

**Inspection under Section 28 of the
Education Act 2005**

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Thornhill Primary School
Heol Hir
Thornhill
Cardiff
CF14 9LA**

School Number: 6812176

Date of Inspection: 14 January 2008

by

**Phillip David Watcyn Edwards
15669**

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Thornhill Primary School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents information about the performance of their child's school.

The inspection of Thornhill Primary School took place between 14/01/08 and 16/01/08. An independent team of inspectors, led by Phillip David Watcyn Edwards undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the quality of leadership and management and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The five-point scale used to represent all inspection judgements in this report is as follows:

Grade 1	good with outstanding features
Grade 2	good features and no important shortcomings
Grade 3	good features outweigh shortcomings
Grade 4	some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
Grade 5	many important shortcomings

There are three types of inspection.

For **all** inspections, there is a written report on seven key questions.

For **short** inspections, there are no subject reports.

For **standard** inspections, there are also reports on six subjects.

For **full** inspections, there are also reports on all subjects.

Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of its past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection. All nursery schools, special schools, pupil referral units and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.

This school received a **short** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of 6 during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Thornhill Primary is situated on the Thornhill housing estate in the county of Cardiff. The main school building is of a relatively modern design, with two separate demountable classrooms. It has a large field, yard and environmental area. The majority of pupils come from the surrounding area which the school describes as neither prosperous nor disadvantaged. English is the predominant home language of around 85% of the pupils. There is a range of other languages spoken by a few pupils at home, but not Welsh.
2. Currently, there are 371 full-time pupils on roll from reception onwards indicating a small, but gradual fall in roll since the previous inspection of around 40 pupils. The annual intake covers the full ability range, with the majority of pupils having had medium nursery education locally. There are 14 straight year classes.
3. Around 5% of pupils receive free school meals, which is well below the all Wales national average of 19.7%. There are 32 pupils (9%) with some form of special educational need (SEN), including 23 on school action and nine on school action plus. There are three pupils with a formal statement for SEN. Around 15% of pupils in the school have an ethnic minority background.
4. There are 14 full-time and five part-time teachers, including the headteacher who was appointed shortly after the previous inspection. There are five full-time and nine part-time learning support assistants (LSAs) and a full-time school administration assistant.
5. The school has gained the Basic Key Skills Quality Mark for the second time and was previously inspected in spring 2002.

The school's priorities and targets

6. The school logo is 'Learning Together – Sharing success'.
7. The vision for Thornhill Primary school is that the children and staff, irrespective of race, culture, gender, religion or disability, feel happy, valued and respected by one another.
8. Its over-riding aim is to continue to develop as a school committed to high achievement for all, where each individual receives every opportunity to reach his or her potential in non-academic as well as academic areas, celebrating strengths and addressing any weaknesses.
9. The school seeks to provide a curriculum that encourages the academic, social, physical, emotional and spiritual development of all our pupils so they savour success, enhance self-esteem, reach potential and celebrate achievement with pride and dignity, both in school and in the wider community.

The school development plan (SDP) identifies the following targets areas:

2007 – 2008

10. Learning and teaching in mathematics and reading; develop the conservation area and become a Green Flag school; maintain and upgrade the buildings and premises; improve provision for inclusion; and introduce teaching of science through the Cardiff Effective Learning in Primary Science (CELIPS) programme.

2007 – 2010

11. Transition plans for effective systems between all partner schools, raising ICT skills across the cluster, enhancing oracy skills, improving quality of assessment between key question 2 and key question 3 and evaluation and review based on impact of the other plans.

Summary

12. Thornhill Primary is a friendly, inclusive school with high aspirations for its pupils. It has many outstanding features and standards have improved consistently since the last inspection.
13. The inspection team agreed with nearly all of the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report. It disagreed with the Grade 2 judgement made on key question 2 and raised it to Grade 1 as the school had underestimated the outstanding features in teaching.

Table of grades awarded

Key Question	Inspection grade
How well do learners achieve?	1
How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	1
How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1
How effective are leadership and strategic management?	1
How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	2
How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	1

14. Pupils, including those with SEN and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve good standards in knowledge, understanding and skills.
15. Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to learning, succeed exceptionally well regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic backgrounds and consistently reach and improve on agreed targets and goals. The shared culture of striving for success is an outstanding feature in encouraging pupils to achieve agreed targets and goals.
16. Children under five make very good progress in the key skills of speaking, listening and reading. In the key skills of writing, number and information and communications technology (ICT), they make good progress.
17. In both key stages, pupils' progress in key skills across the curriculum are very good in listening and good in speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and ICT. The consistency with which pupils listen carefully to teachers and each other is outstanding throughout the school and is a significant influence in promoting high standards.
18. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate good development in their creative skills. Pupils' bilingual competence is good overall when they use Welsh at specific times, such as during registration, but they rarely use it incidentally and

progressively as a second language in lessons during the course of the school day.

19. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
20. When the core subject indicators (pupils attaining at least level 2 in key question 1 and level 4 in key question 2 in all of mathematics, science and English) in both key stages are compared with Welsh national figures they are in the top 25%, and when compared with similar schools who have more than 8% of pupils entitled to free school meals, they are in the top 50%. The small gap between the performance of boys and girls is closing appropriately following recent successful initiatives. Trends in standards over time since the previous inspection confirm steady and significant improvement in performance.
21. Pupils' progress in learning is good overall. Learners generally have an adequate understanding of the work they are doing, but, seldom review their own individual progress to see what they need to do to improve.
22. The trend towards continuous improvement since the previous inspection and the manner in which most pupils, including the few who enter school at a low baseline, and the significant number who join the school during each year, achieve well, acquire new knowledge and skills is outstanding.
23. The pupils in relation to their varying abilities, including those with SEN, achieve well and make good progress towards fulfilling their potential and moving on to the next stage in their learning.
24. The development of pupils' personal and social skills is outstanding. Pupils achieve good levels of attendance with the average for the three terms before the inspection being 94.5%. Most pupils attend regularly and are punctual at the start of the day.
25. The moral and wider development of learners is outstanding. They appreciate the values and rights of others and are very well aware of equal opportunities issues.
26. Learners are knowledgeable and well prepared for effective participation in the life and work in their community.

The quality of education and training

27. The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
37 %	56%	7%	0%	0%

28. Compared with the national picture reported by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in her annual report 2005-2006, the quality of teaching in lessons judged Grade 2 or above (93%) is well above the norm of 79% and over double the 17% judged Grade 1 (37%).
29. The consistently good or better teaching observed in nearly all lessons for under-fives, and in the both key stages is an outstanding feature and contributes significantly to the high standards achieved by pupils. The quality of teaching for

pupils with SEN including those who are withdrawn is always good, and sometimes outstanding.

30. Outstanding features in lessons include:

- lucid expositions include perceptive, challenging and open-ended questioning which encourage pupils to listen, respond confidently and make their own decisions; and
- respectful and courteous working relationships create a conducive atmosphere to stimulate and encourage pupils of all abilities to strive to achieve excellence.

31. Good features include:

- good planning with a clear structure and purpose to enable teachers to share objectives with pupils at the beginning of lessons and revisit them towards the end in order to assess their progress effectively.
- helpful and sensitive intervention by teachers and classroom assistants ensure pupils with English as an additional language and those with SEN play a full part in learning; and
- teachers showing versatility in adopting a variety of teaching strategies to gauge pupils' knowledge and understanding to accommodate their needs effectively.

32. Shortcomings include:

- lesson planning not making clear how the key skills identified are to be developed; and
- limited opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend incidental Welsh in appropriate contexts across the school.

33. The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good and meets statutory requirements. Data from a good range of assessment procedures is analysed effectively to inform teaching and learning and set targets for pupils in the core subjects. Assessment of pupils with SEN is well organised and effective. Teachers mark work accurately and helpfully. The good quality annual reports to parents conform to requirements.

34. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum with good continuity and progression and addresses the needs of all groups of learners effectively, including pupils with SEN and those with particular gifts and talents. Reception children enjoy a good variety of planned indoor and outdoor learning experiences that develop their basic and key skills effectively and prepare them well for moving on to the next stage of their learning. Appropriate subject policies and schemes of work, including curriculum mapping for key skills are in place, but their integration into schemes of work to inform teachers' lesson plans is incomplete. Good timetable organisation ensures that appropriate amount of time is allocated to the curriculum.

35. Collective worship also makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal and wider development with appropriate opportunities to develop spiritually. The school promotes pupils' personal development very well through the values it promotes on a daily basis and through more formal arrangements in its recently revised personal and social education (PSE) programme.

36. Pupils develop a good understanding of the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* through their work and extra curricular activities, but there is insufficient attention given to pupils' bilingual development through the use of incidental Welsh as a second language, where appropriate. The school provides numerous extra-curricular activities, open to all, to cater for a wide variety of interests and benefit pupils' development. Arrangements for the allocation of homework are appropriate overall.
37. Partnerships with parents and carers are good and nearly all have signed an appropriate home-school agreement. The school has appropriate links with teacher training institutions and also provides useful work experience for high school pupils and further education students. Pupils' learning experiences respond well to the needs of employers and the wider community.
38. The manner in which the school promotes and ensures equal opportunities for all pupils and also their families is an outstanding feature. It ensures the inclusion of all pupils in school activities and providing a curriculum that is accessible to everyone.
39. The high priority given to ensuring that pupils receive the best care, support and guidance that can be provided, including their healthy development, safety and welfare, is outstanding. Registration arrangements meet statutory requirements and are effective in encouraging above average attendance figures. The school has adequate measures to eliminate, bullying or oppressive behaviour of any kind. Pupils behave respectfully and thoughtfully towards each other. The school promotes gender equality and avoids stereotyping in all aspects of its work. Taken together, these arrangements are outstanding in generating an environment conducive to improving pupils' performance.
40. The quality of provision for pupils with SEN is outstanding. This includes the very effective early system to identify pupils with additional needs which is thorough, on going and constantly reviewed. Support procedures and programmes are managed very well and all pupils with additional learning needs have well focused, school designed individual education plans (IEPs). The careful way the needs of pupils with SEN are addressed with minimum disruption to their daily lessons and the effective provision made for carefully chosen withdrawal groups to target basic literacy skills effectively is outstanding.

Leadership and management

41. Leadership and management are good with outstanding features. The school's cohesive logo, vision, aims and shared values ensure a solid foundation for improvement and promotion of equality for all which are reflected very well in its life and work. The headteacher provides a positive and caring leadership and her ambitious vision for the school underpins a clear strategic direction which motivates staff effectively and continues to improve standards. She is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher, school management team and subject leaders who carry out a wide range of responsibilities in an outstanding and effective manner.
42. Outstanding arrangements, linked to realistic and challenging targets set out in the SDP, identify individual and whole-school training and development needs of staff, improve standards steadily and the quality of provision very effectively. Targets are met and subject leaders play an increasingly effective role in

tracking the standards being achieved in their subjects through monitoring pupils' work. Performance management procedures are effective in updating and developing the performance of leaders and promoting a culture of continuous improvement among staff.

43. The governors are well-informed, closely involved in the life of the school and ensure important statutory requirements are met. Its prudent monitoring of the quality of provision to match the needs of the school is cautionary in that it plans for and considers carefully the significant fluidity of pupils moving into and out of the area and its knock-on effect on the budget.
44. There is a clear emphasis in the school's self-evaluation on maintaining and improving standards through reviewing its strengths and areas where improvements need to be made. Arrangements relating these to priorities in the next SDP are developing well to establish an increasingly coherent approach to school improvement.
45. All those involved in delivering education are taken into account in the self-evaluation process. School co-ordinators have high expectations and a good feature is they are all involved systematically in the process of school review based on first-hand evidence, including their subject areas and the development and monitoring of whole-school priorities. This year's comprehensive SDP contains details of the priorities and targets for this school year and beyond, together with appropriately time-related and measurable criteria. It provides focussed strategic direction, including transition arrangements within the cluster. Clear targets are prioritised and proper consideration given to allocation of resources to support them.
46. The governors oversee self-evaluation appropriately through regular meetings with the headteacher and staff and through every day involvement with the school. They work together effectively to ensure priorities are supported through adequate allocation of resources. Effective actions taken since the previous inspection have resulted in measurable improvements.
47. The contribution of all personnel towards the positive ethos which pervades the school is outstanding. Teachers and support staff are generally well qualified and experienced. They are deployed and managed effectively across the school and the consistently high quality education they provide is an outstanding feature. Arrangements for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) are very well organised with pupils benefiting from the interests and expertise of staff.
48. The site, comprising one large building and the two demountable buildings, is maintained well and is a suitable setting for effective teaching. The internal accommodation, including in the demountables buildings, is well maintained and kept clean with very attractive displays celebrating pupils' work. Subject co-ordinators use a wide range of appropriate resources effectively and efficiently to enhance curriculum delivery.
49. The administration of the school's daily routines and finances are very efficient. The standard of budgetary control is outstanding with resources managed economically and efficiently to provide very good value for money.

Recommendations

In order to improve standards even further, the school needs to:

- R1. improve pupils' bilingual competence in lessons across the curriculum;
- R2. involve pupils more effectively in setting and reviewing their individual targets to support the next stage of their learning; and
- R3. continue to integrate ways of developing key skills into schemes of work and teachers' lesson plans.

The governing body is responsible for amending its current development plan to incorporate action in response to the recommendations within 45 working days of receiving the report, showing what the school is going to do about the recommendations. This plan, or a summary of it, will be circulated to all parents at the school.

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

50. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report.
51. Pupils, including those with SEN and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve good standards in knowledge, understanding and skills.
52. Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to learning, succeed exceptionally well regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic backgrounds and consistently reach and improve on agreed targets and goals. The shared culture of striving for success is an outstanding feature in encouraging pupils' to achieve agreed targets and goals.
53. Children under five make very good progress in the key skills of speaking, listening and reading. In the key skills of writing, number and ICT, they make good progress.
54. In both key stages, pupils' progress in key skills across the curriculum are very good in listening and good in speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and ICT. The consistency with which pupils listen carefully to teachers and each other is outstanding throughout the school and is a significant influence in promoting high standards.
55. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate good development in their creative skills. Pupils' bilingual competence is good overall when they use Welsh at specific times, such as during registration, but they rarely use it incidentally and progressively as a second language in lessons during the course of the school day.
56. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Children make good and on occasions

outstanding progress in developing skills through focused and play-based activities.

