



Thurton Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121063
Local Authority NORFOLK
Inspection number 291987
Inspection dates 11–12 December 2006
Reporting inspector Gulshanbir Kayembe

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ashby Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Thurton, Thurton
Age range of pupils	4–11		Norfolk NR14 6AT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01508 480335
Number on roll (school)	86	Fax number	01508 480478
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ms Maria Todd
		Headteacher	Mrs Sonia Innes
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2000		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 11–12 December 2006	Inspection number 291987
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Thurton is a smaller than average sized school situated in a rural part of Norfolk. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average and the proportion identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly in line with national averages. Attainment on entry is average. Nearly all pupils are White British and only a very small proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds. No pupils are at the early stages of learning English. A new headteacher took up post in September.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement in Key Stage 2.

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate because achievement in Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory. Not enough progress has been made since the last inspection and the school is not as good now as it was then. However, the school is providing an adequate standard of education in the Foundation Stage where standards and provision are good.

There has been a significant change in staffing over the last year and teaching is currently satisfactory. It is good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Though teaching is satisfactory across Key Stage 2, there are some weaknesses which impact adversely on pupils' progress. Work is not always well matched to individual needs and opportunities are missed to involve pupils actively in lessons. Although pupils currently make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2 standards are not as high as they should be because pupils have made insufficient progress since the end of Year 2. For example, pupils currently in Year 6 reached above average standards by the end of Year 2. However, their standards are now only average, pointing to a deterioration in performance between the end of Year 2 and the start of Year 6.

Standards are above average by the end of the Foundation Stage as a result of good teaching and a lively curriculum that is well focused on meeting individual needs. Standards in Year 2 are currently average and improving. Pupils in Year 2 have not sustained the above average standards they reached at the end of their reception year. However, good teaching is now enabling them to make marked progress, especially in writing, and to get back on track to attain better results.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. They enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning. Attendance and behaviour are also good. Pupils have a secure understanding of healthy lifestyles but do not always make healthy choices. They work and play safely and feel safe and secure at the school because it provides a friendly and caring environment. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of education and future life. There is a strong culture of care and most aspects of health and safety are good. However, the school's health and safety policy is inadequate in one major respect and concerns about health and safety have been shared with the school. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory and improving and the school has successfully bid for additional funding to further enhance provision.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher is providing good leadership and has secured a common understanding amongst staff and governors about the school's strengths and weaknesses. She has established good systems for monitoring the work of the school, tracking pupils' progress and assessing their

attainment accurately. These systems are beginning to be used effectively to help improve achievement. However, the school is at the early stages of using data to inform curricular planning and as a result the curriculum is no better than satisfactory. Pupils are not clear about the levels they should be working at and they do not always know how to improve their work. The headteacher has established an effective senior leadership team, and, based on improved systems and currently satisfactory provision, the capacity to improve is also satisfactory. Most subject leaders are new to their roles and, as yet, they have limited involvement in monitoring their areas of work. However, they have already undertaken some training to strengthen their roles and more is planned for next term. The school has begun to provide satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in Key Stage 2 by making effective use of data to plan work that suitably challenges individual pupils
- Develop teaching by providing pupils with more opportunities to be actively involved in lessons and to have a better understanding of how to improve their work
- Address the concerns raised about health and safety
- Develop the roles of subject leaders so that they are actively involved in helping to raise standards and improve achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 has been unsatisfactory over time. The 2005 and 2006 results show that pupils in Year 6 underachieved in comparison to their performance in Year 2. Achievement in science has been particularly weak. There is little significant difference between boys and girls except in mathematics where girls have performed less well than boys at the end of Key Stage 2. The school is tackling this issue. There has been a steady trend of decline in the results of Key Stage 1 tests. This was arrested in 2006 when results were a little above average and an improvement on those of the previous two years.

