

Thorpe CofE Aided Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125174
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	328308
Inspection date	26 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Carol Worthington

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	70
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	Rev Canon Dr M J Hereward-Rothwell
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Southgate
Date of previous school inspection	22 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Bence Thorpe Egham TW20 8QD
Telephone number	01932 562329
Fax number	01932 562529

Age group	4–7
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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.

- Are exceptionally high standards and outstanding progress being maintained throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1?
- How effectively are school leaders managing change?
- Confirm the strengths in personal development to justify the school's outstanding judgement. How well are pupils being prepared for life in multicultural Britain?

Description of the school

This smaller than average infant school serves pupils from Thorpe and the surrounding area. Virtually all pupils are of White British origin, with very few from ethnic minorities. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly those who struggle with reading and writing, is close to that found nationally. There are 27 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage Reception class. The school has the Healthy School and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'Thorpe School provides a happy and caring environment and promotes learning which children find fun and enjoyable.' This view summed up the feelings of the vast majority of parents and inspectors agree with them. The school provides a good standard of education. The caring Christian ethos is evident throughout all aspects of this small school, where all staff know all the pupils well and are fully committed to their nurture and development. Pupils' personal development, together with their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. They receive outstanding pastoral care and academic guidance. Because of this, their behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent and they achieve well. They become confident young people. From an early age, they take on responsible roles in the school community. They are being very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils achieve well at this school. They regularly attain at least above-average levels in Year 2 national assessments. In two out of the last four years, including 2008, these have been exceptionally high. The current unvalidated results for 2009 are lower, but still higher than in most schools nationally, particularly in reading and writing. Attainment in mathematics and science has improved this year because of the school's focus on these subjects. It is now closer to the above-average attainment in reading. All pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, and some make exceptional progress from a low starting point in Reception. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also progress well, as do those of higher ability, because the school sets challenging targets for all its pupils. There is a small number of pupils whose progress suffers because they do not attend regularly. These absences are for a variety of reasons, including holidays taken during term time.

The teaching seen during the inspection confirms children's good progress and enjoyment of learning. There is great consistency in classroom preparation, thorough planning and high expectations of what all pupils can achieve. Teachers and assistants work closely together, making sure that activities follow on seamlessly, and all children are engaged in learning. Teachers understand how their pupils learn best and plan practical, fun activities. When Year 2 were learning to tell the time, for example, they formed themselves into a huge clock outside, and followed this up with reinforcement using the interactive whiteboard, which they enjoyed hugely.

During many lessons, informal but planned assessments take place, which add to the excellent regular marking and target setting. This enables teachers to keep a close check on progress. Pupils often play a significant role in assessing their own learning in class. They know their targets and can discuss how they need to improve at an appropriate level.

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of virtually all pupils. Literacy and numeracy develop well across themes set in different subjects. A particular strength of the school is the way in which it extends the good features of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum into Years 1 and 2. All years now have an outdoor classroom, for example, to extend learning through independent exploration.

Pupils are proud of their school and thrive in an environment where they feel secure, happy and confident. They welcome visitors in an open and friendly manner and enjoy showing off their work. They make the most of the many opportunities to eat healthily and keep fit. They are keen to try and comment on the different 'Friday fruit' tasters provided by the school cook.

They have very active play-times, with traditional games and wheeled toys; the swimming pool is a popular summer addition to the sports activities.

Many parents recognise the commitment and leadership qualities of the headteacher. Although only four weeks in post at the time of this inspection, she has already demonstrated her leadership qualities in the school by building up the current outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage provision. Recent changes have been handled well. The school has very good and productive partnership with parents. The headteacher has a good vision for the future development of the school, which is shared by all staff. As a result of this, the school has good capacity to improve further.

Governors are highly supportive of the school and do their best to make sure all pupils, including the most vulnerable, receive excellent care. They acknowledge they have not always been rigorous enough in the past in challenging the school and holding it to account when standards dip, but are currently undergoing training to remedy this. Partnerships with local schools and agencies are very productive in enabling the school to widen its provision. There is very good community cohesion within the school, and some global links have started to be made. National links, which could help pupils to gain a better understanding of life in multicultural Britain, have been slower to develop.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The profile of children entering Reception each September is mixed, but overall standards are well below expectations for children of this age. This is because the school admits all the children due to start school that year in September, which means that some of the children are very young. Also, in most cohorts there are a few children with more complex needs. Most children settle quickly into the routines expected of them. This is because of the dedication of the staff team and the outstanding attention paid to children's welfare. A wealth of exciting opportunities are provided for children to motivate them to learn.

There are high adult expectations and clear rules about 'good sitting, good listening', which contribute to good learning. This enables children to concentrate and make good progress in short whole-class sessions, such as the one observed, where they were identifying two- and three-dimensional shapes. Children are encouraged to learn independently by choosing activities to develop skills further and to persist until they complete the task.

Children make excellent progress in all the areas of learning for their age because of the outstanding planning in both indoor and outdoor classrooms. The close working partnership between teachers and their assistants puts planning into practice well. This ensures that every child receives a uniquely challenging stimulus. In the midst of this busy and purposeful activity, adults make careful, focused assessments. Under the excellent leadership of the class teacher, this information is recorded and shared so that the progress of individuals can be carefully tracked. By the end of Reception, children have made exceptionally good progress. They are working within the early goals for their age and a good proportion are exceeding them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop strategies for improving attendance.
- Extend links with other organisations, such as schools, nationally and globally.

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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?	2
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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	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?	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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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	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**

09 July 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Thorpe CofE Aided Infant School, Egham, TW20 8QD

Thank you all for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school. We enjoyed seeing how much you enjoy your work and play-times. We were pleased that so many of you spoke to us and told us about your school. It was very useful.

We believe your school is good. Your headteacher leads the school well. All the grown-ups take very good care of you. Teachers make sure that you enjoy your lessons, and you do well. You can use computers in your work. You are learning to read, write and do maths really well.

We were impressed by how much you enjoy trying new things, such as 'Friday fruit'. You know a lot about keeping yourselves fit, healthy and safe.

We thought your behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. You respect the adults and each other, and act very responsibly. You enjoy helping others.

We are sure you will do really well in your next school because of what you have learnt at Thorpe Infant School.

There are a couple of things the school should do to improve further.

- Make sure your parents bring you to school every day - tell them it's too good to miss!
- Help you to learn more about the children who go to schools which are different from yours, for example in big towns or in other countries.

We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Carol Worthington

Lead Inspector