



# Thaxted Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 115288  
**Local Authority** ESSEX  
**Inspection number** 290192  
**Inspection date** 10 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** John Godwood

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Bardfield Road
<b>School category</b>	Foundation		Thaxted
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		Essex CM6 2LW
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01371830240
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	240	<b>Fax number</b>	01371830232
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr J Jossaume
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs J Chittick
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 March 2002		

<b>Age group</b> 4-11	<b>Inspection date</b> 10 October 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 290192
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector over one day.

## **Description of the school**

This is an average sized primary school. Its social context is relatively advantaged and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. The intake has changed in recent years. Attainment on entry was higher until about five years ago, and is now typical of children nationally. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is average. The school has had several staff changes over the past year, including two new assistant headteachers.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Pupils are very happy in school as a result of excellent support and relationships. Pupils' achievement is outstanding. In the Foundation Stage, children make good progress because the activities are well planned to meet their needs. By Year 2 and Year 6, pupils reach exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science. Their outstanding progress is due to the school's very positive ethos, consistently good teaching and very close monitoring of their progress.

Pupils' personal development is also outstanding. The staff manage pupils consistently and positively, encouraging excellent behaviour through praise and by their own example. Pupils understand and share the school's values. On the playground, Year 6 play leaders organise games for younger children; others are active in caring for the younger ones. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and to think for themselves. The opportunity to learn through exploring ideas is one of the many things that they enjoy about school.

Teaching is usually good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils appreciate teachers' clear explanations and respond very well. Teachers plan carefully for pupils of differing ability and use learning assistants well to provide additional support. They encourage pupils to explain their thinking, although there is some variation in how well this is managed. Marking of pupils' work is good but is not always related sufficiently to pupils' targets. The school has several new teachers this year and it is a school priority to improve the consistency of teaching.

Care and guidance are outstanding. Teachers and support staff work together extremely well to support pupils' individual needs. Pupils' academic guidance is key to their achievement. Pupils know their targets for English and mathematics well. Class teachers and the headteacher monitor their progress closely and carefully plan extra support for those who need it.

Outstanding leadership and management are at the heart of the schools' success. The headteacher has a very clear vision and is very effective in developing staff and teams. The new teachers and new leadership team are quickly gaining ownership of the school's values and high expectations and have made a good start. As a result, teamwork is already of a very high order. Teachers evaluate their own work and support each other well. The quality of self-evaluation is outstanding. The headteacher, supported by the subject coordinators, rigorously monitors all aspects of the school's work, provides feedback and plans continuous improvement. The governors' contribution is also outstanding. As a result, the school's progress since the last inspection and its capacity for further improvement are outstanding.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching in order to increase the proportion of outstanding lessons.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Throughout the school, pupils make outstanding progress and reach exceptionally high standards. In the Foundation Stage children make good progress and meet or exceed the expected standards for their age. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 are exceptionally high in English and mathematics. They have been maintained at a high level despite children's lower standards of attainment on entry.

The progress that pupils make from Year 2 to Year 6 is outstanding, often in the top 10% of schools nationally. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make equally rapid progress. Results in Year 6 national tests have been exceptionally high in English, mathematics and science in most recent years. They improved steadily from 2002 to 2005. The 2006 results are slightly lower, partly because the year group contained more pupils with learning difficulties. However, the school successfully met its challenging targets.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. This is the result of the school's very strong ethos, in which all staff work consistently to guide pupils' personal development. Staff treat pupils with respect and model the behaviour they expect. Pupils subscribe to the school's values and very much enjoy coming to school. As one said, 'People are always smiling.' They particularly appreciate the freedom they have to think and explore ideas. Their attendance and behaviour are outstanding.

Pupils have good opportunities to take responsibility and make a positive contribution to the community. The school council is effective in collecting ideas and suggesting improvements. Older pupils are very caring towards the younger ones. Year 6 play leaders are conscientious in organising games and looking out for lonely children. There are fewer responsibilities available to younger pupils. Assemblies, lessons and special events are very effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is outstanding.

