

Thrupp School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 115544 |
| Local Authority | Gloucestershire |
| Inspection number | 311970 |
| Inspection date | 11 June 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Colin Lee |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 129 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Ruth Bullivant |
| Headteacher | Sally Dillon |
| Date of previous school inspection | 8 March 2004 |
| School address | Thrupp Lane Stroud GL5 2EN |
| Telephone number | 01453 883586 |
| Fax number | 01453 883586 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated in detail the following issues: • achievement in Years 3 to 6 • pupils' achievement and standards in writing • the effectiveness of assessment procedures. Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, other staff, pupils and governors, and from the parental questionnaires. Lessons were observed, school self-evaluation and other documentation and samples of pupils' current and previous work were analysed. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. Half the pupils are from the village of Thrupp and the remainder are from neighbouring villages or the nearby town of Stroud. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Younger pupils are taught in mixed age classes and Years 5 and 6 in single age classes. Although the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features, notably the headteacher's excellent leadership and the pupils' admirable personal development and well-being. The delightful family atmosphere in the school is one of many features that impress parents and carers. There is a strong sense of teamwork, with staff, governors, parents and carers working closely together. The school is also fully involved in an excellent partnership with six other small schools. This is beneficial for staff development and promotes a range of initiatives that are improving pupils' performance and the quality of provision. Pupils' achievement is good. They make good progress from the moment they start school because they are taught well. At all ages pupils attain standards that are at least in line with those expected at their age, and in reading and writing consistently above expected levels. When children start in the Foundation Stage, their overall attainment is typical for their age but their personal, social and emotional development is lower. They make outstanding progress in this aspect of their development and good progress overall. By the time they enter Year 1, most children attain standards above expected levels in all areas of learning. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. At the end of Year 2, standards for many years have been above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. This remains the case for the current Year 2, where the pupils' writing is particularly impressive. The consistency of good achievement and standards in the younger pupils owes much to the excellent cooperation between the teachers of these classes. They work closely together and, where appropriate, pupils move between the classes to ensure that they have learning experiences that best match their needs. This benefits both the more able and the less able pupils.

In Years 3 to 6 there has been inconsistency in pupils' achievement in the past. This has meant that some pupils' results in Year 6 national tests have not reflected the levels predicted from their standards at the end of Year 2. This situation has improved, with all pupils achieving well in reading and writing. There is still work to do in mathematics, where some pupils of average and higher ability are not making the progress they should. Nevertheless, the standards of the current Year 6 pupils are above the levels expected at this age in English, mathematics and science. This puts them on track to reach the challenging targets set for them to reach by the end of the school year. The proportion of the class working at the higher Level 5 is a good improvement on previous years.

The better progress recently in Years 3 to 6 and higher standards in writing are the result of the school identifying these as key priorities and then successfully implementing measures to bring about improvement. These measures include more rigorous tracking of pupils' progress and taking steps to help any pupils falling behind to catch up. Teachers have developed better procedures for assessing pupils' learning and using that information to plan next stages in learning. The school is also carrying out major developments of the curriculum and the first impact of initial changes is already being seen in the improved quality of pupils' writing. One exceptional example of this is the powerful, thought-provoking poetry written by Year 6 pupils after visiting the village war memorial during a history topic.

Assessment is now one of several strengths in learning and teaching, both of which are consistently good throughout the school. Teachers set clear, short-term targets for pupils' learning of basic reading and writing skills. Pupils are strongly motivated by this and it has good impact on their achievement. Conversely, the lack of this type of target-setting in mathematics is one of the reasons for some pupils making slower progress. The curriculum is good and has been re-planned in the form of topics linking subjects together. This has resulted

in provision of stimulating activities that make learning exciting and take full advantage of the surrounding environment. At the same time, curriculum planning ensures that across the topics there is a steady progression in the skills that pupils learn, for example techniques in art and design, the use of historical evidence and the planning of scientific investigation. A very successful element is the planning of opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their writing skills. However, the same process has not occurred for mathematical skills and this is limiting pupils' achievement.

