

Thrumpton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122559
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LA
Inspection number	314325
Inspection dates	9–10 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Gill Broadbent

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alastair Murray
Headteacher	Mrs Elaine Allen
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Off Whinney Moor Lane Retford Nottinghamshire DN22 7AF
Telephone number	01777 702092
Fax number	01777 711879

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small school serves an area of mixed housing. Its numbers have increased rapidly as the new school building includes provision for three-year-olds. Some, but not all, children enter the Foundation Stage with skills that are generally below those expected for their age, especially in speaking and listening. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds with very few from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with learning and/or behavioural difficulties or disabilities is above average overall but with wide variations in each year group. An average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. A significant number of pupils join or leave the school during each year. The school has an intermediate International Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education. The clear vision of the headteacher for the development of the new building has resulted in a bright, attractive environment that raised the morale of everyone. Staff have a strong concern for the welfare of every pupil and, because of this, pupils feel safe and well cared for. They say that they know they are valued and well looked after by everyone. The vast majority of parents appreciate this good care, guidance and support for their children. One parent reflected the views of many when she wrote, 'Every child is important. Parents are warmly welcomed and staff make time to talk to me if I have a concern or worry and go out of their way to contact me if they have a concern.'

Satisfactory leadership and management has brought about several improvements since the last inspection and there is evidence of a sound capacity to improve further. The attendance and behaviour of pupils have improved from satisfactory to good, which help to create a harmonious and happy school. A clear sense of right and wrong and a positive outlook on the world means that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They enjoy learning. They co-operate and work together well when they discuss or plan their work in small groups. Pupils understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and know how to keep themselves safe. Sound skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), together with good social skills, prepare them satisfactorily for their future lives.

A satisfactory range of work provides pupils with interesting and relevant activities that contribute to them enjoying school. Pupils respond well to the opportunities to learn about Germany and to speak French. Satisfactory teaching leads to pupils making sound progress. There are good examples of pupils being set challenging tasks and left to work on them independently. However, this is not a consistent feature of all lessons. Consequently, not all pupils are enabled to develop their independent learning skills and hence to achieve standards of which they are capable.

Standards vary because pupils have different starting points and needs. Since the last inspection, achievement in English and mathematics has improved to satisfactory by the end of Year 6. In science, standards remain persistently below average throughout the school because the actions taken to improve have been ineffective. Senior leaders have identified accurately that their checking of pupils' progress has been insufficiently rigorous, especially in science. They have recently introduced an improved system that enables them and class teachers to check progress in each class more effectively. They are also using this information to intervene swiftly with additional support to help pupils reach challenging targets. While there are early signs of success, it is too soon to evaluate the full impact of these actions on pupils' achievement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children settle quickly and happily into the Foundation Stage because starting arrangements are sensitive and take account of their individual needs and their parents. Because they quickly establish warm, caring relationships with adults, children become confident. They love taking part in story telling, especially when staff use puppets. Children start with skills that are usually, but not always, below those expected for their age, especially in speaking and listening. Satisfactory teaching, with activities based on accurate observations of children's development,

