

Thomas Reade Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123073
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	327842
Inspection dates	11–12 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrusell

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	213
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	Mrs Rachel Fleming
Headteacher	Mr John Serle
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Radley Road Abingdon OX14 3RR
Telephone number	01235 554795
Fax number	0

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a one-form entry primary school, where the great majority of pupils are of White British background. A much lower than average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, with few having specific needs beyond moderate learning difficulties. The school has been awarded many local and national awards including Sports Active, and Healthy Schools accreditation. The governors manage a before and after school club, catering for children from this and other nearby schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Thomas Reade Primary is a good school with some outstanding features. The headteacher provides highly committed and visionary leadership and is well supported by his deputy headteacher, senior leadership team, staff and governors. Parents are appreciative of this leadership and speak of considerable improvements since the last inspection. Standards have risen and pupils achieve well in their learning. Their personal development is outstanding and is supported by excellent pastoral care and the opportunities afforded through a vibrant, fully enriched curriculum. This is summed up by a parent who comments that, 'As parents we continue to be thrilled with the experience our children are having at Thomas Reade. They are challenged to work hard and do their best as well as encouraged to have fun, make friends, be polite, be responsible and keep fit and healthy'. Excellent links with the community, other schools and parents effectively support pupils in their learning and personal development.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy everything about school. They particularly enjoy their class performances, which draw together their skills in art, drama and music and build up their self-confidence. The school provides many opportunities that spur pupils on to success, such as the awards given for reading. These are celebrated in assemblies, where pupils proudly receive certificates for their achievements. Considerable success in sport is also recognised. Many sporting activities and a strong emphasis on healthy eating help pupils to realise the importance of healthy lifestyles. One pupil commented that he could now advise his parents on the right things to eat. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they have excellent attitudes to learning, contributing effectively to their good progress and the above-average standards they attain.

There are excellent procedures for monitoring and recording the progress pupils make in their learning. This information is used to identify pupils who are not making the expected progress and those who would benefit from further challenge. Support for these pupils is very well organised and helps to accelerate their progress. Very competent teaching assistants provide flexible and well-focused support for pupils who are having difficulties with aspects of their work in literacy and numeracy. Teachers use assessment information well to plan challenging activities for pupils of different abilities and to build on their previous learning. However, in some lessons insufficient time is allocated for pupils to work at these activities and to discuss more fully what they are doing. Consequently, progress is restricted as opportunities are missed for pupils to gain a greater understanding of their work and the direction of their learning.

The school is extremely accurate in its self-evaluation, which involves all members of the school community. As a result, the right areas for improvement are identified and recognised by all. For example, the school identified where further improvements were needed in writing. There are now more opportunities for role play, drama and writing in different subjects. This has helped to extend the range of writing and improve its content and vocabulary. As a result, pupils, particularly boys, are now making better progress. Given the school's strong determination for continuing development, it has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Good procedures enable children to settle quickly into the routines of school life. They behave very well and enjoy their learning. Parents are pleased with the comfortable start their children have.

Comments included: 'I am happy with the progress my daughter is making both in learning and interacting skills', and 'Children are cherished and made to feel wanted'. Very good use of the key person system provides children and parents with a central point of contact and contributes to the excellent quality of children's welfare. When they first join, children have the expected levels of skills and experiences for their ages, although some have difficulty sharing and cooperating with each other. Staff generally tailor activities successfully to meet individual needs. These activities are practical, stimulating and effectively capture the children's interest. Children are encouraged to make choices for themselves, which helps them develop as independent learners; this is a real strength of the provision. The teaching team work effectively and seamlessly together, so that children achieve well. By the time they start in Year 1, standards, particularly in personal and social development, are above average. The school is reviewing the development of the assessment systems in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Observations of children's progress are not always sharp enough to help with planning, and to develop closer links between early reading and writing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all lessons provide the maximum time for pupils to work at activities and to discuss and evaluate how well they are doing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and standards are above average. Very careful checks are made of the progress pupils make. This is helping to ensure that a high proportion of pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make good or better progress towards the challenging end-of-year targets set for them. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, standards in mathematics and science are above average, and well above average in English. Pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2, from their starting points in Year 3, has continued to rise in recent years. Where any weaknesses in progress are identified, the school looks very carefully at the quality of teaching and learning and ways to improve the provision in different subjects. This has resulted in improvements to teaching and the progress made by pupils, for example in the recent effort to improve writing. The greatly improved provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is reflected in pupils' above-average standards and the competent use they make of these skills to support their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They are extremely proud of their school. The many opportunities offered to them through the curriculum enable pupils to excel in many areas, so that they develop very high self-esteem. Their thorough enjoyment of school is reflected in their excellent attendance. Pupils say that there is certainly no bullying in school, and incidents of misbehaviour are very few and quickly and fairly dealt with. Excellent relationships ensure that pupils can approach members of staff with any concerns they may have. They particularly enjoy visiting the headteacher's office to share their classroom successes with him. Pupils' excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles has been recognised in national awards. They are very keen to take on responsibilities. Older pupils act responsibly as buddies for younger ones. The school council seeks out the views and suggestions of all pupils, and is

