

# Thringstone Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119972
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	313464
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Linda Killman HMI

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	161
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jane Hodgman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ella Roberts
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Hensons Lane Thringstone Coalville LE67 8LJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01530 222489
<b>Fax number</b>	01530 224913

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school in an area of social and economic disadvantage. Almost all pupils are from a White British background and the percentage eligible for a free school meal is above average. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, although the proportion with significant educational needs is higher than average. A fifth of the pupils joined the school after the Reception Year. The number of pupils is falling and some pupils are taught in a mixed age class.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This school provides a good and rapidly improving standard of education and care for its pupils. Under the headteacher's outstanding leadership, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, the school is moving from strength to strength. In less than two years, standards have risen significantly in English, mathematics and science from below to above average. The headteacher's recipe for success lies in her deep-seated understanding of how pupils learn best and steadfast determination to raise standards. She has raised the bar for pupils' expected achievement. Challenging targets are set for pupils to aim for and teachers guide the pupils effectively to reach them. Good teaching, typified by systematic teaching of skills, rigorous assessment and scrutiny of progress, is working. Nonetheless, teachers do not yet apply this good practice as effectively in other subjects as they do in English, mathematics and science. Supported by a keen and informed governing body that fulfils its role as a critical friend excellently, the school is demonstrating outstanding capacity to improve. This is evident in the markedly accelerated progress that learners of all ages and abilities are making and the deserved recognition for improvement it has earned in the local community.

The pupils say that they enjoy school and appreciate the fact that 'there are lots of fun things to do', such as taking part in a growing number of clubs, special events, like Book Week, and educational visits. The curriculum matches the full range of pupils' capabilities promoting their enjoyment and achievement. In their curricular planning, teachers are developing meaningful links between subjects. This adds to pupils' enjoyment in lessons and enables them to apply the skills they develop in one subject to another. The most striking illustration is the work seen in Year 6 pupils' topic books, where they practise extended writing about particular events in history. This contributes to their higher attainment in literacy. The school seeks pupils' views regularly and their responses to how much they enjoy learning are increasingly positive since the launch of this approach. This year, because of technical difficulties, pupils have had insufficient access to information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning. The school has responded by updating provision, particularly computers. Nonetheless, this has limited the progress that pupils have made in acquiring the necessary skills to equip them sufficiently for modern living.

Good teaching results in pupils' good attitudes to learning and behaviour. They know the rules and most stick to them. This year, the school is celebrating a zero exclusion rate because the boundaries for good behaviour have been set and adults are receptive and conscientious in responding to pupils' emotional and academic needs. However, teaching does not always allow pupils enough freedom to experiment and use their initiative so that they develop as independent learners. The pupils know how to stay safe and who to go to if they need help or advice. The school's focus on healthy lifestyles has had a considerable impact. Most pupils eat healthy snacks and engage in a wide range of physical activities. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and this contributes to this happy school's cohesiveness.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

In their Reception Year, pupils make good progress in relation to the early learning goals, from starting points that are generally below expectations. This is because the adults keep a watchful eye on how well pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developing and plan according to what they already know and can do. Their personal and social skills are developing extremely

well. They take turns, work co-operatively and display the attributes of confident learners. Effective daily teaching of letter sounds (phonics) leads to pupils' growing confidence and enthusiasm as beginner readers and writers. The pupils are happy individuals; keen and exuberant learners. Nonetheless, the adults overly control their play rather than exercising timely and sensitive intervention. This reduces opportunities for pupils to experiment, explore the potential of resources, and learn from their mistakes. Pupils have access to indoor and outdoor play spaces in fine weather, but the generous space outside is underdeveloped to extend their skills in all six areas of learning.

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

- Apply the good practice seen in the teaching of English, mathematics and science to all subjects.
- Develop pupils' ICT skills and opportunities for them to use ICT in other subjects.
- Create more opportunities for pupils to experiment and use their initiative so that they develop as independent learners.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The pupils' achievement is good. Training has developed teachers' skills in making accurate judgements about pupils' attainment. They are tracking their progress diligently and set challenging targets to ensure that all pupils are aiming high enough. In 2007, following four years of gradual decline, standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 shot up from below national averages to well above. All groups of pupils made good progress to outperform similar pupils nationally. The school has successfully maintained these above average standards this year. Fluctuating standards in Key Stage 2 have been stabilised and they are above average in English, mathematics and science. This is because teachers assess the pupils against their targets at regular points during the year and take swift action if they are falling behind.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are very enthusiastic about the school because they feel safe and secure and enjoy being there. Behaviour has improved greatly, and is now good in class and around the school. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and have a keen awareness of their social responsibilities. This is recognised by staff, governors, parents and, importantly, the pupils themselves. Pupils say that everyone gets on, that bullying or bad behaviour are quickly dealt with, and that they can share any problems with adults. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, but the school recognises that pupils' awareness of the world beyond their local experiences is limited.