57. When the core subject indicators (pupils attaining at least level two in key question 1 and level four in key question 2 in all of mathematics, science and English) in both key stages are compared with Welsh national figures they are in the top 25%, and when compared with similar schools who have more than 8% of pupils entitled to free school meals, they are in the top 50%. The small gap between the performance of boys and girls is closing appropriately following recent successful initiatives.
58. Pupils' progress in learning is good overall. Learners generally have an adequate understanding of the work they are doing, but, seldom review their own individual progress to see what they need to do to improve.
59. The trend towards continuous improvement since the previous inspection and the manner in which most pupils, including the few who enter school at a low baseline, and the significant number who join the school during each year, achieve well, acquire new knowledge and skills is outstanding. They develop ideas and increase their understanding exceptionally well as they progress through the school.
60. The pupils in relation to their varying abilities, including those with SEN, achieve well and make good progress towards fulfilling their potential and moving on to the next stage in their learning. Pupils acquire good skills necessary to maintain lifelong learning.
61. The development of pupils' personal and social skills is outstanding. Their behaviour is exemplary in class lessons and they move around the school in an orderly manner. The vast majority are very courteous and polite; they are considerate, and relate very well to each other and to adults.
62. Pupils achieve good levels of attendance in comparison with local and national figures. The average attendance for the three terms before the inspection was 94.5%. Most pupils attend regularly, but the level of attendance is affected by a very few families taking holidays in term time and the unusually significant number of pupils entering and leaving the area over the year. The vast majority of pupils are punctual at the start of the day with only minor instances of lateness during inclement weather.
63. The interest pupils show in their work and their ability to concentrate, are outstanding. They work enthusiastically in lessons, are happy to join in the wide range of activities provided and they show respect for their work, which is often neat and tidy. Many pupils work autonomously, and acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain lifelong learning through undertaking independent research and investigative tasks.
64. The moral and wider development of learners is outstanding. They appreciate the values and rights of others and are very well aware of equal opportunities issues. The level of respect they have for the beliefs, attitudes and cultural traditions of others is outstanding and is reflected in the warm and courteous way they are welcomed to the school.

65. Learners are knowledgeable and well prepared for effective participation in the life and work in their community through constructive links with local employers and a range of visits to places of historical and cultural interest.

The quality of education and training

Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

66. The findings of the inspection team did not match the Grade 2 judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report. The weighting for this key question is in the teaching and the school underestimated the effect the good and often outstanding features have on steadily improving standards.

67. The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
37 %	56%	7%	0%	0%

68. Compared with the national picture reported by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in her annual report 2005-2006, the quality of teaching in lessons judged Grade 2 or above (93%) is well above the norm of 79% and over double the 17% judged Grade 1 (37%).
69. The consistently good or better teaching observed in nearly all lessons for under-fives, and in the both key stages is an outstanding feature and contributes significantly to the high standards achieved by pupils. The quality of teaching for pupils with SEN including those who are withdrawn is always good, and sometimes outstanding.
70. Outstanding features in lessons include;
- lucid expositions include perceptive, challenging and open-ended questioning which encourage pupils to listen, respond confidently and make their own decisions;
 - respectful and courteous working relationships create a conducive atmosphere to stimulate and encourage pupils of all abilities to strive to achieve excellence;
 - clear and appropriate time limits are set to ensure learners complete tasks and that lessons progress at a brisk pace;
 - a wide range of appropriate resources and activities to engage and challenge pupils of all abilities fully in their learning; and
 - efficient and effective partnerships with classroom assistants to support pupils' learning.
71. Good features include:
- Lessons that are well planned and have a clear structure and purpose to enable teachers to share objectives with pupils at the beginning of lessons and revisit them towards the end in order to assess their progress effectively;

- helpful and sensitive intervention by teachers and classroom assistants ensure pupils with English as an additional language and those with SEN play a full part in learning;
 - good subject knowledge, enthusiastic teaching and use of a wide range of contexts capture pupils' interest and encourage them to learn well;
 - teachers show versatility in adopting a variety of teaching strategies to gauge pupils' knowledge and understanding to accommodate their needs effectively, and
 - equality of opportunity is evident and all pupils are treated fairly irrespective of their abilities and backgrounds.
72. Shortcomings include:
- lesson planning not making clear how the key skills identified are to be developed;
 - overlong introductions and inconsistent expectations of how pupils respond to questions; and
 - limited opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend incidental Welsh in appropriate contexts across the school.
73. The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good and meets statutory requirements for accrediting learners' progress and reporting to parents.
74. Data from a good range of assessment procedures is analysed effectively to inform teaching and learning and set targets for pupils in the core subjects. Appropriate strategies to improve assessment of work in the foundation subjects continue to be developed appropriately.
75. Portfolios for core subjects are helpful and ensure agreed and accurate judgement on standards and moderating levels of work.
76. Effective and consistent assessments in short and long-term planning provide continuity and progression within and between the key stages.
77. Teachers mark work accurately and helpfully and there are good formal and informal opportunities for parents to discuss pupils' progress with teachers.
78. Annual reports to parents conform to requirements, are of good quality. They include clear comments on pupils' achievements and abilities in each subject, their behaviour and attitude and targets for future development.
79. Assessment of pupils with SEN is well organised and effective. The school has good liaison arrangements with external agencies such as the LEA Educational Psychology Service and Behaviour Support team.

Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?

Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings

80. The inspection team agreed with the judgement given by the school in the self-evaluation report.

81. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum (NC) and the agreed syllabus for religious education.
82. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning and a few exceed them.
83. Reception children enjoy a good variety of planned indoor and outdoor learning experiences that develop their basic and key skills effectively and prepare them well for moving on to the next stage of their learning.
84. Appropriate subject policies and schemes of work, including curriculum mapping for key skills are in place, but their integration into schemes of work to inform teachers' lesson plans is incomplete. Appropriate policies are in place to address drugs awareness, sex education and personal and social education.
85. The curriculum ensures good continuity and progression and addresses the needs of all groups of learners effectively, including pupils with particular gifts and talents. Pupils with SEN achieve well in comparison with their abilities and pupils new to learning English make very good progress and frequently attain high standards. Good timetable organisation ensures that appropriate amount of time is allocated to the curriculum.
86. The school promotes pupils personal development very well through the values it promotes on a daily basis as well as through more formal arrangements in its recently revised PSE programme. As a result, pupils have strong moral values and treat one another with consideration and respect. They are self-confident and very sociable with both adults and other pupils.
87. Collective worship also makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal and wider development with appropriate opportunities to develop spiritually. It promotes the concept of commitment and service to others, as well as celebrating personal achievement and improvement. Pupils develop a good understanding of the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* through their work particularly in art, history, geography and music as well as through studying the Welsh language and in preparing to celebrate St David's Day. Extra curricular activities with a Welsh dimension also make a valuable contribution to this aspect. There is insufficient attention given to pupils' bilingual development through the use of incidental Welsh as a second language, where appropriate, across the curriculum.
88. The school provides numerous extra curricular activities, open to all, to cater for a wide variety of interests and benefit pupils' development. Educational visits are frequent and wide-ranging. Arrangements for the allocation of homework are appropriate overall.
89. The provision for developing pupils' understanding of Wales as a country where people from all over the world may live and work is an outstanding feature. The school warmly welcomes pupils from an increasing number of countries who make a valuable contribution to the life of the school. They and their families enrich the curriculum effectively through sharing their languages, food, traditions and beliefs.

90. The arrangements for the transfer of Y6 pupils into the next phase of their education are an outstanding feature of the work of the school. There are extremely well developed links with other schools in the cluster and with the local high school. The school has recently taken the lead in promoting a new initiative by inviting teachers from the high school to be present at its Y6 parents' evening. The school has also completed a film about transition to Y7 to help support pupils and allay their fears. Teachers from the local high school teach basic French and German to Y6 pupils through a series of fun activities that take place during lunchtime. This not only provides curricular enrichment but also establishes very good relationships between pupils and the staff that will ultimately teach them.
91. Partnerships with parents and carers are good and the majority have signed an appropriate home-school agreement. The meeting with parents and their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very positive.
92. The school has appropriate links with teacher training institutions and also provides useful work experience for high school pupils and further education students. This, in conjunction with welcoming visitors to the school, also provides additional benefits to pupils' learning experiences and helps them to develop socially.
93. Pupils' learning experiences respond well to the needs of employers and the wider community. They benefit from a range of work-related events such as the 'Business Challenge' as well as from the various visits made by people from the world of work. In addition, visits made by the police, fire service, nurse and others further enhance pupils' learning and understanding of work related activities.
94. There is a clear equal opportunities policy which commits the school to the inclusion of all pupils in school activities as well as providing a curriculum that is accessible to everyone, particularly the children with EAL. This is a good feature of the way the school operates and is clearly reflected in many aspects of school life such as in assemblies, extra curricular clubs, the school yard, and other social activities.
95. The promotion of sustainable development and global citizenship is a good feature. The school council and its sub-committee the eco-committee have undertaken a number of initiatives relating to recycling, waste management and energy conservation. The school has achieved the Eco-Schools silver award and is currently working towards the next award, the Green Flag. Issues relating to sustainable development and global citizenship are promoted well through geography, religious education and PSE which enhances pupils' awareness, understanding and responsibility for their environment.
96. The school makes good efforts to develop and increase pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding of the world of work and entrepreneurial skills.
97. Lifelong learning and community regeneration activities receive prominence in the school and good use is made of its facilities by the Beaver Group, PTA and adult evening classes. Local organisations and businesses support the school well in many of its fund raising activities. Pupils participate in joint community events such as carol services and cultural celebrations.

Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
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98. The inspection team agreed with the judgement given by the school in the self-evaluation report.
99. There are many outstanding features to this aspect of the school's work. High priority is given to ensuring that pupils receive the best care, support and guidance that can be provided. Pupils themselves feel that they are very well cared for and have an effective voice in school affairs. The views of even the youngest children are taken into account when changes are made. All necessary policies and arrangements are in place and pupils are aware of who they should speak to if they have a problem.
100. There are well established links with local businesses and parents. The way in which the school gathers, carefully analyses and takes account of the views of parents is an outstanding feature of its work. One example is the way in which the school has responded to requests by parents of pupils with challenging behaviour for positive as well as negative feedback. This has resulted in a good behaviour display board. The school determinedly explores every avenue in the quest for support for pupils and families with particular difficulties.
101. There are effective induction arrangements in place and new pupils are warmly welcomed into the school. Reception children settle well because parents and children are invited into school during the previous term. There are good links with the nearby nursery and other private nursery provision in the area. Induction arrangements for pupils joining the school later are outstanding. Pupils are allocated to a house group that gives them a sense of belonging and also to a friendship or buddy group in class. The effective buddy group system has been developed to ensure that new pupils integrate more quickly and do not feel oppressed by one exclusive friendship. Pupils say that they settle in easily because other children are friendly and welcoming.
102. An effective personal and social education programme is in place which includes circle time and health education.
103. The established school council is well run and provides pupils with a strong sense of citizenship and responsibility. They take on their roll very seriously and in a very mature way.
104. Registration arrangements meet statutory requirements and are effective in encouraging above average attendance figures. The school has adequate measures to eliminate, bullying or oppressive behaviour of any kind. There is little evidence of oppressive behaviour and pupils behave respectfully and thoughtfully towards each other.
105. The school promotes gender equality and avoids stereotyping in all aspects of its work. Taken together, these arrangements are outstanding in generating an environment conducive to improving pupils' performance.
106. The school gives pupils' healthy development, safety and welfare a high priority. There are effective arrangements and policies in place and pupils are well supervised. Risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis and safety