encouraged to take action on any points raised. It has secured a longer playtime on Friday and provided the school with pets to care for. Where expenditure is involved, the school council has an allocated budget. Eco-warriors are very active and continually look for ways to make the school greener. They are looking at the school's monthly electricity bills and considering ways to reduce costs. Pupils take part in many fundraising activities, understanding the importance of any money raised and how it will be used. Their support for a school in South Africa and links with European schools are helping them to appreciate life and cultures beyond their own community. Given pupils' good acquisition of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, opportunities to realise the significance of finance, and this level of personal development, they are extremely well prepared for their future life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall and are the prime reason for pupils making good progress. Teachers manage pupils well and relationships are very good, creating a purposeful and happy learning environment. They generally use their subject knowledge and questioning strategies effectively to extend pupils' learning, challenge their thinking and assess their progress. Sometimes, however, teachers do not make the best use of time to add this extra challenge to pupils' work. Occasionally, the pace of lessons slows while teachers organise tasks. ICT engages pupils effectively and promotes good independent learning skills. For example, pupils use ICT in Year 4 to compile graphs from research information, and to produce pamphlets about resorts and mountain ranges in Year 6. Planned activities often include a good range of practical experiences that help pupils to practise and improve their literacy and numeracy skills in many subjects. Teaching assistants work well in lessons to provide effective support for less able pupils and those with learning difficulties. Effective teamwork is evident in the way staff work closely together to introduce topics. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the teaching assistant sat in the 'hot seat' to answer questions from the teacher about life during the Fire of London. This excellent use of modelling encouraged the pupils to plan impressive and well-focused questions to ask their own partners.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The outstanding curriculum adds tremendous interest and excitement to pupils' learning. It has a very good focus on developing their basic skills, but not at the expense of unduly narrowing the curriculum. This has been achieved because the school has painstakingly planned opportunities to link subjects together meaningfully, using a themed approach to develop and apply a range of skills. For example, when learning about the Tudors, pupils dressed and cooked as Tudors would, grew a herb garden, investigated the lives of sailors, the diets of the rich and poor, built houses, and wrote poems, accounts and stories. The curriculum also reflects pupils' interests and promotes their health, safety and enjoyment exceptionally well. Other strengths lie in ICT provision, which has made great strides since the last inspection and challenges pupils to reach high standards. Excellent enrichment activities include many visits, visitors, workshops and after school activities. Very good provision in art, drama and music supports pupils' cultural development particularly well. All pupils have regular opportunities to perform in musical dramas and plays, greatly appreciated by their parents. The school's bulging trophy cupboard is a

testament to the excellent provision for sport. French has been introduced throughout Key Stage 2 and is proving popular with pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides excellent pastoral care for pupils. Procedures to protect and safeguard pupils are thorough. Staff know the pupils extremely well and act very sensitively on any concerns they may have. The support for pupils with specific learning difficulties is excellent, ensuring that they can access learning and play a full part in the life of the school. This is greatly appreciated by parents. One commented that the school deals with their child's particular problems 'very well and involved them in the process'. Before and after school clubs provide well-managed and well-equipped facilities, with a high level of care and enjoyment for the pupils who attend. Pupils are very well supported when making the transition to secondary school. They are guided well in their learning. Assessment information is used very effectively to set individual targets for pupils to aim for. They understand their use and recognise that they are designed to help them improve their work. There are good opportunities for pupils to assess their work. At the end of lessons, they record how well they think they have done and teachers' marking confirms pupils' evaluations and provides constructive guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides dynamic, inspirational leadership and sets a clear direction for future development, understood and shared by all staff. Good teamwork is a significant strength of the school. All members of this team are important and contribute their strengths in supporting those areas that need developing. The school is highly inclusive and successfully ensures equal opportunities for the pupils. An exceptional strength is the way the leaders have developed very strong links with the local community. There are also links with schools further afield, including a school in South Africa and several European schools. Governors hold the school to account well, offering both support and challenge, based on a thorough understanding of the school's work. Leaders have taken effective action since the last inspection by raising standards, accelerating pupils' progress and improving the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning. The school development plan is discussed and agreed at staff and governor meetings, and all contribute to the final version. Staff and governors monitor the school's planned actions closely. However, the plan itself doesn't make clear how to measure the success of these actions. Timelines with review dates are not tight enough to help all leaders and governors monitor the plan effectively. Self-evaluation is extremely accurate and the established leadership team makes a good contribution to taking the school forward. This group is rapidly growing in confidence and developing leadership skills, giving the school a good capacity to raise standards further and to set even more challenging targets for its future performance. Leaders manage finances wisely, very successfully ensuring that expenditure contributes to the good achievement and personal development of all pupils.

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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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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**

03 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thomas Reade Primary School, Abingdon, OX14 3RR

On behalf of the inspectors, I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with some of you during our visit and you were always interesting to talk to, extremely polite and helpful. You spoke very enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things in which you take part. Thomas Reade Primary is a good school.

We liked these things the most.

- Children get a good start to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- You work hard in your lessons and your behaviour is excellent.
- You are rightfully proud of your school and of all of the excellent opportunities that are provided; your performances and success at sport are especially impressive.
- The school makes sure that you are safe and well looked after.
- Those of you who find learning difficult are given good quality help.
- You thoroughly enjoy school and are all keen to keep fit and eat the right things.
- You are very keen to take on responsibilities and want to make the school even better.
- Your headteacher is doing an excellent job; he is well supported by all staff and governors.

We have asked the school to improve on one area of its work.

- Teachers must ensure that you always have enough time in lessons to work at your different activities and to discuss more fully what you are doing. This will help you to gain an even greater understanding of what you are learning and to make even better progress.

We did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours faithfully

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector