

Thythorn Field Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119993
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	313473
Inspection date	21 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	123
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Marriott
Headteacher	Derek Gaydon
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2005
School address	Bideford Close Little Hill Estate Wigston LE18 2QU
Telephone number	0116 2889040
Fax number	0116 2887424

Age group	4-10
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who investigated the overall effectiveness of the school and the following issues

- Why the performance of pupils in mathematics is relatively weaker than in English and science.
- The extent to which pupils are involved in evaluating for themselves how well they are doing and how they might improve.
- The quality of provision for the group of pupils from the local special school. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form, from assessment and tracking records and observations of the school at work. Discussions with the chair of governors and pupils also provided evidence. The parental questionnaire responses were analysed. Other aspects of the school 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 the report.

Description of the school

This is a small, open-plan school from which pupils transfer to high school at the end of Year 5. The attainment of children on entry to the Reception class is broadly in line with that expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Close links with a local special school have led to a group of their pupils working full-time in Thythorn Field Primary. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.

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. It has some excellent features. Parents are rightly proud of the very caring ethos of the school and the wide range of exciting experiences provided for their children. The following parental comment captures the views of many: 'The current class size and teaching environment enables a good level of attention for each pupil and lets them make close friendships. The school has a very open, friendly attitude and encourages parental participation in many events. 'I am very, very pleased my daughter attends this school.' There has been good improvement since the last inspection and there is good capacity for further improvement.

The good start that children are given in the Reception class enables them to make good progress across all the areas of learning. This progress is maintained throughout the rest of the school. As a result, by the end of Year 5, pupils exceed the levels expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement from their skill levels on entering school. Pupils' performance in English is particularly strong and reflects the excellent range of enrichment activities that supports work in the subject. These include story-writing competitions, theme days, music and drama productions and a wealth of opportunities to write creatively in other subjects. Pupils' performance in mathematics is relatively weaker. This stems from the school having successfully focused on improving the performance of lower- and higher-attaining pupils, but not having ensured middle-attaining pupils are always effectively challenged to do their best. Consequently, these pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.

The strong leadership of the headteacher has been central to the improvements made in recent years. These include better quality teaching and learning, higher standards and the development of a strong team ethos amongst all staff. All involved in the life of the school share the headteacher's clear vision for school improvement. The school's accurate self-evaluation has allowed it to identify and prioritise the correct areas for development. Senior leaders provide good role models to other staff in their commitment to improvement, but the skills of some subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating provision in their subjects are underdeveloped. Training is being provided for them and the early signs are promising, pointing towards them having a greater influence upon school improvement. Governors are very supportive and are developing their skills in asking relevant questions of the proposals put forward by the school's leaders.

The excellent attitudes of pupils to their learning and the outstanding relationships throughout the school make a very positive contribution to pupils' progress. As one pupil commented, 'School is fun and I enjoy learning'. Teachers and support assistants manage lessons effectively, which is important in an open-plan environment in which classes work side by side. The inclusion of pupils from the special school is an outstanding feature of the school's provision. They are fully involved in all activities and all pupils collaborate well together, showing mutual respect and support. Teachers generally use marking well to suggest to pupils how they could improve their work. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to evaluate for themselves how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve their performance. Pupils behave in an exemplary manner and are kind and considerate to others. This contributes very well to the calm and friendly atmosphere evident throughout the school. They show an excellent enjoyment of school, which is reflected in the above-average attendance rate. Pupils are adopting healthy lifestyles, saying they enjoy eating a balanced diet and taking regular exercise. They know how to stay safe, which is seen in the responsible way they move in and around

school. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council, and so make a positive contribution to the school community. They also contribute well to the wider community, for example, by taking part in musical performances for local residents. The way they are developing their skills in literacy and numeracy shows that they are well prepared for their future lives.

The good curriculum is very effectively extended by an outstanding variety of enrichment activities. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the many educational visits they can take part in, including residential stays. They especially enjoy the Friday Challenge, in which they can work with pupils from other classes to solve a problem set by their teachers. There are outstanding links with other providers to add further interest to the curriculum, such as sports and music specialists. There is a wide range of out-of-school clubs for pupils to join, and these are well attended. Parents and pupils are very appreciative of the time given by staff to run these clubs.

The pastoral care and support of pupils is outstanding, with all staff being firmly committed to the safety and well-being of all pupils. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and pupils say they feel safe and secure in school. There are excellent links with outside agencies to provide extra help for individual pupils when required. The effectively targeted support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to make the same good progress as other pupils. Improvements to the procedures for checking pupils' progress are now thorough. However, the information collected is not always used effectively to bring about improvement, such as by ensuring average-attaining pupils in mathematics are suitably challenged.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The standards and quality of education in the Reception class are good. Of particular note are the excellent arrangements for introducing children into school. These enable them to quickly settle into everyday routines and gain confidence in working in pairs and small groups. Progress is good in all areas of learning and most children are exceeding the levels expected of them by the time they enter Year 1. The leader of the Foundation Stage has a very clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. This has enabled her to identify the need to further improve children's skills in linking sounds to letters and their mathematical skills of calculation. Staff have a very good awareness of the needs of children of this age and so are able to set activities that are stimulating and which capture their interest. Children behave very well and show a great deal of enjoyment in their work. Parents are pleased with the progress their children make and how they are kept fully informed of how children are doing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics by making certain that average-attaining pupils make the same good progress as other pupils.
- Ensure pupils are more involved in evaluating for themselves how well they are doing and what they need to focus upon next to improve their performance.

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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 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

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	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	2

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

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

22 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thythorn Field Community Primary School, Wigston LE18 2QU

Thank you for the really friendly welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I enjoyed meeting you and seeing the things you do. Yours is a good school that has some excellent features. Most of you make good progress and reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are above those expected by the end of Year 5. Your skills in writing are particularly strong, which is shown in the way you write so imaginatively in English and other subjects. Your parents are very pleased with the way the school looks after you and the way staff give their time to let you take part in the wide variety of after-school activities.

What I liked most about your school:

- Your behaviour is exemplary and you are kind and considerate to others.
- You say you really enjoy coming to school and that teachers make learning fun.
- You have excellent attitudes to your learning and this helps the progress you make.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent and help make the school a very friendly place in which to work and play.
- There are many out-of-school activities for you to take part in.
- The curriculum is very interesting, and you told me you especially enjoy the Friday Challenge.
- All adults take very good care of you and make sure you are safe while in school.
- The people in charge of the school are working hard to help the school improve even further.

What I have asked your school to do now:

- Raise standards in mathematics by making certain that average-attaining pupils make the same good progress as other pupils.
- Ensure you are more involved in evaluating for yourselves how well you are doing and what you need to do next to improve your work.

All my best wishes for your future and I hope you continue to enjoy your learning and carry on being kind to others.

Melvyn Hemmings

Lead inspector

Annex B

22 February 2008

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Melvyn Hemmings

Lead inspector