

# Summarised inspection findings

**Thorntree Primary School**

Glasgow City Council

19 August 2025

## Key contextual information

Thorn tree Primary School is a non-denominational school situated in the Greenfield area of Shettleston in the East End of Glasgow. The school is part of the Eastbank Learning Community. The school has extensive grounds, comprising concrete playground areas and a grassed football pitch.

The headteacher has been in post for three years. She is supported by a two full-time depute headteachers, an acting depute headteacher and an acting principal teacher.

There are 437 children attending the school across 15 classes.

Attendance is generally below the national average. Exclusions are below the national average. In September 2023, 81% of pupils lived in the 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland and 11.2% of pupils were recorded as having additional support needs (ASN). In May 2025, 59.3% of children were recorded as having ASN. In February 2024, 37% of P6 and P7 and 83% of pupils from P1 to P7 were registered for free school meals.

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| 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment   | very good |
| <p>This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ learning and engagement</li><li>■ quality of teaching</li><li>■ effective use of assessment</li><li>■ planning, tracking and monitoring</li></ul> |           |

- Children and staff enjoy strong and trusting relationships between each other. They demonstrate consistently the school values of kindness, honesty, citizenship and respect in all aspects of their work and learning. All staff fully understand, and demonstrate very effectively, the nurturing principles. Senior leaders have implemented initiatives such as ‘Story Massage’ and the ‘Early Bird Club’. These efforts, together with the well-established nurturing approaches are strong examples of the school’s thoughtful methods to ensuring all children are ready to learn. Staff developed the ‘Thorn tree Promise’, based on the national promise to care-experienced children. This is bespoke to the school and exemplifies staff’s commitment to meeting the needs of identified children very well.
- All staff have high aspirations and expectations for every child. They have a very clear understanding of children’s needs. They use this well to ensure that they match tasks and activities successfully to children’s individual needs. Well-considered scaffolds enable each child to engage with and experience success in their learning. Children know that they are listened to by staff and that their views are valued and acted upon. Across the school, children talk confidently and knowledgeably about what they are learning. Staff have supportive learning conversations with children to help them to think about how they contribute to the life and work of the school. As a result, almost all children are motivated and enthusiastic learners. Staff have identified correctly the need to develop further children’s ability to identify their next steps and set appropriate targets.

- Staff developed an agreed 'good lesson cycle' which is implemented consistently by teachers. They have worked well together to consider steps required to plan and deliver learning experiences for children. This ensures that children experience similar structures for lessons across all stages.
- Children from P5 to P7 use individual digital devices effectively and appropriately in all areas of the curriculum. For example, children use digital devices to carry out investigations and research linked to social studies. Children who require additional support also use digital technology to help them to access learning in literacy. Children from P1 to P4 benefit from access to shared digital devices to enhance, support and challenge their learning.
- Staff plan play based learning approaches well for the youngest children in the school. They consider their interactions with children, the spaces available to them and have an awareness of using different provocations to stimulate learning. Senior leaders should continue to consider how play-based pedagogy can be extended across all stages as appropriate for children. Children across the school participate fully in well-planned outdoor learning experiences linked to literacy and numeracy. This provides flexibility in learning, particularly for children who find transitions challenging. Older pupils support P1 children well to develop confidence in their outdoor learning experiences. As planned, staff should continue to develop progressive outdoor learning experiences for children at all stages across the curriculum.
- Teachers observe each other's practice regularly. This leads to focused and supportive professional dialogue on quality improvement. For example, teachers highlight individual and collective strengths and areas for improvement. Teachers, supported by professional learning, work well together to improve the quality of effective questioning. Staff are well placed to take forward their plans to develop further higher-order questioning and thinking skills.
- Senior leaders use the well-established school assessment framework to plan strategically the schedule of quality assurance and evaluation activities. Senior leaders collate staff's areas of strength and further improvement needs before carefully aligning these with professional learning for all staff. This has a direct and positive impact on children's learning experiences.
- Almost all teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. Almost all children understand the purpose of their learning and how to be successful. Almost all teachers make well-timed interventions to ensure children make the best possible progress, including those who require additional support with their learning. As a result, children at all stages benefit from a consistently high quality of learning and teaching across the curriculum.
- In almost all classes, teachers provide children with helpful verbal feedback linked to the purpose of learning. Senior leaders and teachers recognise the need to develop further high-quality written feedback to help children understand what they are doing well and how to improve. This will support teachers to track more effectively the incremental progression of children's skills, knowledge and development of attributes and other personal qualities.
- Senior leaders and teachers work together closely to discuss planning, assessment and children's progress across stages and Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. They use a range of formative, summative and standardised assessments well to measure children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Teachers use assessment information very well to plan appropriate learning and teaching experiences and to deploy support staff. Teachers make increasingly effective use of CfE experiences, outcomes and national Benchmarks to support assessments, evaluate children's progress and to inform their planning. Staff should continue to review learning, teaching and assessment approaches for listening and talking. This will support them further to more accurately evidence the progress children are making across the school and to identify next steps.

