

# Thorpe Acre Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119958
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327162
<b>Inspection date</b>	30 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Melvyn Hemmings

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	116
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	50
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anne Johnson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Fines
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 October 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	10 October 2005
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Alan Moss Road Loughborough LE11 4SQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01509 212021
<b>Fax number</b>	01509 212021

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

## Description of the school

This smaller than average school has Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision. A significant number of pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free meals is above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, though a few from minority ethnic groups are at an early stage of learning English. There has been a considerable turnover of staffing over the last two years, including key leaders. The headteacher has been in post for seven weeks.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It provides pupils with a friendly and caring environment in which to learn. The vast majority of parents are supportive of the school. Two parental comments are typical of many: 'My son is very happy and keen to attend school and learn new things,' and 'All staff are approachable, dedicated to their pupils and hardworking.'

The headteacher provides focused educational direction and a clear vision for school improvement. For example, she has quickly identified that the systems for checking pupils' progress are unwieldy, which makes it difficult to analyse quickly whether all groups of pupils are making sufficient progress. Corrective action has been taken and the systems are being streamlined but the school is aware there is more to do. Changes to staffing have led to some subject leaders being relatively new to their roles. They do not yet have a clear picture of provision in their subjects and are not in a position to suggest how it could be taken forward. All involved in the life of the school share the headteacher's vision and there is a strong common commitment to improving progress and raising standards.

Children in the EYFS make good progress and achieve well because of good quality teaching and learning. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress. Although by the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards that are below average in reading, writing and mathematics, this represents satisfactory achievement overall from their low attainment on entry to school. The main reason pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress rather than at least good progress is because they are not always challenged sufficiently. This means the work for some pupils is too easy and for others too hard, and so they do not always achieve to their full capability. A particular weakness in pupils' performance is their speaking and listening skills, which are poor. This hinders their progress in reading and writing. Pupils tend to write as they speak and this leads to a narrow vocabulary, inaccurate sentence structure and grammatical errors. These limit their understanding of what they have read.

Most pupils behave well and enjoy coming to school. They are friendly, polite and considerate to others. They show positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. A few parents expressed concern that the poor behaviour of some pupils affects the work of others. Some pupils do have behavioural difficulties and can be challenging to teach. However, staff cope well with this to minimise any disruption to the learning of other pupils. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community by taking on responsibilities such as being a member of the school council. They also contribute well to the local community through such events as fundraising for local charities.

The pastoral care and support for pupils is good and underpins their good personal development. All staff are committed to the health and well-being of all pupils. Parents are particularly appreciative of this aspect of the school's work. The curriculum is extended well by a variety of enrichment activities. Pupils say they especially enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities in which they can take part.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children enter Reception with skills and abilities that are well below those expected for their age, particularly in language and social development. They make good progress across all areas of learning. As a result, children enter Year 1 with below average standards, which represents

good achievement from their low starting points. Adults are aware of the needs of children of this age and so are able to provide them with activities that capture and maintain their interest. They use information about children's progress well to meet their individual needs. The balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated work is good and effectively develops children's independent learning skills. Adults place strong emphasis on developing children's social and personal skills, which is important, as these are low on entry. As a result, children's personal development is good. They respond positively to their activities, behave well and enjoy their learning. Children work well in pairs and small groups, taking turns and sharing equipment fairly. The quality of care is good, with children's well-being being promoted effectively. Children feel happy and safe, trusting the adults who look after them. Leadership is good and has accurately identified the need to develop the outdoor area in order to better support children's learning throughout the day. The induction arrangements for when children start school are good and enable them to settle quickly into everyday routines. Parents are fully informed of the progress their children make.