- equipment is regularly reviewed. Pupils are encouraged to act responsibly to ensure their own safety and the safety of others and there are nominated teachers trained in First Aid. The school is involved in the Healthy Schools initiative and pupils explain the importance of eating a healthy diet. Pupils are enthusiastic skippers and enjoy taking part in the 'Skip to be fit' programme.
107. The school has a policy and arrangements for child protection in line with local procedures. The headteacher is the designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection and three members of staff and a governor have received recent training.
 108. The quality of provision for pupils with SEN is outstanding. This includes the very effective early system to identify pupils with additional needs which is thorough, on going and constantly reviewed. Support procedures and programmes are managed very well and school policies conform fully to the requirements of the Code of Practice.
 109. All pupils with additional learning needs have well focused, school designed individual education plans (IEPs) that include clear details of targets and strategies to be followed. The arrangements for their regular and annual review are managed systematically and very thoroughly and parents or carers are invited to contribute and be involved actively in supporting their children.
 110. The special needs co-ordinator (SENCo) works closely with teachers in order to provide an effective and inclusive learning structure for pupils. The contribution of teaching assistants is invaluable in promoting the progress of pupils with SEN and helping to ensure that they gain full access to the curriculum and are effectively integrated into the life of the school.
 111. The careful way the needs of pupils with SEN are addressed with minimum disruption to their daily lessons and the effective provision made for carefully chosen withdrawal groups to target basic literacy skills effectively is outstanding.
 112. The support for the very few learners whose behaviour impedes their progress and others is both sensitive and very effective, with minimum disruption to lessons. An outstanding feature is the very effective and successful 'Learning support class for pupils with complex and severe learning difficulties' session which takes place during lunchtime to coach such pupils in appropriate social skills.
 113. The way in which the school promotes and ensures equal opportunities for all pupils and also their families is an outstanding feature. Of particular note is its careful consideration of pupils and others with disabilities, in making adjustments to the premises. Parents, grandparents and friends of the school are closely involved in reviewing provision for disability within the school and suggestions such as priority seating for the elderly are quickly and willingly acted upon.
 114. The school promotes very high expectations in relation to behaviour and it has effective procedures for monitoring and responding to any discriminatory behaviour or harassment. Developments in the promotion of positive behaviour strategies and a range of other playground initiatives are good features of provision.

115. The school recognises and respects diversity well. It is very active in promoting good race relations and pupils from a number of ethnic backgrounds feel valued. There are effective links with the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) who provide very good advice and support for teachers of the increasing number of pupils whose first language is not English or Welsh. Pupils with EAL integrate well and make very good progress, communicating confidently with their peers both in class and socially.

Leadership and management

Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

116. The inspection team agreed with the judgement given by the school in the self-evaluation report.
117. The school's cohesive logo, vision, aims and shared values ensure a solid foundation for improvement and promotion of equality for all which are reflected very well in its life and work.
118. There is outstanding leadership. The headteacher provides a positive and caring leadership and her ambitious vision for the school underpins a clear strategic direction, motivates staff effectively and continues to improve standards. She is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher, school management team and subject leaders who carry out a wide range of responsibilities in an outstanding and effective manner. They carry out their responsibilities in a very efficient, effective and productive way to ensure all pupils, regardless of background, are fully included in all aspects of the school's life and work.
119. There are outstanding arrangements that take account of Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) priorities and local partnerships and consortia agreements, including the very effective transition arrangements being developed with other schools in the cluster. The school leadership is taking appropriate action to prepare and resource the forthcoming Foundation Phase.
120. Outstanding arrangements, linked to realistic and challenging targets set out in the SDP, identify individual and whole-school training and development needs of staff, improve standards steadily and the quality of provision very effectively. Targets are met and subject leaders play an increasingly effective role in tracking the standards being achieved in their subjects through monitoring pupils' work.
121. The governors are closely involved in the life of the school and meet their responsibilities well. They help to set the school's strategic direction through regular meetings as well as overseeing good performance management procedures. These are followed appropriately by the headteacher and subject leaders to promote their professional development.
122. The governing body is very aware of the importance of its role in supporting the well-being of the school. Its prudent monitoring of the quality of provision to match the needs of the school is cautionary in that it plans for and considers carefully the significant fluidity of pupils moving into and out of the area and its knock-on effect on the budget.