- Teachers plan learning over appropriate annual, termly and weekly timescales. This provides clear overviews of key learning underpinned by more detailed planning for core learning and teaching activities. Senior leaders should consider developing more consistent approaches to sharing termly learning overviews with families.
- Teachers use local authority frameworks well to ensure progressive and cohesive learning experiences across all stages for literacy and numeracy. They have created specific, detailed and progressive plans for interdisciplinary learning contexts. Senior leaders have implemented a rigorous cycle of evaluating and assessing the impact of teachers' planning and targeted assessments. This approach supports teachers' dialogue about and understanding of expected standards. Senior leaders lead internal moderation of the quality of learning activities for literacy and numeracy. Staff work successfully with colleagues from the local learning community on literacy and numeracy moderation activities. Together, these approaches have led to robust and reliable professional judgements in numeracy and increasingly reliable judgements in literacy.
- Senior leaders and teachers meet termly for discussions about the effectiveness of planning and the impact on children's progress. Senior leaders and teachers work closely and effectively with support for learning staff. Together, they monitor carefully the progress of children with additional support. Where children face barriers to learning, staff identify and implement interventions and resources quickly. They are responsive to children's changing needs and adapt plans appropriately.
- Senior leaders and staff make very effective use of data to support children to make the best possible progress over time. This enables them to identify individuals, groups and cohorts of children who may not be making the expected progress. Staff use a wide range of diagnostic and standardised assessments to help identify specific areas of learning which may require additional supports. By identifying these areas early and intervening effectively staff are raising attainment in literacy and numeracy for children, including those who for example, are care-experienced, are entitled to free school meals and who have English as an additional language.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

#### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, most children at P7, and the majority of children at P1 and P4 attained expected CfE levels in literacy in 2023/24. Most children at P1, P4 and P7 attained expected CfE levels in numeracy in 2023/24.
- Senior leaders and teachers track and monitor closely the progress of children who require additional support. Most children who require additional support make good progress against their individual targets.

#### Attainment in literacy and English

- Most children make good progress in literacy and English.

#### Listening and talking

- At early level, most children listen to each other and take turns. They follow simple instructions well. A few children require support to maintain their focus during listening activities. At first level, most children communicate clearly with one another and listen to the ideas of their peers in discussions. At second level, most children show respect for the views of others and offer their own viewpoint in debates and discussions. Across all levels, children would benefit from more opportunities to develop and apply their listening and talking skills in a range of contexts.

#### Reading

- At early level, most children use their knowledge of letters and sounds to read simple words and sentences. Most children enjoy choosing stories and share their opinions of them. Children would benefit from further opportunities to develop reading skills through play contexts. At first level, most children identify the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts. Most children read familiar stories aloud adding expression. They answer well literal questions about texts but would benefit from more opportunities to respond to inferential and evaluative questions. This should help to deepen their understanding of stories and texts. At second level, most children discuss the writing techniques that authors use and why. A few children would benefit from further practice developing their skills in predicting, analysing and summarising texts.

#### Writing

- Teachers use a whole school approach to support children in handwriting and presentation. Children are beginning to benefit from this increased focus on presentation and handwriting and the quality of written work is improving. At early level, the majority of children form letters correctly and, with support, are beginning to use capital letters, full stops and finger spaces appropriately. They would benefit from further practice of writing independently, for example, through play experiences. At first level, most children write appropriately for a variety of purposes. They include relevant information when writing non-fiction texts. For example, they

write instructions for a specific purpose. Children confidently use connectives and simple punctuation. Most children working towards second level make appropriate choices about the layout of their writing and organise their ideas in a logical way. Most are motivated to write regularly for a range of purposes. Children use techniques to engage or influence the reader, such as persuasive language. They should now further develop their knowledge of figurative language and use this in their writing.

## **Numeracy and mathematics**

■ Overall, most children make good progress from prior levels of attainment.

■ Children experience high quality learning and teaching in numeracy and mathematics. Across all stages, almost all children confidently share their thinking strategies. They benefit from consistent and thorough approaches to teaching core numeracy and mathematical concepts. Children respond positively to revisiting prior learning and applying their numeracy and mathematics knowledge and skills in new contexts.

## **Number, money and measure**

■ Most children are confident in a range of number processes appropriate to their age and stage of development. Most children explain well how they use number facts to solve problems. At early level, most children count, sequence and show number stories within 20. They are secure about the quantities of numbers and show their understanding using concrete materials, pictorially and numerically. At first level, most children understand the place value of a digit in numbers to 1000 and beyond. They demonstrate secure understanding of number facts, sequences and bonds. This helps them complete mental calculations with confidence. A few children need to work with more complex calculations. At second level, most children use fractions confidently. They explain equivalence and describe when they would use fractions outwith school. Most children apply their understanding of multiplication, division, addition and subtraction to calculate money totals, give change and allocate spending within a budget.

## **Shape, position and movement**

■ At all stages, most children demonstrate knowledge and skills in shape. Children access a wide range of supportive resources which help them to explore and investigate shapes. At early level, children sort, identify and discuss the different features and properties of two-dimensional (2D) shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects appropriate to their age. Children use correct technical language to describe the properties of 2D shapes and 3D objects. At first level, most children measure in centimetres accurately. They calculate the perimeter and area of 2D shapes and confidently name the strategies required to do this. Children are developing confidence in applying this learning to compound 2D shapes. At second level, most children use their knowledge of 3D objects to calculate the volume in cubic centimetres. Children require support to develop their understanding and confidence in classifying and measuring angles.