Pupils are taught very clearly how to stay safe and are effectively encouraged to eat healthily and exercise regularly. They are well prepared for adult life through opportunities to use their initiative and their excellent progress in basic skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good, and sometimes outstanding. The new teachers are settling in very well. The headteacher is very effective in monitoring and continually improving teachers' skills. Lessons are very well planned to match pupils' differing

abilities. Teachers manage pupils sensitively and positively and, as a result, pupils respond with interest and enjoyment. Pupils are encouraged very effectively to think for themselves and express their ideas. There are times when this is not managed with sufficient skill to ensure that all pupils are fully engaged in lessons.

Pupils' learning is well guided by their targets for English and mathematics. Increasingly, teachers are developing pupils' independence through engaging them in assessing their own and others' work. Teachers use resources very well to involve pupils actively, including the interactive whiteboards and computers. The work of learning assistants and additional teachers with individuals and groups is very well planned and helps pupils to make better progress. Marking of pupils' work is good, but the feedback on how well pupils are meeting their targets is better in some classes than others, and better in English than mathematics.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It is very well planned to give due emphasis to literacy and numeracy and a balanced approach to other subjects. Pupils benefit from the specialist teaching of music and physical education. Information and communication technology is used well in many subjects. Personal, social and health education is well planned and effective.

The curriculum is enriched very well through visits and visitors and a wide range of clubs. The additional support for pupils with learning difficulties is very well planned and enables them to make outstanding progress. The extension opportunities for gifted and talented pupils are good and improving.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. There are rigorous procedures for child protection and ensuring safety in school. The school's positive ethos and relationships underpin pupils' care and ensure that pupils trust the adults. Pupils' individual needs are monitored carefully and supported very well. Good links with outside agencies are used to provide additional support for pupils when needed.

Academic support and guidance are outstanding and an important contributor to pupils' progress. Throughout the school, pupils' progress is assessed carefully; they are set clear targets and engaged effectively in understanding their targets and how well they are doing. The headteacher takes a close personal interest in each pupil's progress. Additional support is very well planned and monitored to ensure that it is effective in boosting progress.

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## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher's vision and leadership skills are key factors in the school's success. She maintains a strong focus on pupils' academic achievement and on their development as young people. She is very skilled in developing staff and teams through delegation and support. She is rigorous in monitoring all aspects of the school's work and taking speedy action to ensure continuous improvement. As a result, the school has a very strong ethos of mutual respect, in which pupils and staff enjoy their work and challenge themselves to do their very best.

Teamwork is of a very high order. Teachers and other staff are mutually supportive. They set high standards for themselves and learn from each other. The quality of self-evaluation is outstanding. Subject coordinators oversee work in their subjects very well. Teachers evaluate their own and each others' work. Parents' and pupils' views are sought regularly. The vast majority of parents are very pleased with the school. All the staff and governors are involved in evaluating the school's progress and planning improvements.

Governors also make an outstanding contribution. They are fully engaged in guiding the school's direction and checking on its progress. Governors' visits are well planned and productive. Governors play a key role in overseeing the budget and improving the facilities. The school building is very well maintained and has been developed imaginatively to improve pupils' opportunities to learn.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<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>	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

<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.

## Leadership and management

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

11 October 2006

Dear Children

Thaxted Primary School, Bardfield Road, Thaxted, Essex. CM6 2LW

I very much enjoyed my visit to your school. Thank you for your friendly welcome and for sharing your thoughts with me.

You told me that you really like your school because everyone is friendly. I agree that it is an excellent school. The teachers and other staff take very good care of you. You behave very well and are hardly ever away. Pupils and teachers get on very well together and this helps you to make really good progress in your work.

You are very responsible and helpful. I was pleased to see how well you care for each other and how the older children help to look after the younger ones. The play leaders are very good at organising games. The school council does a good job in collecting your views and helping to make changes.

You told me that you enjoy most of your lessons because teachers explain things clearly and you are allowed to learn by exploring things for yourselves. I saw some good lessons on my visit. The teachers make them interesting and make sure you get extra help if you need it. You learn more because you know your targets and teachers ask you to think about how well you are doing. I have asked the school to try and make sure that all the lessons are really good.

The teachers and other staff work very well together to make sure that the school is a happy place and that you do as well as you can. Mrs Chittick has very good plans to keep improving the school.

You are lucky to go to such an exceptionally good school. I think that it will keep getting better. You can help by continuing all the jobs you do, giving your views to the school council, and doing your best to meet your targets.

Yours sincerely

John Godwood (Lead inspector)