

Inspection of a good school: Thornhill Primary School

Thornhill Road, Islington, London N1 1HX

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 November 2022

Outcome

Thornhill Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly, caring and welcoming school that pupils enjoy attending. They are happy here and kept safe. Pupils said that their teachers are kind and helpful and make learning interesting and fun.

The school's motto, 'help yourself and others to learn', is modelled by pupils. This is because leaders have high expectations of all, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Pupils learn well. In most subjects, they receive a curriculum that prepares them successfully for the next stage of their education.

Pupils behave well. They work purposefully in their lessons and play well together at breaktimes. Pupils are kind and caring towards each other. They are polite and respectful to adults and visitors. Pupils are rightly proud about winning the local authority 'Anti-bullying award'. As such, they are adamant that bullying does not happen at this school. Pupils know that they are safe because they can speak to an adult if they have any concerns or worries. Any issues are dealt with quickly.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. For example, one parent said that the school 'is a loving and inclusive community; my children are thriving'. This view was typical of many shared by parents.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have designed a broad and balanced curriculum that matches the breadth and ambition of what is expected nationally. Leaders have identified the key knowledge and skills that they expect pupils to learn. These have been sequenced carefully to ensure that pupils develop and deepen their understanding over time. For example, in mathematics, children in the early years learn to count in different sequences. Older pupils draw on this knowledge when calculating the perimeter of composite rectilinear shapes. Similarly, in religious education, pupils learn about different faiths. This supports them to compare

different religions, understanding what it means to belong to a faith community and what makes a place sacred.

There are a few subjects that are at an earlier stage of development. Staff have not had as much training in these subjects. This means that they do not always have sufficient expertise to ensure that pupils learn the planned curriculum. As a result, some pupils have a less secure understanding of important concepts.

Teachers typically check how well pupils remember and understand what they have learned. Pupils with SEND are identified swiftly and supported effectively. Staff ensure that planning and resources are adapted to enable all pupils to access the same curriculum. Pupils behave very well in lessons. This ensures that learning is rarely disrupted.

Leaders are determined that all pupils learn to read well. Children begin to develop their phonic knowledge from the moment they start school. Leaders make sure that books match the sounds that pupils have learned. If a pupil falls behind, staff provide them with extra support so that they can catch up quickly. As a result, pupils develop the knowledge and skills they need to read fluently and confidently. Pupils are enthusiastic about the recently built school library. They enjoy the designated reading pods, where they can read on their own or with their peers. This helps them to develop a love of reading.

Work to foster pupils' broader development is a strong feature of the school. Visits to museums, universities, theatres and places of interest aim to broaden pupils' experiences. Strong links with the wider community mean that pupils are supported to develop an awareness of the area in which they live. For example, older pupils regularly visit a local solicitor's office and take part in a mock courtroom trial. They learn how to debate complex issues and build sound arguments. Pupils enjoy taking on roles of responsibility, such as play leaders. They also enjoy the weekly enrichment afternoon during which pupils learn to cook, weave and kayak as well as enhance their creativity through the arts.

Teachers and staff, including those in the early stages of their careers, said that leaders are supportive of their workload and well-being. Those responsible for governance have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This enables them to hold leaders to account for their work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff receive regular and up-to-date safeguarding training. As a result, staff recognise the signs that a pupil might be at risk of neglect or abuse. Any concerns are reported promptly. Leaders take swift action when they consider a pupil to be at risk of harm. This includes working in partnership with outside agencies. Leaders seek advice when necessary, so that families get the help they need. Leaders and governors ensure that all necessary pre-employment checks are completed.

The curriculum has been designed to help pupils to learn about staying safe. For example, pupils are taught about online safety and the importance of speaking to a trusted adult if they are worried. Pupils also learn about healthy relationships and understand the importance of issues such as consent.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some foundation subjects are at an earlier stage of development. Training for staff has not been as comprehensive in these areas as in other subjects. Leaders should provide sufficient professional development to ensure that staff develop their subject expertise. This will support teachers to implement the planned curriculum and check that pupils have learned and remembered important ideas.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	100425
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10240284
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	463
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lisa McCrindle
Headteacher	Jenny Lewis
Website	www.thornhill.islington.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 March 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders and staff.
- The inspector met with seven governors, including the chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders and teachers, visited lessons and spoke with pupils. The inspector also looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- The inspector also considered other areas of the curriculum as part of this inspection.
- The inspector observed pupils at playtime and lunchtime.

- The inspector checked the single central record of recruitment checks, looked at safeguarding records and spoke to the designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspector considered the views of pupils, parents and staff through discussions as well as their responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Dawn Titus, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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