

Thomas Reade Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123073
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	380588
Inspection dates	12–13 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Mike Capper

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachel Fleming
Headteacher	John Serle
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 February 2011
School address	Radley Road Abingdon Oxfordshire OX14 3RR
Telephone number	01235 554795
Fax number	N/A
Email address	office.2587@thomas-reade.oxon.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 13 lessons taught by 10 teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including teachers' planning, assessment information, policies regarding the care and protection of pupils (safeguarding) and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed 107 questionnaires from parents and carers, 18 from staff and 104 from pupils in Key Stage 2.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well observations are used to guide teachers' planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The pace of learning in lessons and the opportunities given to pupils to evaluate their work.
- How well pupils respond to take on responsibility, and the level of their cultural awareness.
- The effectiveness of leaders at all levels in driving school improvement.

Information about the school

Most pupils come to this average-sized primary school from the local community. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. These pupils have varying needs, including specific or moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Nursery and in a Reception class which together form a Foundation Stage Unit. About half of the children in the Reception class start school in the Nursery. There is a breakfast club and an after-school club, both of which are run by the school.

The school has a number of awards, including Artsmark Gold and Healthy School accreditation.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

One parent accurately captured the essence of this outstanding school when commenting, 'The school is welcoming and friendly and is extremely well focused on the children's welfare and development in all areas of their education.' Consequently, pupils' attainment is high by the end of Year 6 and they develop values such as respect, politeness and good manners, as well as growing enormously in confidence and self-esteem. This means that the school is giving its pupils a very strong foundation for the next stage of their education and for later life.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and then continue to make good progress in the rest of the school. Good teaching, very high quality care and a rich and vibrant curriculum contribute greatly to pupils' outstanding achievement. The use of data to check that all pupils are doing well enough is exemplary and this means that any potential dips in progress are tackled very quickly.

Teachers plan exciting and purposeful activities that promote a love of learning. There are good opportunities for pupils to talk about and evaluate their work, and teachers ensure that there is a good pace to learning in most lessons. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children benefit greatly from good opportunities to work independently but there is sometimes a lack of challenge, especially for the more able, when they are being taught together in a large group.

Pupils are brilliant ambassadors for the school. They behave very well and rightly feel very safe. They talk very knowledgably about the dangers they may face in later life, and recent input from the school means that they are very clear about how to use the internet safely. Relationships between classmates and adults are superb, with everyone helping each other when needed. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community by taking part in local events such as 'Abingdon in Bloom' and by very enthusiastically taking responsibility. Pupils contribute to school improvement through the highly effective school council, and their ideas have helped to significantly improve the playgrounds. Pupils have excellent opportunities to learn about life in other parts of the world through visits and lessons, ensuring that their cultural awareness is very well developed.

The school's engagement with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents and carers make a significant contribution to the school's success by helping their children at home and by organising fundraising activities for projects such as the new 'one-to-

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one' tuition room.

This is a school that is not resting on its laurels. It is so successful because leaders have created an ethos in which all members of the school community are valued and respected. Teamwork is very strong and there is an excellent drive for continued improvement based on very thorough and accurate self-evaluation. The headteacher is supported extremely well by leaders at all levels and by the governing body. They have all played a key role in driving improvement since the last inspection by monitoring provision and providing challenge where it was needed. They share the headteacher's ambitions and have a very clear understanding of where teaching and learning could still be improved so that it is all good or better. Their track record of raising attainment to the current high levels and of improving overall effectiveness so that it is now outstanding demonstrates that there is an excellent capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that there is always enough challenge for the more-able children in Early Years Foundation Stage group activities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

When they start school in the Nursery or Reception class, most children are working at the levels expected for their age. From these starting points, pupils' achievement is excellent. Their great enjoyment of school is reflected in high rates of attendance. In lessons, pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning, resulting in progress being good and sometimes outstanding most of the time. In an outstanding English lesson, pupils made very rapid progress in improving their writing skills. A role play about 'The Boy Who Ran Away' very effectively encouraged them to reflect on the feelings of the characters. In a good mathematics lesson, pupils learnt quickly because they were encouraged to think like mathematicians. They cooperated well and explained clearly how they could use different strategies to multiply large numbers. On the very rare occasions where progress in lessons is no better than satisfactory, some activities lack challenge for pupils.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well, ensuring that they learn quickly. They work very hard in lessons and many reach the nationally expected levels for their age by the end of Year 6.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well, helping pupils to become very responsible citizens. Pupils learn to take very good care of each other and they happily discuss complex moral issues when talking about the value of 'fair-trading'. They are very aware of the part they can play in helping the school to run smoothly and they respond very positively to the school's merit rewards system, which they think is 'very fair'. The positive impact

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of the work completed in gaining the national Healthy School status is reflected in the pupils’ excellent understanding of how to be healthy. They grow their own food and participate very enthusiastically in physical education.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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?