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

- Improve pupils' skills in speaking and listening to raise standards in reading and writing.
- Improve the quality of planning and teaching, and rates of progress by ensuring pupils in Years 1 and 2 are always effectively challenged.
- Involve all subject leaders fully in promoting school improvement by ensuring they have a clear view of the quality in provision in their subjects and what needs to improve.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Children have a good start to their education in the EYFS, making good progress and achieving well, though standards on entering Year 1 are below average. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not always challenged sufficiently and this hinders the progress they make. As a result, standards by the end of Year 2 remain below average. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are particularly weak, which adversely affects the standards they attain in reading and writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those at an early stage of learning English make satisfactory progress because of the extra support they receive from teaching assistants and outside agencies.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The vast majority know the difference between right and wrong and follow school rules diligently. They collaborate well with others and respect points of view different from their own. Members of the school council take their role seriously and are proud of helping all children in having a say in how the school develops. They are adopting healthy lifestyles well, having a good understanding of the need to eat a healthy diet and to take regular exercise. They know how to stay safe, moving responsibly around the school and carefully using resources such as scissors. Though children obviously enjoy school, attendance is only satisfactory, as some children do not come to school regularly enough. The school is working hard to improve attendance. Children are prepared in a satisfactory way for when they join the junior school.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Pupils are keen to learn and show enthusiasm and enjoyment in their activities. They collaborate well and are willing to help others when they come across difficulties. Relationships are good and lead to classrooms being friendly places in which to learn. Adults use praise well to celebrate pupils' achievements and to encourage them to try their best. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and so are able to explain ideas in a clear and accurate manner. Lesson planning in the mixed-age classes is not always successful in meeting the needs of pupils of different ages. For example, there are times when all pupils do similar work. This means that pupils of different abilities are not always challenged effectively and this hinders the progress they make. Teaching assistants provide valuable support for all pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those at an early stage of learning English.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

A wide variety of extra-curricular clubs encourage pupils to develop their interests beyond the school day. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in visits to places of educational interest and to work with a range of visitors to widen their experiences. The residential visit for pupils in Year 2 makes a positive contribution to their personal and social development. The good links with other providers, such as sports coaches, extend pupils' skills further. Curriculum planning in Years 1 and 2 is not always focused enough to ensure that activities provided for pupils challenge them sufficiently. Planning for the use of the outdoor area in the EYFS does not always support children's development across all areas of learning. The programme for personal development is good and makes a significant contribution to the good progress they make in this aspect of their learning. For example, as part of this programme, the school nurse visits regularly to teach pupils about healthy eating, dental hygiene and sun safety.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

The school cares for and supports its pupils well. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and ensure pupils' health and well-being. For example, all staff understand the thorough child protection arrangements and the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a pupil. There are good links with outside agencies, such as social services, to provide extra support for individual pupils, as required. The school provides additional support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those at an early stage of learning English. This enables them to be fully involved in all activities and make the same progress as other pupils. The systems for checking pupils' progress are cumbersome and do not readily provide information to help teachers effectively guide pupils to improve their work. In Years 1 and 2, information about pupils' progress is not always used successfully to provide work that is sufficiently challenging.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Self-evaluation is accurate and enables leaders to correctly identify and prioritise areas for improvement. These include accelerating the progress of pupils in Years 1 and 2 and improving pupils' speaking and listening skills, along with raising their standards in reading and writing throughout the school. Some subject leaders are not fully involved in checking and evaluating provision in their subjects. Clearly focused leadership and management of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those at an early stage of learning English enable them to make sound gains in their learning. Leaders promote community cohesion in a satisfactory way, particularly within the school and local community. Governors are supportive of the school but not fully involved in monitoring and evaluating its performance. Leaders have made sound progress since the last inspection, and the capacity to make any necessary changes in the future is satisfactory.

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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?	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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### 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?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	3

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

31 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thorpe Acre Infant School, Loughborough, LE11 4SQ.

Thank you for the really friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the things you do. Yours is a satisfactory school. Your progress, although satisfactory, means you could improve on the below average standards you reach in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.

What we found out about your school:

- it is a very friendly and happy place in which to work and play
- you enjoy coming to school and are kind and considerate to others
- the curriculum is made interesting by the extra activities and a wide range of visits and visitors
- you are leading healthy lifestyles and show a good awareness of how to stay safe
- you behave well and are keen to learn
- adults look after you well and make sure you are safe in and around school and on visits
- you make a good contribution to the school community, such as by being a member of the school council
- the people who lead the school are working hard to make improvements and help you do better.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- improve your skills in speaking and listening to help you do better in reading and writing
- make sure that those of you in Years 1 and 2 are always made to think hard in lessons so that you make faster progress
- make sure all teachers who are in charge of subjects are fully involved in helping the school do better.

You can all help your school improve by always trying your best in your work and always being on your best behaviour. I hope you continue enjoying your work and being kind to others.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn Hemmings Lead inspector