

Thames View Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118528
Local Authority	Medway
Inspection number	326843
Inspection date	29 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	207
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	T Croucher
Headteacher	P Milton
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bloors Lane Rainham Gillingham ME8 7DX
Telephone number	01634 335480
Fax number	01634 335496

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the progress of boys in their learning
- the effectiveness of arrangements for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities
- the school's monitoring arrangements and their impact on pupils' progress.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, chair of governors, various staff and pupils. Parents' questionnaires were analysed and visits made to lessons. Work samples and a range of documents were examined. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is an average size primary school. Children begin the Nursery the term after their third birthday, depending on available places. The Nursery has morning and afternoon sessions. The children attend one of these. There are six other classes. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is about average, although very few speak a language other than English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who have difficulties learning the basic skills or with disabilities is lower than the national average.

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 achieve well. The very effective leadership of the headteacher, good teaching and harmonious relationships between staff and pupils enable pupils to enjoy their education thoroughly and they look forward to each new day. The school's partnership with others is outstanding. It links extremely well with other professionals on behalf of pupils who experience particular difficulties with their learning. It also reaches out very successfully to parents in order to engage them in their children's education. Their support is an added factor in their children's good progress. By the end of Year 2, pupils often reach standards above those expected for their age and the pattern of above national average results for the past few years looks set to continue. Girls overall attain more highly than the boys in reading and writing, but in the main, boys make similar rates of progress. They attain as equally well as the girls in science and mathematics. The staff work hard to make sure that pupils profit fully from their education. Extra sessions before and after school help those who find learning more difficult so that they make similar gains for their abilities in their learning as other pupils.

Parents speak highly of the school and rightly praise its happy and welcoming atmosphere. They find the staff approachable, providing genuine care for the pupils and their families. They report that any problems are quickly recognised and resolved speedily. Parents praise the manner in which any behavioural matters are dealt with. The pastoral care of the pupils is indeed a high priority for the school. Overall, the care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Safeguarding procedures are secure and policies well documented. Typical of the comments made, one parent writes, 'Our daughter is very happy at school. She is doing very well. The school is a happy, friendly environment and we are all made to feel very welcome.'

The well-organised learning environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to acquire a good range of skills in different aspects of their learning and so they too make good progress. The introduction of new learning materials is helping the youngest children to make accelerated progress in their early reading and writing skills.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils behave well, and their enjoyment of school is outstanding. This is reflected in good attendance. Pupils show an excellent understanding of how to live healthily. Many take part in the 'Park and Stride' arrangements to come to school and they engage readily in the opportunities for sport. They wash their hands after using the toilet without being reminded. They demonstrate good awareness of how to live safely, for example being aware of 'stranger danger', although they show less understanding of the dangers of medicine and drugs.

Arrangements to monitor the school's work are thorough and monitoring is regular. However, there is variation in the quality of monitoring reports. In some, there is too much description at the expense of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress. Nevertheless some good practice was noted, for example in science, and this provides a good base to build on.

The curriculum is good and the school has made good inroads into developing a more relevant and interesting curriculum. Learning is often fun; for example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson, the study of a humorous book stimulated the pupils to think of questions to ask a member of staff dressed up as 'the Queen'. Links between subjects are clearly planned and these assist the pupils to remember what they have been taught. The school has made good progress in improving its information and communication technology (ICT) since the last inspection. Pupils now have a good range of equipment, including mini-video cameras, which they use confidently,

for example in evaluating their own drama. Extra events, visitors and themed weeks add to the variety of pupils' experiences. The pupils appreciate the good range of extra activities in which they can participate.

Marking is good and helpful to the pupils' future learning. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and work hard to match work to different abilities. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, able pupils were subtracting three-digit numbers while less able pupils worked appropriately on subtraction from 20. This good attention to matching work to pupils' needs in mathematics is one of the reasons for their good progress in this subject.

Senior leadership staff track pupils' progress regularly and this helps to identify any pupils who are not making expected progress. They ensure that class teachers quickly take action with any pupils who are not progressing satisfactorily. However, data systems do not enable staff to analyse information quickly and to check the progress of different groups of pupils' progress across the school. The school recognises this and intends to have a more useful system in place for the next academic year. Pupils demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of what they need to do to improve their work and of their next steps in learning.

The school has audited its community cohesion provision effectively. It is now engaged in widening pupils' understanding of living in a multi-cultural society and making pupils aware of the wide differences in communities in different parts of the world. Pupils make regular contributions to charities in support of the less fortunate and, in so doing, they learn more about real need.

Leadership and management are good. The governing body is well led. Governors are keenly involved in the school and their visits help to keep them informed of the school's progress. While they largely rely on the school to prepare the school development plan, they keep abreast of the school's progress and challenge and ask questions, which keep the staff on their toes. Finances are well managed. The school development plan contains the major priorities for improvement, but these are not always as clearly set out as they might be. Staff are well deployed and teaching assistants play an effective role in lessons and in extra activities.

The school has a good capacity for further improvement. The school's eagerness to do its best for the pupils and to provide the best possible education is very apparent. It fulfils its motto, 'We learn together, we play together and we take care of each other.' Pupils are well prepared for their future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When the children enter the Nursery, attainment is often below expectations for their age but good progress ensures that attainment is in line with expectations at the start of the Reception Year. Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage helps the children to make good progress. By the end of Reception, a large percentage of the children securely reach the levels expected for their age in all areas of their learning and several children exceed them. Children's personal and social development is outstanding and a particular strength. The curriculum is well organised and includes good opportunities for self-chosen activities, supported by the good outside facilities. However, the more formal sessions are sometimes not rigorous enough in making sure that each child is stretched to the full, such as when the children learn letter sounds. Provision is well managed, for example in the effective arrangements to assess the children's learning and the way in which good teaching ensures that activities are planned to help move children's learning on. Children also contribute ideas to the learning plans and these

are taken seriously by the staff. Good use is made of ICT in the children's learning. Care arrangements are excellent. There are very good links with external agencies. A speech and language therapist, for example, was working in the department during the inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen monitoring to ensure more attention is given to the impact of teaching on learning and pupils' progress.
- Improve the school's tracking systems and use of performance data so that they are more efficient and facilitate greater in-depth analysis of pupils' progress across the school.

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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?	1
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	2
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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

30 April 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Thames View Infant School, Gillingham ME8 7DX

Thank you so much for your very warm welcome when we visited. We thoroughly enjoyed our day. You attend a good school. Your parents think so too. It is clear that you enjoy your lessons a great deal. You behave well and show a lot of concern for each other. Your teachers look after you very well. Teaching is good and the teachers work hard to make your lessons interesting. You show a lot of interest in keeping yourselves healthy and it was good to know that so many of you take part in sport. We liked the way that many of you walk to school. You have good opportunities to give your views about school through your school council and discussions with your teachers.

There are just two improvements that we think that your school needs to make. Firstly, we have asked the staff to improve the reports that they write when they explore the quality of teaching and learning in the school so that these are more helpful in making further improvements. Secondly, the methods that the staff use to check how well you are doing are not as good as they might be. The teachers are aware of this and plan to introduce a new system soon.

Again we thank you for your help. We hope that you will continue to do well at school and to work hard in your lessons.

Yours faithfully

Peter Sudworth

Lead inspector