

Thorney Island Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125868
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	315335
Inspection date	9 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Eileen Chadwick

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	140
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	24
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Hallam
Headteacher	Dean Clegg
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Thorney Island Emsworth PO10 8DJ
Telephone number	01243 371317

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	9 October 2008
Inspection number	315335

Fax number

01243 370569

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school draws nearly all of its pupils from the military base on which it is situated. It is a little below average in size but numbers vary throughout the year due to the frequent transfer of army families at short notice. There are very high levels of mobility in every year group. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average; many of these are later entrants to the school. The proportion with statements of special educational needs is above average. These pupils' main needs are emotional and behavioural, speech and language, and physical difficulties. The 24 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are taught as a separate class, although most of the other classes contain more than one age group. Since the previous inspection, there has been a new headteacher.

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. Pupils thrive both academically and personally in a very welcoming and happy atmosphere. The school has developed well since the previous inspection and is improving further under the very good leadership of the headteacher, who is ably supported by the senior team. The considerable numbers of pupils who join in different year groups are very well integrated into the life of the school. The excellent pastoral care and support given by staff and outstanding links with parents help pupils quickly settle, behave well and make the most of their education. Pupils greatly enjoy school because they have good opportunities to develop their creative, practical and sporting talents as well as to progress academically. Parents are delighted with the school and one parent echoed the views of the majority when saying, 'The headteacher has done a wonderful job and the school genuinely cares.'

Pupils achieve well. Pupils have often attended many other schools, sometimes in other countries, and have varied attainment on entry, often entering with gaps in their skills and knowledge. Staff rigorously check pupils' attainment when they join the school and quickly target those in need of extra support so they can catch up if necessary. This extra support is effective in helping to minimise the disruption to pupils' progress. Children entering in Reception get off to a strong start and this is built upon well in Years 1 and 2 where standards have started to rise. Standards at the end of Year 2 are now a little above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress has accelerated since the previous inspection because the school's performance is now rigorously reviewed and there have been improvements to teaching.

Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6. Currently, by the end of Year 6, standards are above average in reading and average in writing, mathematics and science. The school's improved methods for teaching reading are having a beneficial impact on raising achievement in this area throughout the school. Pupils' progress in writing is particularly good in Years 5 and 6 given that this is an area of weakness for many on entry, including those joining late. By the end of Year 6, pupils write fluently for different purposes with competent spelling and punctuation. Parents really value the strong support for pupils with all types of learning difficulties.

Good teaching and a lively and interesting curriculum ensure lessons are relevant to pupils. However, very occasionally, work is not so well matched to the needs of more capable pupils and then the pace of their learning slackens. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The school has growing links with the wider community outside Thorney Island, although it is aware that pupils' understanding of the many cultures in Britain today is not as advanced as it should be. Pupils develop a strong sense of responsibility for caring for others and their local environment. Pupils feel very safe in school and this is reflected in their good attendance and keenness to come to school. Checks on pupils' progress are good overall and have improved considerably in recent years.

The school knows itself well and has accurately identified its strengths and weaker areas. Senior staff have identified the right priorities for raising achievement and are well placed to move the school forward.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Many children join Reception with understanding and skills that are below those typical for their age. There are particular weaknesses in speaking and early literacy. Transition from home to school is very well managed and children readily settle into school. Standards of care and safety are of the highest quality and help children to feel secure and happy. Children make good progress. By the time they transfer to Year 1, most have reached the expected levels including in reading and mathematics. Their progress in speaking and knowledge and understanding of the world is excellent and strong gains are made in personal, social and emotional development. However, despite their good progress, children often remain a little below average in writing, reflecting their weaker language skills on entry.

Teaching is good with outstanding features. There are excellent outdoor opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play and especially for developing knowledge and understanding of the world. There is a very strong focus on personal development as well. Role-play areas are of a high quality and adults usually intervene most effectively to promote children's learning, although not all are equally skilled at this. Assessment systems are very thorough and careful checks are carried out to make sure all children are making the progress of which they are capable. Leadership of the EYFS is strong and teamwork among staff is good. Provision and children's progress have improved considerably since the previous inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that more capable pupils are always given enough challenge.
- Improve pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in Britain.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points no matter when they enter the school. From starting points that are often below the level expected in Reception, and with many late entrants having gaps in their knowledge and skills, the school adds good value. As a result of the good progress made, standards are now broadly average overall at the end of Year 6 and above average in reading. Careful assessment of the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities results in these pupils receiving good support and making good progress. However, more capable pupils occasionally mark time when work is easy.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils thrive in the school's family atmosphere. Relationships are extremely good and, as a result, pupils are happy and secure. Pupils usually concentrate well in lessons but concentration occasionally wanders when the pace of learning slows as it sometimes does when the more capable pupils are not challenged fully. Pupils' enjoyment in keeping fit is demonstrated by the large number of pupils taking exercise through the extra-curricular sports clubs, playing games at break and walking or cycling to school. Most pupils eat healthily at lunchtimes. Pupils show an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and very regular visits from the school nurse help to promote personal hygiene and safety. Pupils successfully raise money for charities at home and abroad and make a significant contribution to school decision making through the school council. Pupils' understanding of life in other countries is strengthened through

