

# Thornhill Junior and Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107616
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kirklees
<b>Inspection number</b>	287871
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Jones

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>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	348
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Ann Midgley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 December 2002
<b>School address</b>	Edge Lane Thornhill Dewsbury West Yorkshire WF12 0QT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01924 325335
<b>Fax number</b>	01924 325336

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a large primary school serving a residential area with significant deprivation. The majority of pupils are of White British origin. There has been a considerable turnover of staff since the last inspection in 2002. The school contains a resourced provision unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils with statements of educational need is well above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school has Healthy School and Investor in People status, and holds the Effective Early Learning with endorsement for Investors in Pupils and ArtsMark Silver awards.

## 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 with outstanding features and it provides good value for money. The school's curriculum is excellent. It has outstanding elements in its pupils' personal development and care, and also in its leadership and management. The school provides for pupils with a much broader range of abilities than is found in most schools. The school's mission statement states: 'Together we will make the difference.' Staff, pupils, parents and governors work in an effective partnership to realise this ambition. The school works extremely successfully to raise the confidence and self-esteem of its pupils. Parents speak of how the children are encouraged 'to be the best they can be'. The school's inclusive values and its total commitment to equal opportunities are very impressive.

Attendance is consistently above average, and pupils enjoy coming to school and appreciate the many additional activities it provides. They say they feel safe and happy, and that the rare instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and thoroughly by staff. Behaviour in and around school is good. Relationships between staff and pupils are based on a mutual feeling of respect and affection. They are the basis of the school's improved performance. Healthy eating and physical exercise are strong features of the school and contribute to pupils' good awareness of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility as counsellors or monitors, and are given an effective voice in the running of the school. They contribute well to the school and wider community, and the school enjoys a well deserved reputation for the quality of its musical and dramatic work. The steady improvement in achievement and standards since the last inspection helps to provide pupils with valuable skills that they will need in the future.

The school's intensive drive to raise standards for all pupils, and particularly boys, is beginning to bear fruit. Achievement is good and standards are average. This is the result of improvements in teaching. Pupils across the school receive a great deal of support. This assists their progress, but many older pupils are not sufficiently skilled or confident when working independently. Also, the school holds a great deal of information about pupils' learning and achievement, but the targets it sets pupils do not always challenge them sufficiently. As a result, their performance in tests does not always match their potential.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and the outstanding behaviour, the excellent relationships and good organisation of staff and resources result in children making good progress. The school is home to a resourced provision unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Skilled and dedicated staff provide a stimulating education that is carefully tailored to meet individual needs. Pupils progress well as a result, and are also very well integrated into the life of the school.

The school's curriculum is excellent in the way it helps promote effective learning and influences pupils' personal development. Its breadth and richness ensure all pupils enjoy a very wide range of interesting and effective activities.

Leadership and management are good, and exceptional in their forging of effective partnerships with others to promote learners' well-being. The headteacher shows outstanding energy and commitment and, together with her team, works tirelessly to ensure that pupils benefit from expert help and resources. The team has successfully developed and led the programme to improve the quality of teaching and learning that has resulted in raised achievement. The governing body offers valuable support and is effective in monitoring the school's performance.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. The self-evaluation of its work overestimates the overall quality of its care, guidance and support and its leadership and management. It is modest in its judgement on its curriculum. In spite of this, it knows itself well, and given the improvements in its performance, it has good capacity for further improvement.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop the capacity to study independently for longer periods in order to raise their achievement.
- Ensure that all pupils are set challenging targets to enable them to achieve as well as they can.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good throughout the school. This follows a steady improvement over recent years, and is the result of the successful drive to improve teaching and learning. Children enter the school with levels of ability below those expected for four-year-olds. They consistently make good progress in the Foundation Stage to reach standards in line with national expectations. In the rest of the school, the impact of programmes to improve writing and mathematics has resulted in pupils maintaining this good progress to reach average standards by the end of Year 6. Girls do better than boys, particularly in English, but thanks to effective action, this gap has narrowed considerably. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the very effective specialist teaching and support they receive. There is still scope to improve the independent learning skills of pupils and to increase their levels of challenge. This will help to maintain and improve the recent gains made by pupils.

