

Thrussington Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120164
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	339618
Inspection dates	30 November –1 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Bob Roberts

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	56
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Heath
Headteacher	Elizabeth Moore
Date of previous school inspection	0 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the minutes of meetings, records of monitoring and evaluation, school policy and planning documents and 36 replies to the parent questionnaire.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the degree to which more able pupils are provided with sufficient challenge
- the development of writing opportunities across the curriculum and their effectiveness
- the leadership and management of different aspects of the school's work.

Information about the school

Thrussington is a very small primary school serving a largely rural area. Most pupils are from the village, although an increasing number are from further afield. The school has Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the Reception class. No pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below that seen nationally and there are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Almost all pupils are from White British ethnic backgrounds. The school holds the Activemark award for its work in sport and the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a school which has improved at an exceptional rate since 2004-05 when it was deemed to require special measures. Judged as good at its last inspection, it has continued to improve rapidly. With rising numbers and plans afoot for extensions to the buildings, there is a spring in the step of the school and a rebuilt confidence within the surrounding community. Although a range of partners have each played their part in this success, much of it is due to the leadership of the headteacher, who has set uncompromising standards and leads by example, through her dedication and high quality teaching.

Clear-sighted and determined leadership has established outstanding provision for pupils. The Christian values that underpin the ethos of the school result in each child being known and valued. These values are also palpable in the exceptionally strong sense of the school as a community, evident in the pupils and all the adults connected with the school. All individuals are valued but all are part of a greater whole which they willingly serve in different ways. The school's curriculum ensures that the small size and relative isolation of the school will not be a barrier to an experience that broadens pupils' horizons and enriches their development. Inspectors also agreed with the school that the quality of teaching is outstanding. Stemming from a close knowledge of the children, teachers plan work that meets their individual needs extremely well and at the same time reinforces the underpinning values.

Given this quality of provision, pupils flourish. Their personal development is as strong as their academic progress. They enjoy school immensely, as shown by their consistently high attendance. Their exceptional moral and social development is reflected in excellent behaviour and good attitudes to learning. From joining the Reception class to the end of Year 6, pupils make at least good progress at each stage. Their overall achievement is outstanding. Although well-prepared for the next stage of their education, many express reluctance to leave this school of which they feel so much a part.

The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well. Inspection has agreed with the large majority of the judgements in the school's self-evaluation. In particular, the school monitors the progress of each individual child very effectively. From this monitoring, the headteacher forms accurate views on priorities and implements appropriate strategies to move forward. The school is now in a position where leadership responsibilities can be further developed amongst other members of staff. This process, which will help to consolidate and sustain the school's success, has begun. There are aspects of the school's provision that do require further work, such as the promotion and evaluation of community cohesion strategies. Furthermore, having established satisfactory

governance arrangements, the school needs to build and strengthen in this area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop and strengthen governance arrangements so that governors monitor the school's work more closely and are more involved in strategic planning.
- Put in place a strategy for the promotion of community cohesion and evaluate the impact of the actions taken on pupils.
- Take further steps to spread and clarify leadership and management responsibilities and develop leadership expertise by appropriate support and challenge arrangements.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Children start Reception with skills and knowledge that broadly as expected for their age. They make outstanding progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest of the school. Over the last three years pupils have left Year 6 with attainment that is generally above average. The trend has been an improving one and the attainment of the Year 6 group of 2008-09 was high. All this is equally true of boys and girls.

Standards in reading are exceptional and attainment in writing has improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make outstanding progress. Pupils develop the skills, confidence and attitudes that will serve them well and their overall achievement is outstanding. This is a result of being nurtured in a school where the staff know the pupils exceptionally well and where pupils feel they are contributing to a warm, supportive, and purposeful community.

Pupils enjoy their lessons. In the lessons seen by inspectors the extent of their attention and concentration, and their collaboration together, were exceptional. They spoke of their enjoyment of the wide range of opportunities to take part in other activities. Attendance is consistently high as a result, and behaviour is excellent. The cohesiveness of the school community contributes to the striking social and moral development of pupils. Spiritual development in this church school is also outstanding, and cultural development is good. Pupils feel safe and have a very good understanding of how to be safe in their lives. They have an exceptional understanding of what it is to follow a healthy lifestyle, not least because of the high proportion that contribute to the flourishing eco-club, growing vegetables and other produce for the local public house! The school council is very active and is well-regarded by pupils, who feel that through the council they have an influential voice in school affairs. There are many ways in which pupils take on responsibility and contribute to the smooth running of the school, chores they take on willingly and effectively.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Inspectors agreed with the school's own evaluation that the quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers plan lessons very carefully, with activities that match the needs of children extremely well. More able children are suitably challenged by stimulating tasks. Relations between teachers and pupils are extremely good and pupils concentrate on their work to an exceptional extent. Teachers use computer technology well to give lessons more fluency and interest. Teaching assistants have good skills and make a significant contribution to the learning. The quality of marking is excellent. All pupils are used to having personal targets in literacy and numeracy, targets which are referred to frequently and are highly effective. The headteacher sets the standard for teaching, delivering lessons that reinforce basic skills at the same time as being challenging and stimulating.

