

# Thornbury Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113329
<b>Local Authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	357321
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sharona Semlali

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	248
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sam Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Claire Hardisty
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 January 2008
<b>School address</b>	Miller Way Estover Plymouth PL6 8UL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01752302600
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 15 lessons, and 13 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, with members of the governing body and with staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents supplied, including information about pupils' progress, policies, information relating to planning and to safeguarding, and pupils' work. The inspectors received and analysed 61 questionnaires from parents and carers

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

- Progress in mathematics, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, boys and higher-attaining pupils.
- Progress in English, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The starting points of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in order to gauge the extent of progress they make as they move through the school.
- The extent to which the school's track record of improvement since the previous inspection indicates that capacity to improve is good, as judged by the school.

## Information about the school

Thornbury is slightly larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority-ethnic heritages is slightly lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average. Most of these have speech, language and communication difficulties. The school has specially resourced provision for ten pupils who have complex speech and language difficulties. The school's roll is stable.

The school has been accredited with the Activemark Gold award, Healthy Schools Award, Intermediate Global Award and Basic Skills Accreditation.

**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?**

**2**

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

**2**

## Main findings

Thornbury Primary School is a good and inclusive school that has rapidly improved since the previous inspection. The headteacher, together with the rest of the staff team, has been instrumental in bringing about major improvements. Its excellent care, guidance and support enable pupils to feel extremely safe and secure. One of the pupils said, 'Teachers take care of us. If we have any worries we go to an adult.' The school has established excellent relationships with parents and carers and forged exceptional partnerships with other external agencies that promote pupils' good learning.

Attainment is broadly average but improving rapidly in mathematics and English. This is because of improved provision in mathematics and in English, and staff receiving good-quality training. The majority of teaching is now good or better, although in some classes pupils are not always given enough time to think about their learning. Greater emphasis is now being placed on developing pupils' basic skills. The school's clear and comprehensive system for tracking pupils' progress enables any underachievement to be detected quickly and dealt with promptly. Inspection evidence, including scrutiny of the school's assessment information, show that girls, boys and higher-attaining pupils make good or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. Pupils in the specially resourced provision make progress at a similar rate to their peers.

Pupils are punctual and enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in above-average rates of attendance. This is an area of improvement since the previous inspection which staff have successfully tackled. Pupils are polite, courteous and keen to succeed. They respect and cooperate with each other well, readily recognising the difference between right and wrong. Pupils are proud of their school. This is demonstrated by the number of responsibilities they volunteer to take on, giving them the pathway into contributing to and influencing key decisions in the school

Enrichment in the curriculum contributes to pupils' excellent understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and taking plenty of exercise. For example, pupils can confidently explain why the heart pumps harder during exercise. Teachers have improved the way they assess pupils' learning and progress in lessons. However, marking in books does not always give pupils clear guidance on how to make improvements. In a few classes, pupils do not have enough opportunity to respond to any detailed marking.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress and are well supported by adults, but there are not enough opportunities for children to exercise autonomy in the choice of activities. There is insufficient detail in assessments made about children's strengths and areas for development on entry.

The school has moved a long way since the previous inspection, due to the clear vision, determination, passion and drive of the staff team. They understand the strengths and

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weaknesses of the school well and their self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. Taking into account the track record of improved pupil outcomes, notably in achievement, better provision and the growing contribution of the governing body, the school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

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

- Further accelerate learning and progress by:
  - creating regular opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their learning and to respond to marked work
  - ensuring detailed marking consistently suggests ways for pupils to improve their work
  - ensuring that teachers summarise key learning points during lessons.
- Enhance the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - ensuring a better balance between adult-led and child initiated activities
  - completing a rigorous baseline assessment of children's learning needs within the first few weeks of their start date.

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

**2**

Pupils show positive attitudes to learning, high levels of enthusiasm and considerable dedication in the way they apply themselves to lessons. During the inspection, older pupils were observed diligently enjoying reading whole books and doing research whilst younger ones concentrated well in listening to their partner's responses when trying to look for efficient ways of finding the gap between numbers. From below average starting points, all pupils make good progress in mathematics and in English, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A parent wrote, 'Our child has special educational needs with a statement? Since 2009 he has thrived and asks every day if it's school and is very keen to attend.'

Pupils take pride in carrying out their jobs around the school, which include office duties, answering the telephones and helping out at lunchtimes by playing with the youngest pupils. The work of the school council is notable as pupils work in teams seeking the views from other pupils by having in-depth discussions on topics, such as bullying, discrimination and disability. Pupils operate a weekly banking system which helps them to apply their rapidly improving basic skills to real-life situations, preparing them for future life experiences. Pupils respect and are sensitive to other people's needs, showing good social and moral development. This was highlighted when they organised a very moving 'Poppy service' for the school community who served in the forces. Pupils reflect on their own culture adequately but have limited awareness of the diversity of culture and ethnicity in the United Kingdom.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

A key strength of teaching is the way in which staff have created a climate in which pupils consistently conduct themselves well in lessons. As a result of positive relationships with staff, pupils feel confident that they can make mistakes, learn from them and feel at ease in asking for help. A parent wrote, 'I am pleased with my daughter's learning at Thornbury. She finds lessons fun and I think it's great that she is learning in such a positive way and she does not feel intimidated to say "I don't understand".'

A variety of teaching strategies are used effectively to excite and engage the pupils in lessons. These include getting pupils involved in role-play and using practical 'hands on' apparatus such as a 'numicon', a tactile mathematics resource used to help pupils understand how numbers relate to each other. In the most effective lessons observed, teachers asked thought-provoking questions that challenged pupils' thinking. In these lessons, pupils were given time to assess their learning but this only happened on a few occasions. In only a few of the lessons seen during the inspection were the main points summarised and pupils were not given time to discuss their learning. However, the quality of marking overall is good and all pupils benefit from the opportunity to evaluate their own learning at the end of a unit of work in a range of subjects, including English, history and science.

A strength of the good curriculum is the clear emphasis placed upon the teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. It is well organised and offers opportunities for a broad

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range of experiences such as being involved in a transition programme called 'fusion' where the older pupils are invited to the local secondary school to meet their new teachers. This contributes effectively to increasing pupils' confidence and reduces anxiety before they start their new secondary schools. Pupils get pleasure from taking part in a long weekend residential visit doing outdoor pursuits on Torbay, such as archery, and learning to balance on a catwalk which helps to develop their ability to work as a team under difficult conditions. Further work to develop the curriculum in order to promote creativity in learning is underway but has not yet had time to make a strong impact upon pupil outcomes.

Outstanding levels of care, guidance and support are given to pupils. Skilled staff know the needs of all learners exceptionally well. They provide a range of well-targeted support which has clearly contributed to improving outcomes for all pupils, but especially those who are potentially vulnerable and those with complex speech and language needs in the specially resourced provision. Effective intervention strategies, led by the school's parent support advisor, have contributed strongly to improved attendance rates since the previous inspection. In the inspection survey, most pupils reported that they feel cared for. Pupils benefit from a well-run breakfast and after-school club that provides high quality care that helps to develop their self-esteem.

*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The relentless drive, passion and determination of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff team have been key elements in securing significant improvements in provision and outcomes. All leaders routinely monitor teaching and learning, enabling them to have a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The headteacher has effectively deployed staff to ensure weaker areas have largely been addressed. This, for example, has led to improved pupil outcomes in Years 3 and 4 since the previous inspection. Morale is high and staff give good support to each other.

Leaders and the governing body take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of pupils is given high priority by completely fulfilling statutory duties. Site security is a particular strength and the school has become a local model of good practice in this regard. The governing body is made up of relatively new members but all have quickly worked together to secure improved pupil outcomes, particularly in attendance and mathematics. They fully participate in the self-evaluation process alongside staff. As members of the governing body understand the school's tracking data, they challenge and hold leaders to account effectively.

