

# Thorndon C of E Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124745
<b>Local Authority</b>	SUFFOLK
<b>Inspection number</b>	293097
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Cheryl Thompson

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	44
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs W Coulson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr S Robbins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 February 2003
<b>School address</b>	The Street Thorndon Eye Suffolk IP23 7JR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01379678392
<b>Fax number</b>	01379678392

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a much smaller than average primary school serving Thorndon village and two other nearby villages. There are two classes which, on most days, are split into smaller classes for literacy and numeracy sessions. The majority of pupils come from relatively advantaged backgrounds and all are White British. The numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties is average. Attainment on entry varies from year to year but over time, it is broadly average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for its pupils and good value for money. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and have many good things to say about it. As one parent wrote, 'The school is friendly, caring and its ideals are not constrained by its small size.' Pupils achieve well and are making good progress. While the results of national tests have been broadly average for the past three years this is not statistically significant for such small numbers. A real strength is in the pupils' outstanding personal development. This is mainly the result of the headteacher's exceptional commitment to linking with other schools and seeking high quality visits and visitors to promote pupils' enthusiasm for learning and developing their personal qualities. The curriculum is good and is successful in helping pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to stay safe, fit and healthy. The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Pupils say they feel safe and enjoy coming to school and demonstrate this with their good attendance and very positive attitudes towards learning. Behaviour is excellent. The older pupils show that they are thoughtful and responsible young people ready to show initiative in their work and their help for the younger pupils. These qualities, together with improving skills in literacy numeracy and their good skills in information and communication technology (ICT) prepare them well for their future.

Leadership and management, including governance, are good and the headteacher provides very clear direction for the school. He has a good overview of its strengths and the areas to improve. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the school has a good capacity to improve further. There are good systems now in place to check more rigorously on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. However, the system for using data to check on pupils' progress is not used sufficiently well. As a result, the school is not always challenging itself enough to see if pupils can make even better progress. Teaching and learning are good and underpinned with excellent relationships. Teachers manage the difficult task of catering for a wide age and ability range within a class competently. However, some planning does not always identify clearly enough what each group is supposed to achieve in the lesson. With good teaching and good provision, standards in the present Reception group are above those typical for their age.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Use the system for tracking and checking on pupils' progress even more rigorously.
- Make even better use of data to set ever more challenging targets for the pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Small numbers of pupils take the Year 2 and Year 6 national tests and this makes the data for any single year statistically unreliable. For the past three years, test results in reading, writing and mathematics have been in the average range but with writing showing the most variation from year to year. The headteacher correctly identified the aspects of writing were not as good as they should be. Through working with other local schools he has successfully brought about a change for the better with clear evidence of continued improvement. The achievement of individual pupils is good and standards are generally rising. Pupils are making good progress as they move through the school, particularly in their writing. Standards in ICT are above average by Year 6, where pupils make very good and confident use of their skills in a range of lessons.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Attendance is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and involve themselves enthusiastically in all that it has to offer. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying in the school and that, should they have any worries, any member of staff will deal with them promptly and effectively. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school provides many and various opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and develop self-discipline. Pupils rise to these opportunities and take their responsibilities seriously. They contribute well to their own community by being play leaders, school council members or setting up equipment for assemblies. In the wider community, the choir (about a third of the school) sings at church services and older pupils run a coffee morning for the Macmillan charity as well as raising considerable amounts for other national charities such as Comic Relief.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Teaching assistants are deployed well and provide good support for staff and pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties have suitable individual education plans enabling them to make the same rate of progress as other pupils. This is also having the effect of raising their self-esteem. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent so that pupils apply themselves well to their work and try hard to please their teachers. It is clear on visiting classes that pupils enjoy the challenge of finding things out for themselves. This is also reflected in their excellent personal development, particularly their social skills. Teachers make good use of ICT to enthuse pupils, who respond well and use these skills very effectively across a range of subjects. Teachers mark pupils' work well but do not always use this knowledge well enough in planning for the next steps. Through the productive links with other schools, teachers have made good strides in improving the way they teach, particularly writing. This has been used well across all subjects leading to higher achievement generally.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and includes French. It is made enjoyable and relevant through a very good range of visits and visitors. The excellent links with other nearby small schools, cultivated by the headteacher, has a very good impact, for example, on the provision for sporting activities and residential visits. For a small school, there is a good range of clubs which many pupils join. The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development very well, for example, Reception children learn how to make 'healthy' sandwiches and older pupils take part in 'Crucial Crew' activities which help them learn how to keep themselves safe. Good links are made between subjects especially with art, where standards are good. Through the work in improving writing, the school has made a good start on developing pupils' literacy skills through other subjects.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

In this small school each pupil and their family are known very well. Any signs of unhappiness are quickly noted and dealt with. Parents speak highly of the care and support provided for

their children. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils comply with the latest government requirements. The academic guidance provided is satisfactory but the system for tracking pupils' progress and setting challenging targets is not used well enough to promote even faster learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides excellent and successful leadership, particularly for the care and well-being of pupils and their personal development. He has a good overview of what goes on in the school and an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. Although this is a small school, other staff are not sufficiently engaged in evaluating the impact of what they do on outcomes for learners. The headteacher has instigated excellent links with other local schools in order that staff can share expertise through professional development events. The benefits of these can be seen, for example, in improvements to the standards in writing. These links also ensure pupils have a smooth transition to their next stage of education. Through their regular visits, governors have a good understanding of the school and ensure it meets its statutory obligations. Many governors also help in school on a regular basis.

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## Annex A

## 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>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### 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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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>	2

<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>	2
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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

28 March 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Thorndon C of E Voluntary Controlled Primary School, The Street, Thorndon, Eye, Suffolk, IP23 7JR

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and being so friendly and helpful. I enjoyed visiting your classrooms, watching your playtimes and talking to Year 2 and Year 6. I was pleased to hear that you enjoy all the school activities and like your teachers. You have learned a lot about the right sort of foods to eat and that exercise is important.

I am writing to tell you what I found out about your school.

- You develop into very kind and thoughtful young people.
- Most of you are making good progress as you move through the school but some of you may be able to do even better if your progress was checked on more often.

When I visited your classes I noticed that in the older class your behaviour is excellent but in the youngest class there are just a few of you who do not always behave as well as you should. You could help by doing as you are asked without any fuss.

Your headteacher is doing a good job running the school and I have asked him to do a few things to make it even better.

- To visit classes quite often to see if he can help teachers to help you make better progress.
- To keep careful track of your progress.

All good wishes

Cheryl Thompson

Lead Inspector