123. The governing body ensures important statutory requirements are met. It is well-informed about the school's performance and progress. It recognises developing its role as important and, to this end, attends a wide range of relevant governor training courses provided by the LEA and has undergone a governors' audit to improve further its efficacy.

Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?

Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings

124. The inspection team agreed with the judgement given by the school in the self-evaluation report.
125. There is a clear emphasis by the school in maintaining and improving standards. Leaders have a secure knowledge of the school and are well informed about the areas for which they are responsible. This is evident in the good self-evaluation report produced before the inspection which provides an accessible and accurate review of the school's strengths and areas where improvements need to be made. Arrangements relating these to priorities in the next SDP are developing well to establish an increasingly coherent approach to school improvement.
126. Recent arrangements to seek the views of learners and parents to improve quality and standards are established to inform future self-evaluation appropriately.
127. The views of all those involved in providing education are taken into account in the self-evaluation process. School co-ordinators have high expectations and a good feature is they are all involved systematically in the process of school review based on first-hand evidence, including their subject areas and the development and monitoring of whole-school priorities. Useful analysis is made of a range of data, including baseline assessments in reception classes and assessments to track pupils' progress through the key stages. This continues to develop well and enables the school to identify more accurately those areas in the curriculum which learners need to improve.
128. This year's comprehensive SDP contains details of the priorities and targets for this school year and beyond, together with appropriately time-related and measurable criteria. It provides focussed strategic direction, including transition arrangements within the cluster. Clear targets are prioritised and proper consideration given to allocation of resources to support them.
129. Performance management procedures are effective in updating and developing the performance of leaders and promoting a culture of continuous improvement among staff.
130. The governors oversee self-evaluation appropriately through regular meetings with the headteacher and staff and through every day involvement with the school. They work together effectively to ensure priorities are supported through adequate allocation of resources.
131. Actions taken since the previous inspection have resulted in measurable improvements. Standards in design and technology have improved and the

school has addressed the shortcomings identified in the subjects and aspects. Very good provision has been made for the early years' children to support developing them to their full potential and adequate space has been provided for a school library.

132. An effective review of the quality of the provision in the foundation subjects' curriculum has taken place and it is well planned. Curriculum leaders have adequate time to monitor the provision through PPA time and consistent procedures are in place to assess pupils' achievement and monitor their progress.
133. Good opportunities are incorporated in teachers' planning for pupils to enhance their individual learning skills in ICT through the effective use of the new computer suite, but it is less clear how they use these skills in class lessons.
134. Monitoring of teaching against set criteria and dissemination of good practice has resulted in a significant improvement in the quality of teaching overall.
135. The inspection team agreed with nearly all of the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report. It disagreed with the grade 2 judgement made on Key Question 2, and raised it to Grade 1 as the school had underestimated the extent of the outstanding teaching taking place. This confirms that the school's own self-evaluation is based overall on secure evidence and sound judgements.

Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
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136. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report.
137. The contribution of all personnel towards the positive ethos which pervades the school is outstanding. They work as a dedicated team to ensure that all children are cared for and taught well. The caretaker, midday supervisors and kitchen staff all support the school and its aims, and carry out their duties commendably.
138. The governors and the headteacher maintain a good ratio between pupils and adults through good forward planning and skilful budget management. Teachers and support staff are generally well qualified and experienced and a significant number of interested pupils receive in-house musical instruction from visiting teachers.
139. The quality of learning resources such as the wide range of artefacts, apparatus, interactive white boards and books is outstanding and they are readily available to all pupils to support their learning. Subject leaders review them regularly to ensure they continue to match the demands of the curriculum.
140. There is a strong emphasis on continuing professional development for staff members with training linked appropriately to the objectives in the SDP.
141. The site, comprising one large building and the two demountable buildings, is maintained well and is a suitable setting for effective teaching. The school has a large yard, field and environmental area, with exceptionally good sunny weather canopies, but many parents and governors have valid concerns about the appropriateness of a fenced path passing directly through the school grounds and the steep pathway leading down to the school field.

142. The internal accommodation, including in the demountables buildings, is well maintained and kept clean with very attractive displays celebrating pupils' work. The school grounds offer a stimulating learning and recreational environment and are utilised well to support learning effectively, particularly the outside area for the reception and the forthcoming foundation phase. The new library area is proving to be a valuable resource for learners to practise and improve their research skills.
143. Subject co-ordinators use a wide range of appropriate resources effectively and efficiently to enhance curriculum delivery. The quality and accessibility to ICT resources in the refurbished and re-equipped computer suite is outstanding, but the school recognises that accessibility to this valuable resource is presently constrained by the number of computers in the class areas. Pupils' learning is enriched considerably from regular educational visits and the contributions of visitors who share their experiences.
144. Teachers and support staff are deployed and managed effectively across the school and the consistently high quality education they provide is an outstanding feature of the school. Arrangements for teachers' PPA time are very well organised with pupils benefiting from the interests and expertise of staff. Resources for the workforce reform are effectively deployed.
145. The standard of budgetary control at the school is outstanding and the school manages its resources economically and efficiently to provide very good value for money. Spending is carefully planned in the short and long-term, any likely changes in the budget are anticipated and resources are provided in accordance with the school's clear priorities and targets. The headteacher and governing body review and evaluate the needs and use of resources regularly and the best possible use is made of what is available.
146. The administration of daily routines and finances are very efficient and the school secretary supports the headteacher and governors effectively.

