of physical activity and healthy eating.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Procedures for safeguarding children are effective, are reviewed regularly and meet all current requirements. Health and safety matters are tackled efficiently and there is a pro-active approach to risk assessments. The processes for monitoring attendance are good and attendance has improved to be above average. Pupils are supported very well in developing social skills and self-confidence. The support for their academic progress is unsatisfactory as it is inconsistent. Marking is used well to praise pupil's successes but it is rarely used as a vehicle to explain the way work could be improved. Only in some classes, do individual tracking and target setting show children what they need to do to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory but the leadership of the headteacher is good. The headteacher has set a very clear direction for the school with high standards at the heart of the work. The leadership team is now successfully developing new, relevant and well-considered strategies for improving the school. The leadership team has an accurate view of the school's future needs and the action taken has improved achievement, especially in reading. The school works closely in partnership with a number of agencies to support its work. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are very supportive and know the school well. They have rightly identified that they need to strengthen their monitoring as they rely too heavily on the headteacher for information. Many subject leaders are new to the role and do not yet have a good understanding of the standards in their subjects and how well the subject is taught. This is an area that is being tackled. Improvement since the last inspection has been slow until recently, mainly because of staffing difficulties. However, the headteacher is now making teachers more accountable for the achievement of children and has started to raise achievement. The capacity for improvement is therefore satisfactory.

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## Annex A

## 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>
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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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

9 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Little Thurrock Primary School, Grays, RM17 5SW

Thank you for your welcome and for your willingness to talk about your work and your school when we visited it. We would particularly like to thank the school council for letting us sit in on one of their meetings.

Many of you told us that you enjoy coming to school and your improved attendance shows this. You behave well, concentrate and work hard in lessons and learn how to live a safe and healthy lifestyle. We were impressed by the healthy choices of food many of you were making at lunchtime. Most of your parents are pleased with your progress. Staff share the concerns of a few of your parents about the small playground. They do all they can to make sure that playtimes are safe and have plans to make the space bigger for you.

Older pupils will remember that you have had a number of changes of teachers which had started to affect your progress. This has begun to change and Mrs Jackson and the staff have been working hard to make sure that you all achieve as well as you possibly can. The standards of your work are starting to improve as a result.

We have asked your teachers to do four things.

- Make sure that your teachers and yourselves use assessment, such as target ladders, so you all know how well you are doing and how you can improve your work.
- More of you could be achieving higher levels in the tests you take.
- You and your teachers should be clearer about how well you are doing in all subjects.
- Some of the subjects you learn about are not covered in depth.

Thank you once again for all your help during the inspection days and best wishes for the future.

Sandra Tweddell Lead inspector