

# Thomas Fairchild Community School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100243
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hackney
<b>Inspection number</b>	354823
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Paull

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	305
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Claire Barton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Shona Ferguson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 July 2008
<b>School address</b>	Bridport Place London N1 5JN
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<b>Email address</b>	sferguson@thomasfairchild.hackney.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed the school's work, and observed 13 lessons taken by 11 different teachers. A range of documents related to safeguarding and the tracking of pupils' progress and attendance were scrutinised, as well as a number of policies. Parents returned 30 questionnaires and their responses were analysed. Staff and pupils also completed and returned questionnaires. Discussions about the school, its work and future direction took place with pupils, staff and representatives of the governing body.

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

- The extent to which leaders and managers have been successful in maintaining at least satisfactory outcomes for pupils, including their attainment, learning and progress, following a fire that destroyed the school's original building.
- The extent to which it has proved possible to develop and improve teaching and the curriculum since the fire, and also since the previous inspection.
- How well safeguarding of pupils has been managed, bearing in mind that the school now occupies buildings in different locations.
- The extent to which provision in the Nursery and Reception classes has been sustained or improved.

## Information about the school

Thomas Fairchild Community is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. It has its own Nursery and Reception classes for three- and four-year-olds in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school's pupils are drawn from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages. The larger groups include Black British, Black African, Bangladeshi, Turkish and White European. The proportion speaking English as an additional language is well above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also well above average, including a few with specific speech and language impairments, for whom designated places are made available. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is also well above average.

At the end of the summer term 2009, the school building was destroyed by fire and it is now temporarily housed at two other sites while new premises are built. This necessitates transporting large groups of pupils by coach on a daily basis.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Thomas Fairchild Community School provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. It is making a rapid recovery from a fire, which understandably set back improvements that were underway after its previous inspection.

Leaders and managers have been very successful in establishing the new routines that accommodation in separate sites have necessitated. In practice, these routines are safe and well established. Staff vetting, risk assessments and other elements of safeguarding are solidly in place. Great care is taken to ensure that pupils feel secure, escorting and reassuring them in the school's present unusual circumstances. Pupils say that they feel completely safe, which is supported by parental views in questionnaires.

There are other outcomes related to pupils' well-being that are also good. For example, teaching about healthy diets and the availability of fruit and vegetables to pupils in school is evident. Pupils are also taught about the importance of exercise and nearly all those asked stated that they enjoy taking part in swimming and physical education. Most aspects of care, guidance and support are strong. For example, the advice to vulnerable pupils and their families and the way that the special needs coordinator enables involvement with parents and carers are good, so they receive insights into how to support their children.

Provision to monitor and raise attendance has been successful, especially in the support offered to persistently poor attenders. As a result, attendance in the present year has improved and is now broadly average. These elements are directly influencing current improvements in the learning and progress of all pupils, including those from different ethnic groups, those who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or difficulties.

Leaders and managers are gradually succeeding in restoring the school's performance back to where it was prior to the fire. This follows an initial sharp dip in pupils' achievement in the immediate aftermath. This is reflected in test results and assessments of pupils' work in Years 2 and 6. In 2010, for example, Year 6 results in national tests dropped from broadly average the year before, to well below average. However, clear evidence of improving attainment, which is currently broadly average, is apparent in lessons and in pupils' workbooks. This is happening because senior and team leaders have been effective in improving the quality of teaching, especially in the last two terms. Despite some minor inconsistencies in marking from class to class, teaching and assessment are both currently good throughout the school. Teachers engage pupils thoroughly and ensure good behaviour. This means pupils listen well, take turns effectively and support each other well in groups or when talking to a partner about their work. The impact, however, is not fully evident, as this much-improved quality has not had time to bed down. As a result, while pupils' learning and progress in lessons are

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rapidly improving, progress and achievement over time, since the previous inspection, are satisfactory. An exception is in the Nursery and Reception classes, where good provision is leading to good outcomes, based on rapid progress. The school's curriculum satisfactorily promotes equal opportunities and is compliant with all statutory requirements. However, a drive to embed the international primary curriculum that was underway is temporarily in abeyance and some momentum in curriculum development has been lost.

