



# Thornhill Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 100425  
**Local Authority** Islington  
**Inspection number** 285787  
**Inspection dates** 9–10 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Lynn Bappa

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 address</b>	Thornhill Road
<b>School category</b>	Foundation		London
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		N1 1HX
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7607 4162
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	402	<b>Fax number</b>	020 7609 1208
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Martin
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Matthew Chappel
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 September 2001		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This is a larger than average school in an affluent area of Islington. Its pupils, however, come from an extremely diverse range of socio-economic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic communities and those who have English as an additional language is above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is higher than found in most schools. Pupil mobility is above average, particularly in the junior classes when some pupils leave for the independent sector. The current headteacher was appointed in April 2004.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school, where pupils' enjoyment of learning and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the activities on offer and speak very positively about their teachers and about the school's very wide social mix. As one pupil said, 'Teachers teach in a fun way and that makes us inclined to learn'. By the time they leave the school, pupils have become well-rounded and mature individuals. As one parent commented, 'My child has a rich educational experience at Thornhill and is learning many other skills - social confidence, how to get on with and make friends with people from a wide range of backgrounds, self-motivation - which will serve her well in later life'.

Children make a good start to their schooling in the Foundation Stage and are well prepared for more formal learning when they enter Year 1. Throughout the school, achievement is good. Standards have improved since 2005 when they were well below average at Year 2 and Year 6. Standards by Year 2 are now above what is expected for pupils of this age. Standards by Year 6 are broadly average and improving, although more remains to be done to ensure that all groups of pupils, particularly higher achieving boys, reach the standards of which they are capable. The school is on its way to meeting its challenging targets for this year and prepares its pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Teaching and learning are good. As a result pupils enjoy their lessons, are very well motivated and work hard. The school provides a good curriculum and parents are very appreciative of the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer.

Leadership and management are good and have effectively brought about the rise in standards and pupils' achievement. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. He has a real heart for his work and his clearly articulated vision as the school's 'lead learner' is widely shared by adults and pupils alike. As one parent commented, 'The school has changed a great deal for the better and has a real buzz and excitement about it now'. There is a very strong commitment to making every child feel valued. Staff, parents and pupils are rightly proud of this aspect of school life.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in Years 3 to 6, particularly for higher attaining boys.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good overall. Pupils enter the school with a very wide range of starting points. By the end of the Reception year, most children are confident learners and have met the expected goals for their age. They make good progress during their time in the Foundation Stage.

The school has taken robust action to improve standards from a low point in 2005, when test results for seven and eleven year-olds were well below average, with particular weaknesses in mathematics. Pupils now achieve well in Years 1 and 2, reaching standards that are above what is expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards for older pupils have also improved. Last year's test results for eleven year-olds were below average overall and these pupils made satisfactory progress. The tests also showed that higher attaining boys did not achieve as well as they should have done. The school has acted swiftly to tackle these concerns. These actions have accelerated pupils' progress in lessons, and inspection evidence shows that standards in Years 3 to 6 are continuing to rise and that pupils are now making good progress. More remains to be done, however, to ensure that older pupils, particularly more able boys, reach the standards of which they are capable.

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities gain the basic skills for learning and make good progress because they are supported well by teachers and classroom assistants. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve as well as their classmates.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils speak with great pride of all the school does for them and their enjoyment of school is outstanding. Children learn to cooperate with each other in the Foundation Stage and develop positive attitudes to their learning, which are subsequently maintained across the school. Pupils behave well, know how to keep safe and willingly ask for help when needed. They are keen to take responsibility and contribute well to the school and wider community. The school council, made up of pupils in Years 3 to 6, is proud of the improvements it has helped to bring about, although members think that younger pupils should also take part because 'they are quite sensible'.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. By the time they leave school, they are confident and outgoing, with a strong sense of right and wrong and high levels of social awareness. They say that being part of such a diverse community helps them want to get to know each other. As one pupil commented, 'Every human is the same, although they may have different colour skins or beliefs'. An example of this was seen during the inspection. A few pupils started a game which had been taught to them by the midday supervisors. After a few minutes, virtually every child in the playground had joined in the game and all played happily together in absolute harmony.

Pupils participate enthusiastically in sports and show a good understanding of which foods are good for you. The school is working hard with parents to ensure that their children attend regularly. As a result, attendance has improved, although it remains a little below average.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning have improved recently as a result of good leadership and management. Pupils say that the interesting and 'fun' lessons are one of the best things about the school. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is lively and interesting and provides children with good opportunities to acquire essential skills. Teachers have worked hard to improve standards in mathematics, with a particular focus on investigative work. As a result, standards have improved. The school has developed a comprehensive 'learning toolbox' which enables teachers to plan a range of exciting opportunities for pupils to develop their skills. Teachers are getting better at tailoring their teaching to the right level, although they are not yet consistently challenging older pupils, particularly more able boys, to achieve as well as they might.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum provides a range of interesting experiences in an attractive learning environment. It is well matched to the needs and interests of the pupils and is enhanced by special focus weeks to celebrate events such as Black History Month. The outdoor area for the Nursery and Reception classes is well used, although classroom resources are limited and looking a bit 'tired'.

The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment activities, such as opera workshops. Regular visits provide first hand learning experiences and promote pupils' social development well.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school provides good care and guidance, creating a very supportive learning environment in which pupils thrive and are very happy. Pupils have confidence in the good support available should they feel at risk. Procedures for ensuring their health and safety are good. The induction of children into the nursery is well-planned. As a result, children settle quickly. The school is a very welcoming place for children. Adults make a real effort to get to know the pupils and their families. Parents appreciate this and are very supportive of the school.

Academic guidance is good. Teachers have improved their tracking and assessment procedures so that it is easier to identify pupils who need extra help or who are at risk of underachieving. Pupils are becoming more actively involved in this process. A particularly good example of this is the phonic and spelling 'passport'.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher is an outstanding leader whose inspirational leadership has had a major impact on the school's ethos. A real strength of the school is the high quality of teamwork and commitment which ensures that everyone plays an integral part in moving it forward. The school has good systems for checking how well it is doing and has used these effectively to improve the quality of teaching. It regularly seeks and acts upon the views of parents and their children through surveys and through the school council. Governors are very supportive of the school and are becoming increasingly confident in checking the school's performance and asking staff challenging questions.

There are many signs of real improvement and the school is in a good position to build on these. Standards are rising and the school has successfully tackled the issues for improvement from the last inspection. There has not yet been sufficient time, however, to see the full impact of all the recent initiatives to raise standards. The percentage of pupils, particularly boys, who gain the higher levels in the national test results at the end of Year 6, is still not high enough, for example.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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	2
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

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making us so welcome and sharing with us your thoughts about your school. We particularly enjoyed talking to the school council and talking to some of you about work that you are proud of. We think that your school is a good school, and we think it has some excellent features. Well done to all of you! You obviously enjoy lessons and activities, and contribute much to making the school successful. Your behaviour, positive attitudes to work and play and the ways in which you care for one another are good. The headteacher and all his staff have worked hard to improve the school. They certainly believe that all of you can achieve well, so it's up to you to keep on proving them right.

I have asked your teachers to make a few improvements to make the school even better. Work has begun on helping some of the older pupils to achieve higher standards. I have asked them to carry on doing this. You can play your part in this by always working as hard as you can.

I hope that you continue to enjoy your time at school and wish you well for the future.

Lynn Bappa

Lead Inspector