The curriculum meets all the statutory requirements and provides a succession of memorable experiences. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for instance, are not going to forget in a hurry their recent dissection of sardines! Subjects link together extremely well: the sardine dissections were photographed, and the pictures carefully annotated in science exercise books that showed frequent opportunities for extended writing. The focus of the curriculum is on basic skills with more creative elements increasingly being developed. These are often linked to the regular visits that take place, such as that which took place immediately before the inspection to a Hindu temple in Leicester. This whole school visit was accompanied by governors and parents, and was followed up in the afternoon with specially prepared Indian food (from the local public house) and an exploration of Indian dress and culture. Pupils appreciate the residential opportunities

that are offered each year to pupils from Year 2 onwards. There is a wide range of enrichment activity available, not least activities related to the environment (the eco-club) and to sport, through the active sports partnership with local schools.

Very good arrangements are in place to support and care for pupils and to help them develop and learn. The ethos of the school is very much to support the whole child and the school does this effectively in a range of ways. Communication with parents is good. All the parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that their children were cared for well. Parents are helped to become involved in their child's learning. Health and safety is given a high priority. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and suitable support arrangements are put in place. Where necessary, the school works effectively with other agencies to meet children's needs. The well-being of children is high on the agenda for all staff. Effective strategies encourage and sustain high attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads the school exceptionally well. She has the highest standards and aspirations for the school and leads by example. Staff have great confidence in her. After a period of some turbulence in the staffing arrangements, there is at present greater stability. This is providing a good opportunity to spread leadership and management responsibilities amongst more members of staff, something which has begun effectively. These teachers are enjoying relatively new roles and their expertise now requires further development. The headteacher has established an ethos in which equality, the welfare of children and the highest possible academic standards, go hand in hand. Safeguarding procedures are rigorously applied by all staff. The progress of individual children is monitored rigorously and any under-performance or emerging needs are immediately tackled. The governing body of the school has had to re-establish itself as an effective body after considerable disruption. It has established a system of committees which are increasingly thorough in their scrutiny of the work of the school. Further work is needed to develop the role of the governing body in planning and monitoring, especially with respect to pupil achievement. The school is an integral part of its small village community and is fully aware of the duty to promote community cohesion. Plans to develop this work at various levels, and to evaluate the impact on pupils, need to be more formally developed.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The small numbers of children allow the staff to know them exceptionally well as individuals and to plan to meet their needs accordingly. All children have individual targets which link directly to the activities planned. Children make outstanding progress from starting points that are broadly as expected for their age. They start Year 1 with standards that are above expectations and the national average. Children say they feel safe and feel confident that staff will help if the need arises. The setting provides a safe, attractive, informative learning environment. There are very good links with parents and pre-school providers. Visits to homes and pre-school settings ensure that teachers know the pupils before entry and that the children recognise the school staff. There is good involvement of parents in the assessments of progress. The 'learning journey' logs are exceptionally good. The school recognises the areas for further development, such as developing further opportunities for writing and for role play in the outside area. These issues are already being addressed.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are exceptionally positive in their support of the school. A high proportion of parents returned the questionnaire. There were virtually no concerns expressed. Two parents felt that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors did not agree. It was clear from the comments on the questionnaire that parents and carers have a high regard for the leadership and management of the school and are very happy with the experience the school offers their children.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Thrussington Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 56 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	76	8	22	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	78	8	22	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	68	12	32	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	68	12	32	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	68	12	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	76	9	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	68	12	32	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	21	57	13	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	70	11	30	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	49	15	41	2	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	68	12	32	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	28	76	9	24	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	76	9	24	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thrussington Primary School, Thrussington, LE7 4TH

As you know, your school was inspected recently and this is to tell you about the results of the inspection. First of all I would like to thank you for the way in which so many of you greeted and spoke to us. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and listening to what you had to say.

Thrussington is an outstanding school. It has improved considerably in the last few years. It is a school where, as I am sure you know, every pupil is valued and supported. All the staff join together in trying to do their best for you. The teaching is excellent, and the school provides you with many memorable experiences and opportunities to develop interests and skills.

As a result of this, you all do very well at school. The progress you make in lessons is outstanding and the standards you reach are well above average levels. The school also helps you develop extremely well as individuals. You all have a strong sense of right and wrong and know what it means to play your part in a community. You understand very well how to be safe in your lives and how to live healthily. It is very clear from your excellent behaviour, and the ways in which so many of contribute to the school, that you are very happy at school. Your high attendance confirms that.

All the staff contribute to the success of the school, but especially the headteacher. She has done an excellent job in recent years and leads by example.

There are things that need to be done to ensure that things continue to go well. More teachers need to share in leading parts of the school's work. The school has to take some steps to develop what is called 'community cohesion' - which, I hope, will add to your knowledge and understanding of the world. Finally the governors of the school should be more involved than they already are in planning and checking what is going on.

With best wishes

Bob Roberts

Lead inspector

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