Senior leaders and the governing body have evaluated most aspects of the school's performance accurately and have used the information successfully to identify aspects of the school's work that require further improvement. The promotion of community cohesion is another telling example. Here, there is much good practice in the school's work within its immediate communities but awareness of, and links with, people and schools further afield are less well developed. They are also realistic in accepting that the proven track record demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement, although current successes with teaching and learning indicate that the school is beginning to increase its capacity for improvement well.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress over time, especially in English and mathematics, by:
  - re-establishing work on curriculum development as quickly as possible to enrich what is planned and taught.
- Improve the school's promotion of community cohesion by developing more opportunities for national and global cultural awareness and interaction.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**3**

Pupils apply their learning increasingly well. In a mathematics lesson in Year 6, for example, many pupils demonstrated knowledge of how fractions can be converted to decimals and percentages. They were also able to use their understanding to solve word problems related to proportions. Work in their books indicated much improvement in their attainment over the year, with several able pupils working at high levels of attainment. A few lower-attaining pupils, including some with special educational needs and/or disabilities, were supported effectively by a teaching assistant, so their learning and progress were also good in this lesson. This pattern is repeated in classes in different age groups throughout the school. It is also apparent in English lessons and for different groups of pupils, including those speaking English as an additional language. However, this improving trend has not yet been sustained for long enough to result in good achievement over time. In an English lesson, pupils in Years 1 and 2 made rapid progress when learning how to recognise and distinguish between fiction and non-fiction texts. This was because teaching made each salient point clear, so pupils' knowledge and understanding increased well.

Pupils make several notable contributions to the school community, helping each other by carrying out small tasks that help the school to run smoothly. The school council is well involved in conveying pupils' ideas to staff. However, contributions to the wider

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community have been restricted by the fire and so are less well developed. For example, work to improve land in a setting opposite the school is no longer possible, as the whole school has been forced to move from its site. The development of workplace skills, such as literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, is satisfactory. Nevertheless, pupils show considerable interest in each other's cultural heritage, and work together well in groups, irrespective of backgrounds and ethnicity. They also know right from wrong and invariably behave well based on this knowledge. They are excited about learning and enjoy what the school offers.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

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

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching is now consistently good and has improved since the previous inspection, notably during the past year. This is having a positive impact upon rates of pupils' progress. Inspection evidence indicates that behaviour management of pupils, the pace of teaching and the quality of support from teaching assistants are strong elements, although marking, while carried out conscientiously, does not always result in a dialogue with pupils about how to improve. In lessons, pupils' progress at all ability levels is accelerating and gaps in learning are being filled successfully. This is because good systems of assessment identify what pupils' next steps should be. Targets are set effectively using this information and, for the most part, pupils understand what their targets mean. Planning is also adapted to meet the needs of individuals and all groups of pupils. This includes pupils

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with specific speech and language impairments, for whom the presence of a speech therapist provides tailored support and guidance. Teachers and teaching assistants benefit from working alongside practitioners with this type of expertise, as it helps to develop their own practice and enhances learning for all pupils. Guidance for pupils who struggle with attendance is good and the school's attendance rate has improved in the last two terms especially. This good care, guidance and support is another improvement since the previous inspection.

A strength of the satisfactory curriculum is that pupils learn about the environment and how to care for it. The curriculum supports the school's inclusive ethos well, including specific adaptations for different groups and abilities. The school's team and senior leaders have correctly identified that it does not provide sufficient enrichment in terms of clubs and that creative opportunities and links between subjects are limited.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Leaders and the governing body have driven up the quality of teaching and learning, so progress occurs at a good rate in lessons. This much-improved picture is recent, so not fully embedded to the extent that achievement has risen beyond satisfactory. Views expressed by staff during the inspection and in responses to questionnaires demonstrate that morale is high. One typical comment explains, 'I feel very proud after what this school has gone through. I am valued and supported and the headteacher always gives you time in a cheerful way. Her confidence rubs off and everyone wants to do well. We are going places.' The governing body carries out its responsibilities satisfactorily and staff appreciate their supportive influence during the low points just after the fire. Governors are now beginning to develop a more analytical approach to school improvement. Partnerships with parents and carers are good, building well on a strong start that includes home visits in the Nursery, to include provision of information that helps parents and carers to support progress. Families whose circumstances make them vulnerable are also supported effectively with access to help groups and other advice. Partnerships with agencies and other organisations are satisfactory. Links with agencies that result in advice and guidance for individual learning, such as educational psychology and speech therapy, are strong. However, those that might enhance the curriculum are more limited. Adequate procedures exist to ensure that pupils of all backgrounds take equal advantage of what the school offers. Leaders and managers have ensured that pupils are appropriately safeguarded. For example, pupils are transported from one site to the other in a careful but efficient manner. The promotion of community cohesion is also satisfactory and is

