



# Thurlaston Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

**Unique Reference Number** 120201  
**Local Authority** Leicestershire  
**Inspection number** 291667  
**Inspection dates** 19–20 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Liz Kounnou

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>	Desford Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Thurlaston
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Leicester LE9 7TE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01455 888243
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	115	<b>Fax number</b>	01455 888243
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Janet Gaten
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Gavin Beetham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 March 2001		

<b>Age group</b> 4–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 19–20 September 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 291667
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## **Amended Report Addendum**

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Thurlaston is a smaller-than-average sized primary school situated in an area of economic advantage. There are four classes, most containing pupils from more than one year group. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. A very small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. There have been several changes to the school's leadership in the last two years. Three new members of staff joined the school at the start of the current school year, including the present headteacher. The school has held an 'Investors in People Award' since 2004.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory and with some areas of particular strength. For example, the quality of education in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. In the years since the last inspection the school has gone through a difficult period, with disruption to its senior leadership. During that time the school has remained well ordered, so that pupils have continued to behave well and attendance has remained above average. National test standards in Year 6 have also been maintained at exceptionally high levels until very recently. Indeed, the school has achieved much improvement to the provision for children in the Reception Year where standards are above average. Children learn quickly in this class because they are challenged all the time and have a lot of fun as they learn new things. There are, therefore, a number of important strengths on which to build. The new headteacher has made an accurate assessment of where the school needs to make rapid improvement. Action has already been taken to improve assessment and draw staff together as a team. Parents express the opinion that things have now begun to move forward again and voice their confidence in the changes. One wrote, 'so far the headteacher seems to be doing an excellent job', while another said 'the school has had a difficult 12 months, but things seem to be improving'.

Pupils say they enjoy school life, and like their school because 'it is small and friendly and everyone knows you'. However, the staffing complications over the past two years have affected pupils' academic performance, and their achievement is now satisfactory, rather than good. As a result, standards have been affected and the most recent national test results in Year 2 and Year 6 fell to an average level. The fall in the Year 6 tests was due in part to this group's prior attainment being lower than usual for the school. Nonetheless, some more able pupils in Years 2 and 6 are not consistently challenged to do their very best. Consequently, fewer pupils gained the higher levels in the 2006 tests than they had in previous years. This weakness was most marked in science and mathematics in Year 2 and in writing in Year 6. The main reason for these shortcomings is the remaining weaknesses in assessment and target setting, and inconsistencies in the quality of guidance pupils receive about how their work could be improved. These weaknesses cause variations in the quality of teaching and learning. Although new systems for checking the school's work have been introduced, it is too early for staff members to have developed the leadership skills to monitor academic performance with enough rigour.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more able pupils are consistently given challenging work in order to demand more from them and increase their achievement.
- Make better use of the information gained from assessment to set challenging targets for pupils of all abilities and to check their progress regularly.
- Give pupils clearer guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average at Years 2 and 6. The exception is found in the reception group and pupils in Year 1, where children of all abilities make excellent progress. Their work is always challenging and fun, so that by the end of the Reception Year standards are above the expected level, and this tremendous start is maintained in Year 1.

The impact of disruptions to the school's leadership over the last two years is particularly evident in the most recent national test results for Year 6 pupils, when standards fell to broadly average. This followed a sustained period of exceptionally high results. At the same time, these results show that pupils' progress over the course of Years 3 to 6 has gradually slowed over the last three years to a now satisfactory level. The greatest impact of the disruption has been to the achievements of more able pupils, particularly in mathematics and science in Year 2, but also in writing in Year 6. As a result, no pupil gained the higher Level 5 in writing in the 2006 national tests. The school set itself challenging targets, but these were not met because pupils' progress was not checked as closely as it should have been. Consequently, pupils who were falling behind were not picked up quickly enough.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Pupils make a valuable contribution to their school through the work of the school council, and council members are proud of the equipment they chose to make playtimes more enjoyable. Pupils' understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle is satisfactory, but stronger in the Reception and Year 1 class. Here children gleefully took part in short, sharp exercises before testing their heart rates and breathing. Pupils feel safe and adopt safe practices throughout the school day. They behave well and enjoy coming to school. Their attendance is good. In Years 5 and 6 pupils say, 'All the lessons are fun and the teachers are kind.' Pupils' good attitudes do not result in high achievement at the moment, because not enough is expected of the most able pupils. Pupils' develop satisfactory skills for life, although their development in literacy, numeracy and ICT skills varies and mirrors teachers' expectations.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but vary in quality ranging from outstanding to occasionally inadequate. This variability contributes to pupils' variable achievement. In the Reception and Year 1 class the oldest and most able children revel in the

challenges they face each day. 'We are writing letters to the Little Red Hen', they giggled with delight, 'we are pretending that we are the animals in the story, and we've got to say sorry!' In no time at all they wrote the letters by themselves.

In other year groups not enough use is made of assessment information to vary the difficulty of tasks for pupils of different abilities, particularly the more able. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities are given help and support in small groups and make satisfactory progress during lessons. Teachers' marking is variable in quality so that not all pupils get enough guidance to help them improve their work.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory, covering all requirements and providing a suitable range of extra activities. The work in each subject is designed to ensure that pupils of all ages cover the recommended topics, but does not always set out how pupils will build on their skills as they move through the school. Consequently, the most able pupils sometimes work at below their capacity. The excellent Foundation Stage curriculum inspires and challenges children of all abilities, and ensures that all pupils in this mixed age class make really good progress.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory, with appropriate procedures for safeguarding pupils. The good relationships between staff and pupils contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of school. There is satisfactory support for those with learning difficulties and disabilities, but academic guidance is not yet consistently effective. For example, not all pupils have challenging individual targets that are routinely shared with them. A successful system has been established in Years 5 and 6 to reward pupils' efforts and achievement. Pupils in this class say 'It is easier this year, we get FAB points for the things we do well'.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Parents say there is a noticeable change of direction since the appointment of the new headteacher. Over time pupils' achievement has fallen steadily. Standards are average and pupils' achievement satisfactory, but higher attaining pupils are not making the progress they should. There is satisfactory capacity to halt and reverse this decline. Demonstrable improvements in the first two weeks of the new school year are based on setting up whole school systems that draw on the good and excellent practice that already exists in the school. Crucially a clear programme of checks has been drawn up, focusing on what difference improvements make to pupils' learning. This monitoring programme is also designed to help governors improve the quality of their strategic planning, and

to help other school leaders develop their leadership roles and play a full part in establishing good levels of achievement.

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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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
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>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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.

## 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**

Thank you all for making me so welcome and helping me when I visited your school. Your school is satisfactory. You make satisfactory progress, although those of you who find work easy could do even better. Since you came back to school after the holiday, lots of new things have already been happening to make your school better and help you all learn as well as you can.

Here are some important things I found out about your school:

- Exciting lessons help those of you in the Reception class to have fun and learn really well.
- You behave well in lessons and outside in the playgrounds, and enjoy your life at school.
- All the staff and the governors work well together and are determined to help you make better progress in your lessons.

These are the things your school has been asked to do to make it even better:

- Make sure that those of you who find work easy are also challenged to do your very best.
- Make sure teachers use the information they get from school tests to set targets that help you improve your learning.
- Help you to understand how well you are doing in your work and what you need to learn next.

Thank you again for helping me this week.