Progress currently in the school is satisfactory though it is clear that pupils in Key Stage 2 have not sustained the standards they achieved at the end of Year 2. Achievement is good in Key Stage 1 with Year 1 pupils demonstrating above average standards. Though Year 2 pupils have not sustained the above average standards they gained at the end of their Reception year, they are now making marked progress and making up for any lost ground. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make similar progress as others. Good teaching and a stimulating environment enable children in reception to make a good start to their learning and achieve well. The very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve in line with others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Attendance, punctuality and behaviour are good. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and their lessons although older pupils, especially girls, often do not like mathematics. Pupils like, and respond well to, the new awards, such as the Golden Duster Award, given each week to the class with the tidiest cloakroom. Whilst pupils are polite and helpful and get on well with one another, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory reflecting the quality of provision. The school council makes a satisfactory contribution to the school. Pupils engage in conversation readily and with ease. However, they do not always put their points of view across confidently enough and are, to some extent, dependent on their teachers. Most pupils understand what they need to do to live a healthy life and make satisfactory efforts to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils work and play carefully and older ones look after younger pupils effectively. They feel safe and behave in a manner that ensures their own and others' safety. Given that standards are broadly average by the time pupils leave school, they are satisfactorily prepared for the next step in education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good teaching includes a good focus on the needs of different groups and good use of teaching assistants. Teachers have a good rapport with pupils and this encourages and motivates pupils to work hard. The use of questioning is thorough and teachers ask probing questions which help to develop pupils' thinking. However, they are not always pushed enough to give detailed answers. Learning outcomes are well communicated to pupils and are mostly focused on what pupils are expected to learn. Sometimes, though, they are simply a list of activities. In Key Stage 2, pupils are not always given opportunities to take an active role in lessons. Work provided for them is not matched precisely to their individual needs though support from teaching assistants and teachers ensures that all now make satisfactory progress. Opportunities are missed for using computers. Homework is appropriate and marking is frequent and usually thorough although written comments are not always informative enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curricular provision is satisfactory and meets the needs of different groups of pupils adequately. Long term planning is not detailed enough to provide teachers with sufficient help to develop their teaching plans. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good and provides good opportunities for pupils to learn through well-structured practical activities. An appropriate programme for personal and social education makes

a satisfactory contribution to pupils' personal development. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities is in place. Teachers work hard to run as many after school clubs as they can but there is scope for the school to make more use of external providers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory though in many respects the school provides good quality care for its pupils. Good attention is paid to most aspects of health and safety. For example, pupils are well supervised around the school and in the playground, risk assessments for trips and visits are thorough and appropriate background checks done for all new staff. However, one important area of health and safety is currently not properly addressed. The headteacher and governors are now beginning to tackle it. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are satisfactorily supported.

New systems for assessing pupils and tracking their progress are in place and beginning to be used effectively. Teachers know their pupils well and provide appropriate support in lessons. Whole class targets for literacy and numeracy are in place and the school is ready to provide pupils with individual targets next term. Pupils are, however, not very aware of the levels they are working at and are not always clear about how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher has a very secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to improve the school. Her self-evaluation of the school is very accurate and she has established a good working partnership with staff and governors to help address the issues of underachievement. The headteacher has been particularly systematic in putting in place robust arrangements to support accurate assessments of pupils' progress. These include procedures to identify quickly when pupils are underachieving. A new senior leadership team is working well to manage the school and, in particular, to tackle the weaknesses in pupils' performance. Most subject leaders are new to their roles but have already attended training events to help them carry out their responsibilities. Whilst monitoring and evaluation of the school's work are securely established at senior level, subject leaders have yet to become effectively involved. Governors are well informed and becoming more actively involved in the work of the school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
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	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	3
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

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

13 December 2006

Dear Pupils,

Thurton VC Primary School, Ashby Road, Thurton, Norwich, Norfolk, NR14 6AT

I enjoyed visiting your school very much and most of all I enjoyed visiting your classrooms and talking to you. I would like to thank you very much for making me feel welcome. The school provides an adequate quality of education but does need to make significant improvement in relation to how well you improve.

I saw a number of things that were good including ways in which you help to make the school a better place.

- You enjoy school and your attendance and behaviour are good.
- You get on well with one another and older pupils are good at helping younger ones.
- Younger children get a good start to their education in the Reception year.
- The headteacher leads the school well.

There are, as is the case in all schools, some things that could be better. These include:

- improving the amount of progress older pupils are making especially in literacy, numeracy and science
- making teaching better in Key Stage 2 by involving pupils more actively in lessons and setting work that is at just the right level for you
- ensuring that the school tackles all aspects of health and safety properly
- enabling subject leaders to regularly check the quality of work in their subject areas.

You can certainly help to improve the school by continuing to work hard and being more confident about your abilities.

I wish you all well in the future.

Gulshan Kayembe

Lead inspector