

# Thames Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119254
<b>Local Authority</b>	Blackpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	313232
<b>Inspection date</b>	6 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gordon Alston

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	480
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Bradley Burrow
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jean Martin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 April 2005
<b>School address</b>	Severn Road Blackpool Lancashire FY4 1EE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01253 341466
<b>Fax number</b>	0000

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

This was a reduced tariff inspection carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the pupils' achievement and standards
- the pupils' personal development and well-being
- the quality of care, guidance and support
- the effectiveness of the leadership and management.

Evidence was gathered from visiting lessons, discussions with pupils, staff and governors, looking at pupils' work and analysing data on pupils' progress. School documents and parental questionnaires were also 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

This is a large primary school. It is situated in an area with high levels of social and economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is almost three times the national average. The majority of pupils are White British though about 10% come from other ethnic groups. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The frequency of pupils joining and leaving the school throughout the year is much higher than found in most schools. The school has achieved the following National awards: Healthy Schools, Activemark, Investors in People, the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark and a Football Charter. From the local authority it has gained Choir of the Year and Advanced Level Inclusion awards. There is a recently opened Children's Centre attached to the school.

## Key for inspection grades

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 several outstanding features. It provides good value for money. An inspirational headteacher, strongly supported by a committed, caring staff, ensures that the school successfully fulfils its mission, 'To provide a good quality learning for all, in a caring community where everyone feels respected and valued'. The school is very popular and has a very strong community spirit. The overwhelming majority of parents have very positive views about the school as reflected in comments such as, 'I am so pleased my children thrive in terms of personal and academic development because of the very high quality of pastoral care the school provides'.

The quality of care for pupils' social and emotional needs is outstanding. The school provides a haven where pupils can have, and at times fulfil, their dreams and aspirations. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They are very sociable, well behaved and extremely happy in school. They say that their teachers make learning great fun and always encourage them to try their best. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of good nourishment and a healthy lifestyle. Relationships between pupils and adults are warm and very positive. Pupils' enjoyment of school shows in their willingness to talk about their learning and in the good quality of work in books and on display. The school has worked very hard since its last inspection to improve attendance and has effective procedures to reduce absence. Consequently, attendance is rising and is now broadly average.

When children start Reception a high proportion has skills and knowledge that are much lower than is typical for their age. Pupils make good progress and achieve well during their time in school. By the end of Year 2 standards have risen to below average and by the end of Year 6 have improved again to be broadly average. Over time, Year 6 national test results have been consistently average, with mathematics and science slightly stronger than English. The school is aware of this and has initiated a programme to improve pupils' literacy skills as a means to raise standards in English. Excellent support for pupils with English as an additional language and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to make excellent progress.

Teaching and learning are good because staff spend much time considering how best to interest and motivate their pupils to learn effectively. Teaching strengths include the emphasis on developing pupils' self-confidence, presentations that capture pupils' interests, and lessons that move along at a brisk pace. There are many opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and to be involved in planning the next steps in their learning. Support assistants make an excellent contribution to the success of lessons and are well briefed about their roles in lessons. Assessment and marking of work are effective with the information collected used well to monitor progress and set challenging learning targets. Pastoral care is outstanding. A particular strength is the way the school caters for its very high level of pupil mobility through a helpful programme of induction. Parents overwhelmingly compliment the school staff on the day-to-day attention they give to children's needs. Systems to ensure pupils' safety and protection from risks meet requirements.

Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum that has been adapted well to meet their needs especially for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils develop an exceptionally good understanding of modern day communication, especially how information

and communication technology (ICT) can aid their learning. They are eager to take part in the many opportunities provided for sports, arts and cultural experiences and are rightly proud of their achievements in sporting competitions and celebrations of their work in the arts. The school makes an outstanding contribution to its community. There are strong links with a number of community partners that help pupils to appreciate their wider social responsibilities.

Leadership and management are good. The school thrives because of the strong focus on providing the best for every pupil and a conscientious leadership team that is committed to continuous improvement. The headteacher's creative thinking and vision for the school are strong features; for example, her involvement in the development of the Children's Centre. The work of senior managers and subject leaders in monitoring the work of the school is effective. The information gathered provides a firm basis for self-evaluation, which is accurate in almost every aspect and provides a clear blueprint for future planning. This has led to improvements in problem solving in mathematics, investigation skills in science and general competency in ICT. Strategies to improve literacy skills are clearly highlighted in the school improvement plan. Governors take their roles very seriously and successfully hold the school to account. The school demonstrates it has a good capacity for improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Many children start the Foundation Stage with skills that are below those typical for their age. Many arrive with delayed language and speech development. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is good and staff work well as a team. The children make good progress in all aspects of their learning, especially in their communication and personal skills. However, by the time they leave the Reception class most children have still not caught up enough to meet the expectations for their age. There is an excellent partnership with parents that enhances children's learning. Parents report how well their children settle into school and how happy they are to learn. Teachers achieve a good balance between adult led and child initiated learning activities which are full of interest and challenge and encourage the children's independence and confidence. The school has improved the provision for communication skills in response to the growing number of children who start with delayed language and speech development.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in English, focusing on improving pupils' literacy skills.

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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	School Overall
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### 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?	1
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	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	1

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
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	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

<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	1
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

9 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thames Primary School, Blackpool, FY4 1EE

Thank you for making me so welcome at your school and for all your help during the inspection. I enjoyed talking with you and learning about your school. This letter is to tell you about what I found out about your school. Your parents say that Thames is a good school with some fantastic things about it and I agree.

Your attitudes towards learning and behaviour are excellent. You have a good understanding about how to lead a healthy life. You also know what you have to do in order to stay safe. What a great contribution you make to your community! I was impressed by the monitors, buddies and school council. You all play a part in making the school a happy place. Well done! I am amazed at how well you all get on together. I know that the school offers lots of clubs for you to go to and it's great to see that so many of you take these opportunities.

You are taught well and obviously enjoy learning. I am very pleased to see that you are getting on well with your work and you make good progress. The curriculum is good because there are lots of chances for you to learn about so many different things. The school looks after you really well and helps you to learn.

Your school is in good hands. The headteacher, staff and governors are working very hard to make sure you carry on doing well. I have asked the school to try and improve the standards you reach in English. You can help by carrying on working hard and doing your best.

Once again, thank you for the welcome you gave me, it made my visit really enjoyable.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Alston

Lead inspector