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strongest at the level of the local community. Systems to evaluate the impact of planned actions and to introduce global partnerships are at a relatively early stage.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

As a result of the establishment of good routines, children settle quickly when they first arrive in the Nursery. Success is built on good initial contact with families, including home visits. These visits also provide opportunities to exchange information, so individual needs are known and children can make progress quickly as soon as they begin school. The stages that children have reached in their development are comprehensively assessed soon after they arrive. Indications are that attainment on entry is typically below age-related expectations in some important areas, such as language development and communication. Records are kept meticulously and information about how children respond to activities across all the areas of learning is gathered well, both formally and informally. This indicates that learning and development are good by the time they enter Year 1, where transition arrangements are good. Children thrive socially and across most areas of learning. Good leadership ensures that provision is of consistently good or better quality, although slightly less well developed outside compared with indoors. Adults' interaction with all groups of children, including those who enter school with little English, is highly skilled, helping each child to develop speech and vocabulary at a fast rate. In a Reception class, for example, when teaching the days of the week, a teacher directed questions to individuals, used a song and engaged children very effectively. The balance between activities that are teacher directed and those when children choose is good. Early work on letters and sounds is taught effectively in classes throughout the Foundation Stage.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

The proportion of parents and carers who returned questionnaires is lower than usually found in primary schools. Nevertheless, those who did respond were largely positive about what the school offers their children. For example, all questionnaires indicated that parents and carers are satisfied that their children make enough progress. Furthermore, nearly all agreed that their children enjoy school and a similarly high proportion indicated their overall satisfaction with what it provides. Nevertheless, a significant minority indicated that the school does not help their children to lead a healthy lifestyle. Inspection evidence supports the majority of parents, whose views indicated that the school does much to teach their children about matters related to healthy living. Much agreement that the school does well for their children was also indicated by small groups of parents and carers to whom an inspector spoke directly when they waited to collect their children.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Thomas Fairchild Community 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 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 305 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	60	11	37	0	0	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	20	67	9	30	0	0	1	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	16	53	12	40	1	3	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	50	15	50	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	7	23	21	70	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	43	14	47	1	3	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	33	16	53	3	10	1	3
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)	11	37	16	53	0	0	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	40	17	57	0	0	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	43	15	50	0	0	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	30	18	60	1	3	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	9	30	19	63	1	3	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	50	14	47	0	0	1	3

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



29 June 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Thomas Fairchild Community School, London N1 5JN**

Thank you for being so polite and helpful to the inspection team when we came to your school. You helped a huge amount to make the two days go smoothly. We all enjoyed speaking to you and visiting your lessons. We were very pleased that so many of you told us that you like school a lot. Thomas Fairchild provides you with a satisfactory education overall, and this includes several good things. Here are some of the important things that we found out.

- You are taught well, and your progress is speeding up rapidly.
- Learning and development are good in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- All the adults in school care for you a lot.
- Staff and your parents and carers work together well to make sure that everything works smoothly for you.
- You behave well.
- You know a lot about how to eat healthily and you report that you feel really safe at school.
- You show much willingness to do jobs that help your teachers to run the school.

Here are some things to help improve your school further and so we have asked the governors, headteacher and staff to:

- make the things that you study even more interesting, so you reach higher levels and progress faster still
- create more opportunities for you and members of the wider community to build bridges and learn about the aspirations and lives of people in other parts of our country and also in other countries.

Best wishes for the future to you all.

Yours sincerely

John W Paull

Lead inspector

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