

# George Tomlinson Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103075
<b>Local Authority</b>	Waltham Forest
<b>Inspection number</b>	355307
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kevin Hodge

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	486
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jane Woolley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Amanda Stewart
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	Vernon Road Leytonstone, London London E11 4QU
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<b>Email address</b>	school@georgetomlinson.com

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They visited 22 lessons taught by 20 staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation and pupils' workbooks; they held discussions with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, including the Chair, and senior staff. Questionnaires from 79 parents and carers, 112 pupils and 32 staff and were analysed to help inform the inspection process.

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

- The childrens' achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in their early writing language and early writing skills.
- The level of achievement in pupils' writing, reading and mathematics, particularly in Years 1 and 2.
- If teaching and the curriculum promote pupils' learning in key skills, particularly for boys and those pupils who maybe underachieving.
- How senior leaders are raising the school's effectiveness from the current levels they judge them to be.

## Information about the school

This much bigger than average sized school serves a culturally diverse community. Approximately 85% of pupils are from minority ethnic heritages with pupils of Indian and Pakistani heritage forming the largest proportion. Approximately 35 different languages other than English are spoken by pupils. Around 18% of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities which is about average, as is the number with a statement of special educational needs. The largest groups are pupils with speech, language, emotional or social difficulties. The proportion of pupils eligible to receive free school meals is higher than the national picture. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery and three Reception class bases. During the inspection, there were no children attending the Nursery as they were being visited in their homes. A January admission of children was due to join the Reception classes in the week after the inspection. The school has received a number of awards reflecting its commitment to promoting active lifestyles and environmental awareness. There is a breakfast and after-school club managed by the governors.

**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?**

**3**

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

**3**

## Main findings

George Tomlinson Primary provides a satisfactory level of education. Its strengths are found mostly in the way it cares for and guides pupils. As a result, pupils behave well, and develop good attitudes and relationships in this culturally diverse and harmonious school. Although academic levels are rising, this is not consistently the case for all pupils.

Pupils make satisfactory progress and so leave the school with attainment that is broadly average. Attainment in mathematics is better than in aspects of pupils' English skills such as their confidence to write. Overall they achieve satisfactorily; progress sometimes varies as pupils move through the school partly because they have to make up a lot of ground in their learning. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, children and pupils make satisfactory progress, but their language work develops more slowly as not all activities really stretch their thinking. Pupils make best progress in developing their social skills. Pupils make up some ground in gaining basic skills, but pupils enter Year 3 below the levels expected in both mathematics and English. Pupils' skills in science work are more secure as they broadly reach the levels expected. Parents and carers are generally happy with their children's experience at the school, as are the pupils, but parents and carers would like to see the pace of academic progress increase so pupils achieve well rather than at the current satisfactory levels.

Teaching has some good features, but does not yet consistently help pupils quickly gain skills in all areas of their work. Boys' achievement sometimes lags behind that of girls in Years 1 and 2, for example, particularly in writing, and the focus on helping them close the gap with the girls before they leave is starting to work. The school is increasingly targeting different groups of pupils who need extra help or lag behind, to positive effect. Teaching promotes good levels of cooperation in the class and the aims of lessons are usually clear. On occasions, however, teachers' questioning is not probing enough and activities are not as relevant to pupils' interests or linked to the skills needed in later life. This is truer for pupils from some, but not all, minority ethnic groups. The satisfactory curriculum is modified to ensure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities keep pace with their classmates. More creative approaches, such as learning other languages, topics revolving around pirates or the rainforest, help broaden the pupils' knowledge and awareness. Information and communication technology (ICT) and opportunities to develop extended writing skills are not fully and consistently planned to good effect through the school. Sporting activities, both during lesson time and in after-school clubs, help pupils improve activity levels, and clubs such as steel pan and film help enrich pupils' experiences. Pupils speak highly of the breakfast and after-school clubs.

Senior leaders and managers have successfully promoted some improvements to aspects of teaching and in maintaining good aspects of pupils' personal development since the last inspection. In reality they recognise, as do some parents and carers, that the pace of

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change has been variable. Plans for this are clear, accurate and include better provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage and a greater focus on speeding up pupils' progress. The relative attainment of different groups is analysed closely, but does not always result in all groups making consistently good progress. Governors have reviewed routines and areas to improve and new approaches are just starting to take effect. Given that the school's self-evaluation is accurate and staff have a clear idea of what they have to do to lift the school's effectiveness, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

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

- Raise pupils' attainment and pace of progress in writing and number work before the next inspection, particularly in Years Reception to 2 by:
  - ensuring pupils write at greater length and complexity
  - ensuring that writing and number activities for boys and those from African and Caribbean heritage really engage them in their learning
  - giving pupils more problem-solving activities in mathematics so they can apply their skills more regularly.
- Ensure that teaching is more consistently good through the school by:
  - actively involving pupils more in their learning during lessons
  - marking pupils' work consistently well in all year groups so that they know how to improve
  - making sure teachers use good questioning to extend pupils' thinking and learning
  - using monitoring of teaching more effectively to pinpoint those teachers who need extra support and guidance.
- Improve the curriculum in all year groups by ensuring that:
  - all independent learning activities in the reception classes promote children's basic skills
  - topic work in Years 1 to 6 includes more opportunities to use basic skills of writing and number work
  - ICT skills are planned for in more day-to-day activities in all classes.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils academic skills develop steadily, although in Years 3 to 6 pupils' progress sometimes increases, where initiatives such as grouping by ability has helped them reach average levels in their mathematics. Pupils are not fully confident to write at length, although work is often presented neatly. Teachers' assessment indicates that children in the Nursery and Reception classes sometimes make good progress, given their low starting points on entry to school, although this is not always the case. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make satisfactory progress as they do in Years 3 to 6. However, pupils' past work, teachers' assessments and current work indicate their progress picks up more quickly as they move up the school. For example, in a well-taught Year 3 lesson on global warming, pupils spoke enthusiastically about how they would go about tackling the problems and in