Attendance has risen over the past year. It is now satisfactory and the staff work hard to convince parents not to take extra time off for holidays. Pupils arrive promptly and are prepared to work hard. They are welcomed and made to feel at ease from the time they arrive in the school. Their enthusiastic participation in healthy activities starts from the word go with the whole school (including the adults) starting the day with 'Jiggle and Wiggle' to music so that they are alert and switched on to learning. They understand the dangers of smoking and alcohol, and of the misuse of drugs.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, although inconsistent across subjects. Teachers are confident and expert, but are much more secure of what is required in English, mathematics and science, where there are high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving, than in the other subjects of the curriculum where the teachers are unsure of the standards required. Teachers use a variety of strategies to capture the interest of pupils, who respond accordingly by showing their eagerness to learn.

Lessons usually proceed at a good pace and pupils are encouraged to do their best. The teachers ensure that pupils know what they are expected to learn and regularly remind them of what their target is and what they are aiming to achieve. Their work is pitched just at the right level so that it is not too easy or too difficult. Teachers manage the classes very well but they are inclined to overly direct the pupils and in doing so, they restrict opportunities for pupils to think for themselves.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school's creative curriculum is effective in making learning more relevant to the pupils' lives. Teachers design interesting lessons by making connections between some subjects and this has been positively received by the pupils. They have clear plans to follow for each year group but there is currently no overarching curricular plan in place to map out the balance of study across key stages. Pupils learn French from Year 3 and there are innovative projects to address citizenship and personal, social and health education.

There are many opportunities for pupils to enrich their learning and extend their skills during the school day and beyond through music, drama and sport. Trips and visitors to the school are plentiful and extend pupils' experiences. These have had a positive effect on pupils' enjoyment of learning. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to progress well. The use of new technologies to stimulate pupils' interests and support their learning is limited.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support for all pupils. All staff are vigilant about health and safety issues, with all procedures for safeguarding pupils in place. Personal achievements both in and out of school are recorded and celebrated. The pupils say the house system is a very positive motivation and they enjoy seeing their work displayed around the school. This generates a sense of security amongst pupils. They feel valued and develop the confidence and positive self-image that underpin their good progress.

The school works effectively with parents and outside agencies to ensure that all pupils are progressing appropriately. Pupils' academic progress is tracked systematically and careful guidance towards their challenging targets means that pupils understand what they need to do, how well they are doing, and how to improve. There is a thoughtful use of classroom assistants to give pupils both pastoral and academic support, and there are good links with

external agencies. This means that any pupils, including the more able and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, have access to specialist help where it is needed. Vulnerable pupils are sensitively supported so that they flourish.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The inclusion and success of all learners are central to the headteacher's vision and drive the direction for the school. Her infectious enthusiasm has rejuvenated staff and morale is high. Sensitive management and determined leadership are significant elements leading to the school's recent and rapid success. Governance is excellent. Governors know the school well, support it, yet rigorously hold it to account. The leadership team is committed and effective because members are professionally well equipped to fulfill their management roles. Drawing upon a wide range of valuable evidence stemming from good quality assurance activities, they have a clear view of where strengths and weaknesses lie. Strategic planning is of good quality. Roles of middle managers are developing well. Newly in post, some of the initiatives that they are leading are not yet securely embedded in practice. However, they have already had a significant impact in improving pupils' understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. Curricular teams are in the early stages of developing their role to strengthen progression in individual subjects.

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

### 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	3
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	3

### 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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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	1
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

26 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thringstone Primary School, Thringstone, LE67 8LJ

Thank you for being so friendly when the inspectors came to see how well you are learning. It was a pleasure to spend two days at your school. We enjoyed talking to you and what you told us was very helpful. You and your parents told us that you enjoy school and we are pleased that you all come to school regularly. We found that Thringstone is a good school and it is getting better and better. These are some reasons why:

- Your headteacher encourages everyone to aim high and do their best.
- All of the adults work as a team to make sure that you are learning all that you should as fast as you are able; in reading, writing, mathematics and science, you are making better progress than many other pupils of your age in other schools.
- You behave well in class and around the school. It was a pleasure watching you playing so happily outside at lunchtime.
- You know how to stay safe and be healthy. (Keep up the good work in Jiggle and Wiggle!).
- The governors make sure that the school provides you with all that you need to be successful learners.

We think that there are things that can be even better so we have asked your teachers to:

- make sure that you do as well in other subjects as you do in English, mathematics and science
- give you more practice in using computers and other technology to improve your skills
- encourage you to think for yourselves, try out ideas and rely less on your teachers to tell you what to do next.

We wish you all every success in the future. Have a lovely summer break.

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman Her Majesty's Inspector