School's response to the inspection

The headteacher, staff and governors are all thrilled that the recent Estyn Inspection Report confirms what we, as a school community already knew, that Thornhill Primary is doing well in some areas and outstandingly in many others. When we heard that we were in the top 13% of schools this year who were chosen for a Short Inspection, rather than a Standard or Full one, we were delighted.

Although this report has been outstanding in many ways, there are always areas for further development in any school and we as a school community have no intention of becoming complacent. We look forward with enthusiasm to facing all the new challenges that lie ahead with the introduction of Curriculum 2008 and Foundation Phase and the headteacher, staff and governors will address the three recommendations which came out of the inspection by including them in a post inspection action plan to:

- improve pupils' bilingual competence in lessons across the curriculum,
- involve pupils more effectively in setting and reviewing their own individual targets to support their next stage of learning, and
- continue to integrate ways of developing key skills into schemes of work and teachers' lesson plans.

Some aspects of the recommendations are already part of our school improvement planning process.

We were extremely proud of everyone involved. The children and all staff proceeded in their usual industrious, dedicated and respectful way and the governors contributed to the whole process in their normal enthusiastic and supportive manner – and we feel that this was recognised by the inspection team who captured in the report the essence of what we aspire to in our school.

This has been a true team effort – reflecting our school motto of 'Learning Together – Sharing Success'.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Edwards and all the members of his team for their courtesy, consideration and enthusiasm and for endeavouring to make the process of inspection for everyone as pleasant as possible.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Thornhill Primary School
School type	Nursery and Primary
Age-range of pupils	4 - 11
Address of school	Heol Hir Thornhill Cardiff
Postcode	CF14 9LA
Telephone number	029 2075 1302

Headteacher	Mrs Joyce Power
Date of appointment	September 2002
Chair of governors	Steve Greenaway
Registered inspector	Mr Phillip Edwards
Dates of inspection	14 – 16 January 2008

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	N/A	54	55	48	49	50	55	60	371

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	14	5	16.6

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	22.3:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	N/A
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	26
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.2:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Spring 2007	N/A	93.5	93.7
Summer 2007	N/A	93.1	94.5
Autumn 2007	N/A	95.1	95.6

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	5%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results

End of key stage 1:

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2007 Compared with national averages 2006			Number of pupils in Y2:					49
Percentage of pupils at each level								
			D	W	1	2	3	
English:	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	6	73	21	
		National	0	3	13	63	20	
En: reading	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	6	71	23	
		National	0	4	14	55	27	
En: writing	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	17	69	15	
		National	0	5	14	68	12	
En: speaking and listening	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	4	65	31	
		National	0	2	10	63	24	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	2	69	29	
		National	0	2	10	64	23	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	67	33	
		National	0	2	9	66	24	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	93.8%	In Wales	80.6%

End of key stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2007 compared with national averages 2006			Number of pupils in Y6					56			
Percentage of pupils at each level											
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	2	11	50	37
		National	0	0	0	1	1	4	16	48	30
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	4	24	48	24
		National	0	0	0	1	1	3	14	48	33
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	2	20	33	44
		National	0	0	0	1	0	2	12	52	34

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language) by teacher assessment			
In the school	87%	In Wales	74.2%

- D Pupils who are excepted under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum
A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence
F Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

A team of four inspectors, who were present at the school for 10.5 inspector days, carried out the inspection.

Pre-inspection meetings were held with parents and the governing body to discuss the life and work of the school.

Parents completed 82 questionnaires which were analysed carefully and 95% were positive.

Discussions were held with the headteacher and staff with responsibilities, and support staff.

School documentation and samples of pupils' work were examined.

Inspectors observed 27 lessons or sessions.

A sample of pupils' work from across the ability range in each year group was examined.

Inspectors listened to a sample of pupils across the age range reading. Discussions were held with pupils, including the school council, about their work and about the life of the school.

Pupils' behaviour was observed during break periods, at lunchtimes and at the end and beginning of the school sessions.

Inspectors attended assemblies and observed extra-curricular activities.

Post inspection meetings were held with the headteacher, staff and the governing body.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Phillip Edwards Registered Inspector	Context, Summary, Recommendations and appendix Key Questions 1, 5, 6 and 7 Contributions to Key Questions 2, 3 and 4
Moyra Greaney Team Inspector	Key Question 2 Contribution to Key Questions 3
Jan Marsden Team Inspector	Key Questions 3 and 4
Helen Adams Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3 and 4
Mrs Joyce Power Headteacher and Nominee	Contribution to team meetings

Acknowledgement

The inspection team would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents of Thornhill Primary School for their co-operation and courtesy throughout the inspection.

The contractor was: EPPC/Severn Crossing Ltd
Suite H, Britannic House
Llandarcy
Neath SA10 6JQ