## **Information handling**

■ Across the school, most children gather and use information in a variety of ways. Teachers encourage children to use a variety of materials and methods to organise their information. At early level, children use tally marks to gather information and grids to organise the numerical representation. Almost all children explain confidently how they match, sort and organise objects. At first level, most children discuss how to present information in bar graphs, tables, charts and diagrams. At second level, most children use technology to display data simply and to record their analysis. They discuss confidently a range of ways of presenting information for a variety of purposes and audiences.

## **Attainment over time**

■ Teachers have a strong understanding of standards within CfE levels and of children's progress over time. They use a wide range of assessment evidence across different time periods to make their professional judgements of achievement of a CfE level.



- Senior leaders are at the early stages of developing tracking mechanisms to effectively demonstrate progress over time in curricular areas other than literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.
- Over the past two years senior leaders have focused relentlessly on improving attendance at school. Senior leaders track and monitor attendance rigorously. They demonstrate that by attending school more, children's attainment rises. Staff work very well with parents to understand issues which may be preventing children attend and to find solutions. Senior leaders share helpful individual attendance profiles with parents termly. The majority of children identified as needing bespoke arrangements have improved attendance over 2022/23 and 2023/24.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievements**

- Staff value and celebrate successfully children's achievements from within and outwith the school. Children have regular opportunities to share their successes in class and at assemblies. Staff celebrate children's achievements well through, for example, wall displays, newsletters, social media and regular 'praise assemblies. The headteacher tracks children's achievements and their participation in activities such as clubs, committees and sporting events. Staff should now discuss and track the skills children are gaining from their achievements and link these to skills for learning, life and work. This should help children to make links between their achievements, learning and progress.
- Children are enthusiastic about their school leadership responsibilities. These include as house captains, playground ambassadors, digital leaders and as story massage club leaders. Through these roles, they demonstrate valuable skills, such as teamwork and communication and are becoming increasingly confident in developing their citizenship skills. Children build their confidence well through working towards and attaining locally and nationally accredited awards. These include in areas such as nurturing approaches, sports, sustainability and health and wellbeing.
- Most children engage positively in the wide range of activities and clubs available across the school. These activities develop children's sporting, musical and teamwork skills successfully. Children play an active role within their school and local community. For example, working with the local community council to fundraise for a defibrillator and engaging local businesses as part of the annual enterprise fayre. This supports children to develop as effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- Children demonstrate responsibility through their roles in The Pupil Volunteer Force (PVF). They proudly describe the positive difference the PVF makes for them, those they are helping and to ensuring calm and productive learning environments. Senior leaders recognise the importance of ensuring that children at all stages develop these important skills. Staff should continue to develop programmes and activities to ensure that more children experience and develop their skills for life and work.

### **Equity for all learners**

- All staff are aware of the socio-economic and emotional circumstances for children and families. The headteacher uses Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) effectively to employ additional staff to provide targeted support across the school for children at risk of not making appropriate progress. She also uses PEF to provide a morning activity club, music tuition and funding for trips and other activities. As a result, a few children have improved their attainment and achievements, increased attendance and demonstrate improved social and emotional wellbeing.



- Senior leaders track rigorously the progress and attainment of groups of children, such as those who have experienced care and those who are in receipt of free school meals. They have clear evidence of individual children's progress towards expected attainment levels. Senior leaders use data very effectively to identify children who experience disadvantages and are making less progress than other children. They track carefully the impact of funded interventions for targeted individuals and groups. Children are improving outcomes in literacy and numeracy as a result of these interventions. A few children also benefit from attending group sessions, such as nurture support, or work closely with partner organisations for example, to access play therapy.

## Other relevant evidence

- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and children. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. Minor areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.
- All children receive high-quality learning experiences in physical education in line with national minimum expectations. Children receive their entitlement to religious and moral education and religious observance through the curriculum and assemblies.
- All children learn French progressively as they move through the school. They experience small inputs of learning about Scots Language in their learning in other curricular areas. However, this approach does not enable children to experience modern languages in line with the Scottish Government's 1+2 language policy.
- Children access books from their class libraries. Staff work with the local library to organise block visits for children from P1 to P3 to promote children's reading for enjoyment. This session, children at P7 were selected to participate in a Young Readers programme involving online training, visits to libraries and working with authors. The programme is improving their reading for enjoyment and motivation. The school also hosts a free, termly 'Get Thorntree Reading' event for families, offering access to pre-loved books and promoting reading for enjoyment at home.
- Senior leaders recognise the need for, and are at the early stages of, involving parents more in decisions relating to the allocation of PEF. Children are not yet consulted on this.

## Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

|                         |               |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| All                     | 100%          |
| Almost all              | 91%-99%       |
| Most                    | 75%-90%       |
| Majority                | 50%-74%       |
| Minority/less than half | 15%-49%       |
| A few                   | less than 15% |

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.