

Thorpepark Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 117808 |
| Local Authority | Kingston-upon-Hull |
| Inspection number | 326687 |
| Inspection date | 16 September 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Andrew Scott |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 0 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr David Fowlie |
| Headteacher | Mrs Mary Wallace |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 December 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Laxthorpe Orchard Park Estate Hull HU6 9EG |
| Telephone number | 01482 854632 |
| Fax number | 01482 803722 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- standards in writing
- the quality of provision, especially in relation to the achievement of girls and more able pupils
- the effectiveness of the school's development planning.

Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, analyses of pupils' work, performance data, parents' questionnaires and the school's documentation, and from discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average urban school in an area of considerable deprivation. Almost all pupils are from White British families; very few pupils have English as an additional language. A high percentage of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The mobility within the pupil population is higher than average. The school suffered badly in the Hull floods of 2007 and had to use temporary accommodation until the building reopened in February 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which provides outstanding care and support for pupils and their families. Pupils openly say how secure they feel and how much they trust and respect all the staff. The school works impressively with local agencies to meet the needs of families as a whole. Teaching is good throughout the school and the curriculum is improving. All these strengths stem from good leadership, especially by the headteacher. As a result, pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well in their learning and they develop well as individuals.

The headteacher is not only highly effective in ensuring a very caring ethos; she has led the school extremely well through a difficult year following the devastation of the floods. She has not allowed the disruption to affect standards and the commitment by staff to ensure continuity of learning has been admirable. Weaknesses in reading and writing mean that standards by Year 2 were below expected levels in 2008, as they were at the last inspection. Results in mathematics have improved and are closer to average. Standards are usually average by Year 6, especially in science and mathematics; they were of a similar standard in 2008. This represents good progress from below average starting points in Year 1. Concerted action by the school has improved reading by the time pupils reach Year 6 but writing remains an issue and dilutes pupils' overall command of English. The school is well aware that girls and more able pupils do not always achieve quite so well as other pupils. It has already put suitable measures in place to try to improve girls' performance but has yet to do so for more able pupils.

Effective management by senior staff ensures consistency in teaching. Lessons are well prepared and managed, so that pupils know exactly what they should be doing and little time is lost. Learning is mostly challenging, although pupils said that sometimes their work could be harder. Staff do not always expect enough from more able pupils in particular. Good assessment means that staff take prompt action to support pupils who are falling behind and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is skilled, close support by teaching assistants and pupils appreciate the advice they receive from all staff. However, not all lessons have the vitality to enthuse pupils fully and encourage them to work at a swift pace.

The curriculum is good and well focused on basic skills. Teachers are methodical in their planning to ensure good continuity to learning, especially in classes with mixed year groups. The curriculum is broadened and enlivened by activities outside the classroom. For example, a recent visit to Eden Camp stimulated writing in Year 6 and pupils prosper from specialist coaching by Hull Football Club. The school has just begun a programme to make lessons more stimulating and to give learning more meaning. It is too soon to judge its impact.

Despite the school's best efforts, attendance remains just below average. Even so, it is gradually improving, reflecting how much pupils enjoy school. They concentrate well in lessons and like learning. Behaviour is good and bullying is rare; occasional problems are, according to the pupils, quickly and fairly dealt with by staff. Pupils have a strong sense of community; the open rapport with adults enables them to offer opinions freely. Pupils know their opinions matter. Pupils' awareness of the diverse cultures beyond their locality is continuing to develop. They are increasingly adopting healthy lifestyles, not only through their diet. They sign up to sports activities in large numbers. Their all-round skills are satisfactory and socially they are well prepared for life ahead.

The ethos of care courses through the school. Rigorous procedures for safeguarding pupils include the vetting of staff and risk assessments. The school does all it can to promote pupils'

health. All staff are trained in first aid and are readily available. Pupils' individual circumstances are closely monitored. If problems emerge, the school acts swiftly, frequently in tandem with local agencies. Physical and emotional support is readily available; at lunchtime, for instance, there are quiet sessions for pupils who sometimes find life stressful. There are opportunities for parents to learn how to support their children at home. The quality of care is a major influence on pupils' well-being and attitudes to learning.

Through their questionnaires parents expressed their appreciation of this care and of the school's leadership. They rightly consider these to be strengths of the school. The senior leaders work well as a team and the recent appointment of a deputy headteacher is already helping to strengthen and galvanise procedures. Governors are caring and supportive although not as proactive as they might be. The school evaluates itself shrewdly and produces good priorities to improve further. Its development plans are comprehensive but rather cumbersome; the school realises the need to focus more sharply on fewer priorities. Nevertheless, the school has made good progress since the last inspection, notably in improving the curriculum and pupils' personal development and also in addressing issues in reading. Overall, the school is in good shape and is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children begin school with skills and knowledge that are very low for their age, especially in language, personal and social skills and their awareness of the outside world. As a result of careful assessment and good teaching, children achieve well, particularly in their weakest skills. By the end of the Reception year, they reach standards below those expected of five year olds but this is changing. In 2008, children came close to expected levels in all areas of learning. The Foundation Stage is carefully planned so that all children have access to all areas of learning. The many staff enable focused teaching to take place in small groups and they support children sensitively in independent activities. The school has yet to finish the outdoor learning area after the flood damage but children benefit from ample resources outside regardless. The quality of care is as high as elsewhere in the school. Children progress rapidly in their personal development, gaining confidence and social awareness. They love being active and concentrate very well. The provision is well led. Learning areas are well organised, staff are well briefed and information about children's progress is efficiently gathered. However, analysis of the Foundation Stage's progress is not as clear as it might be to streamline further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Broaden pupils' curricular experiences to improve the quality of pupils' writing, especially their vocabulary and range of expression.
- Raise expectations in teaching, especially of more able pupils.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

| | |
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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being? | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 2 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 1 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress | 2 |

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 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 | 3 |

The quality of provision

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| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 |

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 2 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 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 | 3 |
| 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**

17 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thorpepark Primary School, Kingston-upon-Hull, HU6 9EG

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the recent inspection of your school. I learned a good deal from you all and this helped me to get to know your school in a short time.

Like you, I think that Thorpepark is a good school. You have had a really difficult year after the floods and I was really impressed by how well you and the staff coped with it all. If I had not been told about the devastation I would not have guessed! Therefore, all credit to you for keeping your standards up. You all achieve well and there are signs of further improvement in the Foundation Stage and in reading. Standards are broadly average but they could be higher in writing. The school is in the process of making lessons more exciting and varied so that you will have a lot more to write about and have the necessary vocabulary. In addition, some of you do not find the work challenging enough so you will find that teachers will be expecting more from those pupils and, indeed, from you all. I hope that you will enjoy the challenge.

You are right to appreciate what your headteacher and teachers do for you. Not only do they provide good lessons and a suitable curriculum, but they also take great care of you. They do all they can to make sure you are safe and happy and they work closely with your families to make life even better. As a result, you develop well in your time at school as individuals. You get on together and behave well. Your attendance could be better but once again the school is working very hard to improve matters. I am sure you will try to help them. I think it is important for you to know more about the big wide world, especially all the different people and cultures out there. I have asked the school to give you more opportunity to discover these and I am sure you will find it fascinating.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Lead inspector