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

### **Grade: 2**

This aspect of the school's work is good. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. Attendance is good, and pupils clearly enjoy school and feel safe. Pupils say that everyone gets on well together. This is largely the result of the school's success in promoting caring and tolerant values amongst its pupils from an early age. Pupils are respectful and friendly. The oldest pupils look out for their younger schoolmates, and this culture of care and consideration permeates the school. Pupils are taught about the values of other cultures and religions and there are strong links with the local church. Art, music and drama have a high profile. In class and assemblies, effort and thoughtfulness are encouraged and rewarded. Pupils with very challenging social and emotional needs respond very positively to the school's work. They grow in confidence and do better academically as a result. Pupils take seriously the day-to-day responsibilities they are given. They are not always sufficiently skilled and confident when called upon to work independently. This inhibits their achievement, although most pupils do leave school equipped with the skills they will need for later life. Pupils benefit from well developed health awareness education and have many opportunities to take exercise. The school's contribution to the local community is good, with fundraising for charity and musical events featuring strongly.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Good teaching is characterised by the way in which staff make productive use of a range of strategies that employ information and communication technology (ICT) and stimulating resources to motivate and focus pupils' learning. The pupils behave well as a result, and have productive relationships with their teachers and each other. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good, and the skills the children acquire act as a springboard for the next stages in their education. Teachers and the skilled teaching assistants plan and work together effectively. Pupils particularly enjoy lessons with practical activities involving experiments and computers. There are good opportunities for speaking and listening in most lessons, and teachers work hard to boost those pupils that lack the confidence to express themselves orally. The school's work to improve writing, particularly for boys, is proving highly successful with standards rising significantly over the last two years. The current push to improve standards in mathematics is also making an impact. The high levels of support pupils receive results in them not having enough opportunities to get on and do things for themselves in order to consolidate their learning. This is most evident in tests, where their performance does not always match their achievements in class.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The first-rate curriculum has helped teachers to raise levels of achievement; it has also contributed to pupils' good personal development. The school is developing interesting links between subjects and makes good use of its quality ICT resources to stimulate learners' interests. High quality art work produced by pupils of all ages graces the classrooms and corridors. Many pupils learn to play musical instruments or sing in the choir. All pupils participate in an annual school production, and the school has gained success in music festivals. The school has been awarded the prestigious Artsmark in recognition of its work. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start. They are given a good grounding in basic skills and enjoy a range of stimulating experiences in all the areas of learning. This is why the school has been judged worthy of its Effective Early Learning award. The school is innovative in its introduction of French teaching, and pupils benefit from an excellent variety of visits and visitors. There are an impressive number of out-of-school activities for all pupils.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good, but the care the school provides its pupils is outstanding at all stages of their education. Pupils feel safe and secure within a warm and welcoming school and this is greatly appreciated by the vast majority of parents and carers. The many vulnerable pupils with physical, emotional and social difficulties receive expert care and guidance and make great strides in their development. Pupils say that 'teachers are always there for you.' The school's arrangements for child protection and health and safety are robust and in line with local and national guidelines. Pupils' academic guidance is good in the way it ensures that pupils are made aware of their progress. They are also given advice about how they can improve their work further. Pupils with particular gifts or talents are well supported in furthering their skills. Information is used well to identify pupils in need of extra support,

but targets are not challenging enough to enable pupils to achieve as well as they can. It is this shortcoming that prevents this aspect from being outstanding.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has outstanding energy and commitment to improving the achievement of all pupils. The school displays exceptional attention to ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities and do not suffer discrimination. The more stable staffing the school now enjoys and the intensive programme of professional development for all staff have resulted in improved standards and achievement. This has been particularly so in the last two years as the school's strategies have started to have an impact. Staff morale is good and there is a strong team approach. The school's work is monitored in depth and this informs its strategic planning well. However, the school's management does not yet make sure that enough appropriate targets are set for all pupils. The school uses its budget well and the school is maintained and resourced to a high level. The governing body has close ties with the school and monitors its performance closely. It is well aware of the need to ensure that its new members receive the training and advice they will need to continue the trend of good governance.

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## Annex A

## 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?	1
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	2
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>	1
<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.

## Annex A

**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	1
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing to you to let you know what we thought about your school after our recent visit. Thank you for making us very welcome and for telling us about your school. We think your school is a good place to learn. I have made a list of some of our reasons below.

- Many of you told us you enjoy coming to school. You clearly really like taking part in the sporting and musical activities provided for you. We were very impressed with the playing of your steel band.
- You behave well in lessons and in the playground. It was good to see how the older pupils look after the younger ones. Your school council has helped improve school dinners and the way you are rewarded in school.
- Your progress is improving as a result of your hard work and the good teaching you receive.
- All the staff really care about you and look after you very well. They are always thinking of ways they can make Thornhill even better.

We would like you to be even better learners and so we have suggested two things that will help. We would like you to have more opportunities to develop skills that will help you to learn on your own. Also, your teachers need to be sure that your targets are always challenging enough for you to do as well as possible in tests.

You can help by continuing to work hard and trying your best with the more difficult work you are given to do. It will be worth the effort, and we know you can do it.