ensures that children make sound progress. They enter Year 1 with skills generally below those expected for their age. Skilful teaching that links letters to sounds provides children with a good start in this aspect of their work. The new Foundation Stage leader has made a sound start. She has effective links with the Key Stage 1 coordinator that ensure children's smooth transfer into Year 1. She has identified accurately that the development of independent learning skills is an area for improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement, especially in science, through a tighter focus by senior leaders on rigorous and systematic monitoring of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school by setting challenging tasks for pupils and by developing their independent learning skills.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average by the end of Year 6, but there are significant variations between subjects. In English and mathematics, achievement is sound and standards have improved to average. Standards in science have improved slightly. However, they remain persistently below average and pupils' achievement has been unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, the recent action taken by the school has ensured that pupils are now making satisfactory progress. In Key Stage 1, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved over time. Many pupils now reach the levels expected for their age but, because few reach the higher levels, standards are below average. This reflects satisfactory achievement, based on pupil's individual starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy lessons and all of the school's additional activities. They contribute well to the life of the school and enthusiastically help others through their fund-raising activities. They make friends easily and relationships with each other and with staff are good. Pupils work and play together sensibly and they know how to stay safe. In class, they appreciate the importance of working hard. Pupils respond well to challenge and are keen to do well. Pupils respond well to the school's promotion of a healthy lifestyle. They make good choices on what to eat and stay active by taking part in lots of sports and physical education. Their sound literacy, numeracy, and ICT skills, together their social skills, ensure that they are prepared satisfactorily for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Sound teaching, guided by a clear understanding of the purposes of lessons, ensures that activities are generally matched to pupils' different needs and capabilities. Hence, pupils make satisfactory progress. There is some good teaching across the school. In these lessons, good

use is made of laptop computers and interactive whiteboards to provide the extra visual stimulus to make learning more interesting and effective. Elsewhere, pupils are not sufficiently interested or engaged for them to learn well. This is particularly the case when they spend too much time listening, as opposed to answering challenging questions or developing their skills in working independently. In lessons such as these, where the pupils are passive for long periods, the pace of learning drops.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and makes a good contribution to pupils' social and emotional development. Activities are modified to challenge pupils who are identified as having particular skills or talents. The school is improving provision for English, mathematics and science by using the most up-to-date national guidance, though the impact of these changes on standards is not yet apparent. The time allocated to science has increased and the curriculum altered to focus on the use of scientific skills in practical tasks. A wide choice of after-school clubs and other activities is popular with pupils. A range of team sports contributes well to the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. Many pupils also learn to play musical instruments, sing and take part in drama activities and concerts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good relationships between adults and pupils create a positive environment wherein pupils learn with confidence and assurance. All the arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place and effective. Pupils who find learning particularly difficult are supported effectively and those whose needs are quite complex receive good support. The challenging behaviour displayed occasionally by a few pupils is managed well, with fewer temporary exclusions than had been previously. The guidance given to pupils to support them in making progress is satisfactory. Improvements in assessment and tracking progress mean that all pupils know how well they are doing and how they can improve. While this is helping them to focus on making progress, the newness of the tracking system means that the impact on standards is not yet clear.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Strengths in leadership and management lie in well-established, strong, caring relationships between the school, parents and governors. School self-evaluation is accurate and subject leaders have identified how they can improve pupils' achievement further. The school improvement plan has too many priorities to be a useful tool for managing the most important initiatives. The new system for checking each pupil's rate of progress has the potential to help senior leaders and governors to check the effectiveness of their actions to improve achievement. Many governors are new but are supported in developing their roles by experienced governors. Governors challenge the school to improve. However, the roles of governors and subject leaders in monitoring standards and achievement are in the early stages of development following recent restructuring.

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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

11 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thrumpton Primary School, Retford, DN22 7AF

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. This letter is to tell you about some of the important things we found out.

We found that the staff take great care of you. You and your parents told us how much you appreciate this. You know that someone will always listen and help you if you have any worries. You keep fit and healthy by taking part in sports and choose to eat sensibly. You really enjoy learning to speak French and finding out about children's lives and customs in Germany and other countries. You appreciate the hard work of adults and the many clubs they provide for you. Your behaviour and attendance are good and you work hard too. You carry out your responsibilities around the school sensibly. By the end of Year 6 you reach the standards expected for your age in English and mathematics and your teachers know that you should do better in science.

All the adults want to help the school to improve so we have asked them to:

- check carefully how well the changes they have made are helping you to do even better, especially in science,
- make sure that even more lessons challenge you and help you to work independently.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and supporting the work of the school council.

I hope that you continue to enjoy learning in your wonderful new school building.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Gill Broadbent

Lead inspector