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The school has fostered excellent relationships with its parents and carers. They were recently invited to an 'open house' session in school where they took part in lessons alongside their children. Consequently, they now report that they feel more equipped to support their children's learning. Communication systems are innovative and effective, including a well-used school website and a range of tools including evaluations, comment book and surveys to encourage positive feedback. Partnership work is outstanding. The school is highly committed to working with the local authority, local clusters of schools, social services and the police to support children who find themselves in vulnerable and challenging circumstances.

A feature of the school's satisfactory contribution to community cohesion is that it has a clear grasp of the needs of its immediate community and has taken early steps to evaluate the impact of its work to date. The school is linked with a contrasting school in Sheffield and with another school in Denver in the United States of America but these links to extend pupils' cultural understanding are only recently formed and have not had time to embed and develop. The school has worked successfully to pursue its ambitious targets in closing the achievement gap between the different groups of pupils. It is an inclusive community in which discrimination, on the very rare occasions it occurs, is tackled vigorously.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

Given their lower than expected starting points, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning. They do particularly well in linking sounds and letters (phonics) and in writing. This is as a result of staff's effective introduction to phonics. However, the data collected on entry into the Foundation Stage is not thorough and systematic enough.

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Children know how to keep themselves safe and they work in a safe and secure environment. They behave well and show mostly positive attitudes to learning. They play and cooperate with each other, and relationships with adults are generally productive. Any children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and their needs are well met. They have healthy snacks daily which help them to adopt healthy lifestyle habits early. Children make good choices when they work independently. During the inspection, children accessed the computers independently, showing appropriate mouse control for their age.

Even though children are interested and engaged in their learning, there is an imbalance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. This is exacerbated by the lack of free flow between the indoor and outdoor learning areas throughout the day, which limits pupils' choices. Leadership and management of the key stage are satisfactory. There is a sound transition process in place, enabling children to settle easily into school.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

**Views of parents and carers**

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire is broadly in line with that typically found in similar schools. Almost all of the views were extremely supportive of the school and responses indicate very high levels of satisfaction. A small minority of parents and carers submitted written comments praising and thanking the school for its dedication, enthusiasm and care and the progress made by their children. A parent wrote, 'We changed schools to Thornbury and have been delighted with the way the school has helped our daughter to progress and learn. The school has a caring ethos, dedicated teachers and a strong headteacher who is approachable and enthusiastic.' A couple of individual comments from parents and carers indicated that learning for their children was not enjoyable. The inspection team found that children enjoyed their learning.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Thornbury Primary 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 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 248 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	54	27	44	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	69	17	28	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	32	53	26	43	1	2	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	59	20	33	4	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	67	18	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	54	25	41	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	49	27	44	2	3	0	0
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)	26	43	25	41	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	44	29	48	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	43	33	54	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	36	31	51	4	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	43	30	49	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	57	24	39	1	2	0	0

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 2009 to 31 August 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 2009/10 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.**



1 April 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Thornbury Primary School, Plymouth PL6 8UL**

I would like to thank you for being so welcoming to me and the other inspectors. You were very polite and courteous.

I am pleased to tell you that you go to a good school. You know how to keep yourself safe and healthy. If you have any worries you feel confident in sharing them with the staff. You have had the opportunity of going on exciting residential visits that helps you to work as a team member under difficult conditions. You enjoy coming to school and arrive on time. You work hard and make good progress and the staff take good care of you. Teachers work hard to make your lessons interesting and exciting.

In order to make your school even better, we have asked your headteacher and other members of staff to do two main things to help you to do even better.

The teachers should give you more time to think about and discuss what you have learned in lessons. Also, you should have more time to respond to your teachers' comments. Teachers have been asked to make sure that the marking of your work helps you to know how to make improvements.

We have asked the Early Years Foundation Stage staff to make a few improvements, such as allowing the younger children to have more choices in their activities, including more opportunities to learn outside at suitable times.

You can help by reading and making comments about your marking and asking for help if you are unsure on how to make your work better.

Yours sincerely

Sharona Semlali  
Lead inspector

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