initiatives such as 'International Week' and their own experiences of life abroad. However, their appreciation of the different cultures found in Britain is not so well developed. Pupils develop good teamwork and decision making skills, for example through sport and problem solving in design and technology. Their good basic skills and personal development ensure that pupils are well prepared for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In the EYFS, teachers provide a very good blend between direct teaching and allowing children to explore and work creatively and independently. Throughout the school, classrooms are attractive and positive learning environments. Teachers have established clear expectations of behaviour and pupils are usually keen and attentive. Lessons are interesting, new vocabulary is explained well and there are good opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) resources well to facilitate learning. They also engage pupils well by deploying question and answer techniques that get pupils to think carefully. Teachers' thorough checks on pupils' attainment quickly establish what pupils already know from the moment they enter school, whatever their age, and their planning is good. However, occasionally, there are shortcomings in practice when the challenge for more capable pupils slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The EYFS curriculum is very interesting and varied. Adults plan a wide range of worthwhile and stimulating learning activities indoors whilst the outside area is used excellently to promote learning. In Years 1 to 6, a good emphasis is given to developing pupils' English, mathematics, science and ICT skills. Catch-up intervention programmes have a good impact, particularly in improving the reading skills of the least able. Art and design is a strong feature and used well to bring relevance to learning in other subjects. Close attention to the social and emotional aspects of learning has a very positive impact on behaviour. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, including residential visits, enhances the curriculum. The school has forged strong links with partner schools to extend the curriculum through visits and shared expertise. It has recently begun to develop links with local businesses to raise pupils' awareness of the world of work. Not enough is done through the curriculum, however, to develop pupils' awareness of the rich diversity of cultures in modern Britain.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The many pupils that join throughout the year are helped to develop secure relationships quickly so that they feel confident and ready to learn. Parents and carers are very actively encouraged to work with the school to support their children. Excellent links with outside agencies, including the Army Welfare Unit, help staff to provide very good support for vulnerable pupils, including for those with emotional difficulties. Child protection, health and safety procedures are rigorous. Pupils' progress is tracked effectively and school leaders use the information meticulously for evaluating pupils' progress and the impact of provision on progress. Teachers too are becoming more skilled at analysing achievement although the school is aware that more work is needed

to make sure teachers consistently use pupils' targets to accelerate their learning and, in particular, to provide consistent challenge for more able pupils. Individual target setting is established in English, mathematics and personal development and pupils can usually say what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides vision and co-ordination to the work of the school. The senior team has been restructured and thorough management systems enable staff to take responsibilities for subjects and key aspects across the school. Senior leaders work well together, undertaking monitoring, promoting good practice and providing good quality support. They use data and other information effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses and use this to promote the interests of all pupils and bring about further improvement. Staffing changes mean that several subject leaders are still being trained in monitoring. Governors fulfil their role well. They understand the school, monitor pupils' progress carefully and offer well-considered advice. Governors are mainly army personnel and subject to postings at short notice but the chair and vice chair bring continuity. However, they are reflecting on how to strengthen this, for example by creating a system of 'shadow governors'. Community cohesion is promoted well. It is extremely strong within the immediate community and the school is now forging links outside the army base as well as further afield.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Children

Inspection of Thorney Island Community Primary School, Emsworth, PO10 8DJ

I am writing to tell you how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helping us with the inspection. Your views are important as you are the school's customers. You said your school is a good one and we agree with you. Here are some good things about your school:

- You make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Those of you in Reception get off to a good start.
- You try hard in all you do and your behaviour is good. This helps to make your school a happy one.
- You give a warm welcome to new children and help them to feel at home.
- The teaching is good and lessons are interesting.
- You have some great opportunities for sport and this helps you to keep fit.
- All adults take superb care of you and ensure that you are safe.
- Your headteacher, teachers and school governors are working hard to make the school even better. This is what we are asking the school to improve:
- Make sure that those of you who learn quickly are always given work that is hard enough.
- Help you improve your understanding of all the different people who live in Britain today.

We hope you will continue to enjoy school and try hard in all you do so your work continues to improve.

Best wishes

Eileen Chadwick

Lead inspector