Adults place pupils’ well-being at the centre of their work and they willingly go the extra mile to make school a happy and safe place to be. Very well targeted support for pupils who have been identified as needing extra help ensures that they quickly catch up with their peers. Pupils are very confident that they will get help if they need it. As one said, ‘There is always someone to help us.’ The very well attended breakfast and after-school clubs provide pupils from different schools with a happy and safe environment for working and playing together.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils’ behaviour and ensure that learning is enjoyable. Skilled teaching assistants are deployed effectively and give good support, especially to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is a good pace to learning in lessons, although just occasionally this slows because teachers keep pupils on the carpet for too long at the start of lessons. Teachers plan carefully for lessons, making good use of assessment information to help them to decide what pupils need to learn next. Discussions in lessons ensure that pupils are clear about the next steps in their learning but targets are not carried forward when pupils move to a new class, lessening their impact.

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

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The curriculum takes excellent account of pupils’ interests and aptitudes and promotes basic skills exceptionally well. The imaginative way that subjects such as food technology, information and communication technology, and geography are linked together helps to make learning purposeful.

Clubs and visits support pupils’ personal development extremely well and are greatly enjoyed by the pupils, who say, ‘We have every club you can think of!’ High-quality displays and the well-deserved Artsmark Gold award reflect the school’s excellent work in fostering pupils’ creativity through art and music. Pupils are very proud of their success in competitive sport, for example speaking very positively about victories in a recent cricket competition.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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?

This is a school that is not standing still. Leaders’ ambitions and their very strong drive for improvement are very firmly embedded, with members of staff providing excellent challenge and support to the headteacher. Leaders have ensured that teaching has continued to improve since the last inspection and have a good awareness of what needs to be done to iron out remaining minor inconsistencies across the school, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The governing body is mindful of its responsibilities and fulfils them extremely well. It provides excellent challenge when needed and has played a key role in the school’s continued development. Leaders are highly committed to working in partnership with others and in areas such as physical education they are taking a valuable role in providing support to other schools.

The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination very successfully. Senior leaders make excellent use of data to check that all groups are doing equally well. There is no discrimination, because pupils learn to respect and understand different beliefs. This helps the school to make an excellent contribution to community cohesion. Leaders are very responsive to local needs and works extremely closely with parents and carers. Very strong links with other schools, including one in South Africa, help pupils to develop a very strong awareness of life elsewhere in the United Kingdom and other parts of the world.

The school has good safeguarding procedures. Staff training on child protection is comprehensive and underpins the good safe practice seen in school.

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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	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

A parent summed up some of the key strengths of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage when writing, ‘The Foundation Stage Unit provides a safe, secure and happy environment for the children.’ Excellent care and an interesting curriculum ensure that most children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Consequently, children’s attainment is above average by the start of Year 1. Adults plan exciting activities, making good use of the excellent outdoor area to support learning. Children have good opportunities to explore their own ideas when working alone or in small groups and this helps them to make rapid progress in developing confidence and independence. Activities such as looking for numbers in the garden build well on children’s natural curiosity and help to make learning enjoyable and purposeful.

Adults assess children’s progress carefully. The use of observations to assess learning has improved since the last inspection and the resulting information is used carefully to help to decide what to teach next. However, in whole-class sessions at the start and end of lessons, too often children all work on the same activity and this slows the pace of learning, especially for the most able. At the end of sessions, adults give children too few opportunities to talk about their work so that they can review their learning and move it on. The newly arrived Nursery children are given good support to help them get used to routines and this means that they have settled very quickly. There is a delightful atmosphere in lessons, with children supporting each other happily and behaving well at all times.

Leaders work very closely with parents and carers, who are particularly positive

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about the help that they are given when their children first start school. Leaders have a good picture of where further improvements are needed but this is not always reflected well enough in written development planning, making it difficult to measure progress towards meeting targets or to develop a strategic long-term vision.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

There was an above average return of parents' questionnaires. Almost all parents and carers who responded are very pleased with all aspects of the school's work. The many positive comments included, 'The school is extremely well managed and meets every child's need very well,' and 'My child couldn't wait to start school again which says everything about how happy and secure she feels.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Thomas Reade 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 107 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 205 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	76	71	30	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	73	68	33	31	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	60	56	46	43	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	65	61	38	36	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	76	71	27	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	59	55	42	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	63	59	40	37	1	1	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)	51	48	46	43	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	60	56	42	39	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	62	58	39	36	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	45	47	44	1	1	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	77	72	25	23	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	85	79	20	19	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 8 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.

14 September 2011

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Thomas Reade Primary School, Abingdon OX14 3RR

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and completing our questionnaires. You were very polite and friendly when we talked to you. We agree with you that your school is excellent, helping you to do very well.

Here are some of the things we liked best about your school

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are very happy and make good progress most of the time.
- In Years 1 to 6, good teaching helps you ensure that attainment is high by the end of Year 6.
- You behave extremely well and very enthusiastically take responsibility. There are lots of fun things to do in and out of lessons. The school council does a great job in giving you a say in school life.
- You rightly feel that you are kept very safe and you develop an excellent understanding of the importance of being healthy. It is great that you are able to take part in so many physical activities.
- All of the adults in the school are very kind and they give you excellent help if you are struggling with your work. They work very hard to keep you safe.
- Your headteacher and other staff are continuing to make the school even better.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Make sure that teachers in the Foundation Stage Unit always give you work that is just right for you so that you learn quickly all the time, especially when you are working as a big group.

We wish you all well for the future. You can all help your teachers by continuing to be so enthusiastic about your work!

Yours sincerely

Mike Capper
Lead inspector

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