

# Thorverton Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113368
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	311232
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Clifton

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	76
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Iffla
<b>Headteacher</b>	Denise Woodgate
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	School Lane Thorverton Exeter EX5 5NR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01392 860374
<b>Fax number</b>	01392 860374

---

<b>Age group</b>	4-11
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 September 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	311232

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller-than-average school with three classes. Situated in a small village, most pupils attend from the immediate locality. Pupils come into the school with skills and abilities which vary from year to year but taken collectively are broadly at the level expected. Nearly all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The acting headteacher took up the position three weeks before the inspection.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Thorverton Primary is a good school. Nearly all parents comment favourably about the school and all that it offers. They say that their children settle quickly and are very happy. Pupils and parents alike comment on the school's 'friendly nature' where everyone gets on well together. Care and support for pupils are good, with a clear set of values underpinning all of the school's work. Pupils behave very well and have positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy taking on responsibility and are considerate towards each other. Consequently, pupils really enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above average. The acting headteacher knows the school well and has worked effectively with other leaders to ensure that there has been a smooth transition in leadership. As a result, the focus on improvement has been maintained.

Standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good. Provision in Reception is good. The children are well prepared for starting the National Curriculum in Year 1. For the past five years, standards have remained above average, with standards in some years being exceptionally high. There is some variation in standards because more-able pupils are not consistently reaching the higher levels. Good teaching is the main reason for pupils doing well academically. Teachers create a positive atmosphere for learning and pupils show real enjoyment in their work. At its best, the interaction between the teacher and pupils is excellent and pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding. Teachers are successfully fostering pupils' independence and learning continues whilst teachers help individual or groups of pupils. The curriculum provides many good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills and, as a result, the pupils express themselves clearly and confidently. These skills are used well to help prepare the pupils for different writing tasks. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school has rightly identified the need to improve pupils' involvement in setting themselves targets to achieve during lessons, so that pupils can understand better the progress they are making. However, it is too early to see the success of action taken.

Good leadership has resulted in successful teamwork. Innovation such as the development of 'thinking skills' has been successful in improving pupils' learning. The headteacher has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, and is using this well to support and improve teachers' individual skills. The teachers review and reflect on their own practice, thinking carefully about what they can do to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children make a good start in Reception because of good teaching and they make good progress. They are happy and confident in class, sometimes working alongside older pupils. They have good access to a secure outdoor environment. However, opportunities for them to make their own choices about learning are not sufficiently well developed, which hinders progress in their personal development. The school has good links with pre-school providers and has good information about standards on entry to the school and the progress the children make.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that there is a more consistent challenge for pupils who are more able.
- Improve the use of targets in classes so that pupils can understand better how well they are doing and be more involved in their own learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Children in the Reception Year join in well with older pupils in the class. They make good progress and reach the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, and reach standards that are usually above average. Standards in writing have lagged behind those in reading and mathematics as there are too few pupils reaching the higher Level 3.

Pupils' current progress in Years 3 to 6 is good, reflecting the good teaching and innovative curriculum. In 2006, overall standards were significantly above average, and high in English and science. Mathematics standards were not as good because too few pupils achieved at the higher Level 5. The 2007 results show improvement in mathematics, with an increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level. The school's tracking information shows that pupils make particularly good progress in Years 5 and 6. Across the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well in relation to their individual learning targets. Pupils' good academic progress and gains in personal development ensure they are well prepared for their next stage of learning.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are welcoming and polite. They respond quickly when asked to listen to the teacher in lessons and happily work together in groups. The high level of interaction ensures pupils develop above-average speaking and listening skills. They relate well to other adults and to each other and are patient in listening. At playtime they enjoy each other's company, being active in the playground or sitting quietly together. They have a good understanding about keeping safe and say they enjoy coming to school. The Christian nature of the school successfully helps the pupils develop a keen sense of right and wrong as well as fostering spiritual development.

The pupils happily take responsibility for helping to make the school run smoothly. For example, classes are responsible for playground equipment. However, there is scope for improving pupils' responsibilities around school, particularly for older pupils, who would willingly take on additional duties. The school council is well established and there is keen competition to be an elected representative. Pupils are keen to have their say. They actively raise money for children who are less fortunate than they are.

This is a healthy school. Pupils' physical development is evident in the high level of activity in the playground during playtime, where organised games are the norm. The grounds are spacious and well equipped and this encourages children to be imaginative and energetic in their play. Pupils know about a healthy diet and the value of regular drinks of water, but a few do not always make healthy choices in what they eat.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching provides the pupils with a good range of stimulating learning activities, which enables them to make good progress. Speaking and listening are used particularly well to help pupils clarify their thinking and develop ideas. This is particularly successfully in encouraging pupils

to write in different contexts. Whilst there is effective planning across the school to meet the needs of the wide ability range in the mixed-age classes, on a few occasions, lessons do not provide enough challenge for more-able pupils. Teachers are reviewing lessons carefully to remedy this.