Curriculum developments are strengthening the pupils' love of learning. They particularly enjoy theme weeks such as those on Global Awareness and the Spanish Fiesta, when they have opportunities to work with pupils from other classes. Such experiences help develop the high quality of the relationships they have with one another. This, together with their excellent behaviour, are two features of pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. In other respects, the curriculum is used very effectively to develop pupils' excellent appreciation of healthy lifestyles and knowledge of safe practices in and out of school. Their good basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills, along with their mature social skills and experience of enterprise activities, contribute considerably to their future economic well-being. The excellent school council exemplifies the success with which pupils carry out the many responsibilities they are given to contribute to both the school and the wider communities. The councillors appreciate being consulted about aspects of school life such as the curriculum and the discipline and behaviour policy. The Young Sports Leaders are relishing the responsibility for running the school sports day. Attendance is satisfactory. Despite the school doing all it can to improve attendance, there is a high incidence of younger pupils being absent for family holidays during term time.

Outstanding care, guidance and support are provided for all pupils. In addition to maintaining the highest quality of pastoral care, pupils receive support in many forms. Excellent attention is paid to the needs of less able pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This results in most of these pupils attaining the same standards as their peers by the time they leave the school. The school's skilled and knowledgeable teaching assistants play a major role in this success.

The school's leadership and management are good. The headteacher's drive is a corner stone of recent improvements. She has involved all staff in the analysis of information about pupils' performance and promoted a collective responsibility for school improvement. Staff respond well to the challenge, working together closely. The good governing body is a highly effective source of support, working tirelessly with staff to move the school forward. Being a small school, all staff have several areas of whole-school responsibility and they carry these out well. As subject leaders, they have good awareness of standards across the school in their subjects and produce clear annual plans of action for improvement. They have successfully looked at how pupils' literacy skills can be developed in other subjects and recognise that it is time to do the same thing for mathematical skills. The school knows itself well and has good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle quickly into school life as a result of the excellent liaison with the main pre-school provider housed on the school site. Good quality teaching and learning, and a well-planned curriculum enable children to become confident learners who progress rapidly. Their progress is checked constantly in all areas of learning and all staff are successfully involved in the

recording and evaluating of the children's achievements. There is a strong focus on children's personal and language development. In addition to small group teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills, each of the many structured play experiences is taken as an opportunity to use language and develop social skills. The teacher provides the teaching assistants with detailed guidance on the purpose of activities and what they should look out for in children's responses in order to further their learning. There is a well-planned balance of indoor and outdoor activities despite the limitations of the outdoor space available.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievement and standards in mathematics through better target-setting and use of the wider curriculum for the application and development of mathematical skills.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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| 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? | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ 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

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 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

| | |
|--|---|
| 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? | 1 |

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thrupp Primary School, Stroud GL5 2EN

Thank you for making me welcome in your school and for talking to me so willingly. I thoroughly enjoyed seeing you at work. You told me how much you enjoy going to school, and I think you have a good school that is very successful in helping you to learn. The school does many things well. This is what I particularly appreciated:

- You are making good progress in your work.
- By the time you reach Year 6, many of you are reaching standards in English, mathematics and science that are above average.
- Your behaviour is excellent, and this makes your school a friendly, pleasant place where everyone helps one another.
- In addition to your excellent school council, many more of you have responsibilities around the school that you carry out very well and this helps the school run smoothly.
- Teaching is good and your teachers work hard to plan interesting things for you to do in your lessons. This is helping you to learn well.
- All the adults look after you very well and make sure that you are safe and get help whenever you need it.
- The school is led superbly by your headteacher, and all the adults, including the governors, work well together to improve it.

I have one recommendation to help your school to get even better:

- Set targets to help your learning in mathematics and plan opportunities for you to use your mathematical knowledge in topics and other subjects.

I hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Thrupp Primary School an even better school.

Yours sincerely

Colin Lee Lead inspector

12 June 2008

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Lead inspector