A good feature of lessons is the way in which the pupils collaborate to find answers to problems. They work together confidently because teachers have fostered independence in learning from the time they come into school. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution in helping with pupils who have specific needs. Although marking encourages pupils, it does not consistently identify next steps for learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school is successfully developing a flexible and creative curriculum, which is planned through the development of key skills. Topics are planned to enable different subjects to be linked together. Opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking through specific lessons are well established and this together with a strong emphasis on speaking and listening is helping pupils to achieve well and actively enjoy learning. Creative aspects such as art are strong and are supported through the expertise of visitors coming into the school. These strengths successfully enable the needs of pupils in the mixed-age classes to be met. Pupils enjoy a wide range of well-planned clubs with a strong focus on sport and the arts. Visits to different places are carefully linked to topics to enable learning to be relevant and more enjoyable. The school makes good use of local amenities. Leaders have rightly identified the need to forge links with other schools to enhance pupils' understanding of living in a multicultural society.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school has a very warm, friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Pupils feel very safe because they know that any concerns they may have will be listened to by staff and that adults can be approached to sort out any difficulties. Older pupils are very mature and confident and like having responsibility. For example, Year 6 pupils organised and ran the leavers' service in the local church, receiving many favourable comments. However, older pupils would benefit from having a more formal role in the school to provide them with more responsibility. Child protection procedures are in place and the school has successfully improved levels of attendance.

The guidance and support of pupils' academic progress is satisfactory. Pupils can recall some of their targets but this is inconsistent. Leaders have therefore rightly identified, as a key priority, the need to improve pupils' awareness of individual learning targets in lessons so that pupils can be more actively involved in judging for themselves how well they are doing. However, improvement in this area is at an early stage of development.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leaders and governors have put good procedures in place to ensure a smooth transition between the previous headteacher and the acting headteacher. The acting headteacher knows the school well and has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development, which are identified through regular monitoring of teaching, pupils' work and assessment data.

Self-evaluation is accurate. The school's next development plan accurately identifies where improvements are needed and action to be taken to remedy weaknesses. This, together with the school's record of introducing initiatives that have resulted in improved learning, demonstrates it has good capacity for further improvement. New initiatives are monitored closely to see how successful they are. Governors are actively involved in the monitoring process. For example, they work alongside the headteacher and co-ordinators to monitor the curriculum.

**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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	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

28 September 2007

Dear Pupils Inspection of Thorverton Primary School, Thorverton, Devon EX5 5NR

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us to your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and during your playtimes and were very impressed with your friendliness and confidence. The valuable information you gave us was a great help. We think your school gives you good care and support and a good education. The curriculum and teaching are good. Overall, you attend well and are making good progress. Leadership of your school is good.

What we most liked about your school:

- You make a good start in Reception.
- There are good links with your parents or carers.
- The school ensures that you are safe and secure.
- You are polite and thoughtful towards each other.
- You have positive attitudes to learning and you behave well.
- The after-school clubs and visits to different places help you to learn and develop your skills well.
- The curriculum offers you a wide range of exciting and interesting activities.

We have asked your headteacher and others to:

- Make sure that teaching provides a consistently good challenge for those of you who sometimes find the work too easy.
- Improve the use of learning targets in lessons so that you can improve your knowledge of and involvement in your own learning. We are sure that, with your hard work and help, your school will continue to improve.

Yours faithfully

Peter Clifton Lead Inspector

28 September 2007



Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Thorverton Primary School, Thorverton, Devon EX5 5NR**

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us to your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and during your playtimes and were very impressed with your friendliness and confidence. The valuable information you gave us was a great help. We think your school gives you good care and support and a good education. The curriculum and teaching are good. Overall, you attend well and are making good progress. Leadership of your school is good.

**What we most liked about your school:**

- You make a good start in Reception.
- There are good links with your parents or carers.
- The school ensures that you are safe and secure.
- You are polite and thoughtful towards each other.
- You have positive attitudes to learning and you behave well.
- The after-school clubs and visits to different places help you to learn and develop your skills well.
- The curriculum offers you a wide range of exciting and interesting activities.

**We have asked your headteacher and others to:**

- Make sure that teaching provides a consistently good challenge for those of you who sometimes find the work too easy.
- Improve the use of learning targets in lessons so that you can improve your knowledge of and involvement in your own learning.

We are sure that, with your hard work and help, your school will continue to improve.

Yours faithfully

Peter Clifton  
Lead Inspector