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a Year 6 English lesson, pupils enjoyed developing their journalistic skills by presenting a newspaper report to good effect. In contrast, in an otherwise well-taught mathematics lesson, pupils were not enthused enough about how to apply their number skills to a real-life context. Most groups of pupils achieve satisfactorily, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities because of the close supervision they receive. Those with special gifts and talents are identified, and the school is increasing the focus upon them to extend their learning further. Indian pupils do particularly well, but progress is not consistently good in all classes for children of African and Caribbean heritage. The progress of groups is analysed carefully, but modification of lesson activities does not always take full account of their differing learning needs so that all can achieve at a good pace.

Pupils' good moral, social and cultural development ensures pupils' well-being. The happy relationships that exist extend to lessons, corridors, lunchtimes and playtimes. Pupils speak highly of their roles such as playground pals and lunch monitors, and say that being chosen to sit on the top table once a week is valued by them. Pupils say they feel safe as their views are listened to and acted upon. This year's school council is just getting into its stride, but it has a track record of getting involved in the local community and in shaping the direction of school initiatives such as helping to design the school's logo. Pupils' good awareness of environmental issues, staying healthy and financial issues during 'money week' stands them in good stead for their future. Weaknesses in their basic skills mean their preparation for their next school is satisfactory rather than good.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</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>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<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

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## How effective is the provision?

Since the last inspection, the school's monitoring indicates the proportion of good teaching is increasing, which inspection evidence confirms. In well-taught lessons, teachers use interesting activities to motivate pupils' learning and set challenging tasks that really stretch their thinking. Predominately, lessons engage some but not all pupils, explanations are sometimes too long and questions teachers pose are too predictable so pupils' learning moves at a satisfactory rather than at an exciting pace. The curriculum, which has emerging elements to aid teachers in planning for more innovative topics, is not yet fully established so that pupils in every class benefit to the same degree. The range of extra-curricular activities is good and includes sporting and cultural experiences. Language teaching, such as French and Spanish, add spice to some lessons. Teaching assistants help support pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to a level which is effective in helping them keep pace with fellow pupils. Teachers' marking of work gives praise regularly and clearly, but is not effective enough in pointing to the ways pupils can improve it to the next level. Underpinning the pupils' good behaviour and attitudes is the effective pastoral care shown to the pupils. They appreciate that adults are approachable and help them through difficult times. The academic care shown to pupils, seen through the analysis of results and in reducing gender differences or between groups, is not yet as effective. Transition arrangements to, within, and from the school ensure that changes are as smooth as possible.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have faced periods of disruption to staffing since the last inspection, and some parents and carers voice their concern at the changes, many of which were unavoidable. This is now reducing, albeit slowly, so that there is a stronger sense of team work towards the common goal of improving the school's effectiveness. The realistic self-evaluation rightly points to improving the pace of pupils' progress linked to the need for teaching to be of higher quality, although monitoring has not yet resulted in consistently good teaching. Both aspects are increasingly being tackled to good effect, but there is some way still to go. Staff questionnaires returned indicated a positive commitment to the school and senior leaders in the drive for further improvement. The headteacher, supported by governors, recognises that plans, priorities and ambitions must make a greater difference in the classroom and in the school as a whole. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective, including the vetting of staff, checks on health and safety and all E-safety aspects. The school's harmonious relationships are a strength

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of its satisfactory provision to promote community cohesion. These strong internal and local links are more effective than those links with others much further from the school in this country and abroad. The school's commitment to ensure equal opportunities are effective in ensuring discrimination is not tolerated at any level. The school ensures that pupils have similar opportunities to attend clubs and access resources where practical. Although the school monitors the performance of different groups carefully, there are some variations in the way different pupil groups sometimes perform.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</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>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

When children start in the Nursery, they benefit from bright, well-organised, resources. Well-thought-through induction procedures help them settle in to school and then into Reception classes. Adults gain a secure knowledge of individual children, although in the Reception classes, activities, while interesting, do not always stretch the children's thinking or language skills, particularly when they are working independently. Indoor areas in the Reception classes or 'bases' are not always vibrant or organised to best effect to support learning. For example, some role-play areas are more enticing than others. Children develop positive attitudes and they socialise well, enjoying their practical work both inside and outside the classroom. They acquire a sound understanding in important areas such as learning letter sounds and numbers, but these skills are not often taught with imagination which reduces their effect. Children develop independence skills appropriately, and although teachers and helpers supervise these activities well, not all help children benefit from activities with the same skill. Children are regularly assessed and activities are modified to help their learning move on. Their satisfactory progress means some weaknesses remain, particularly in writing and language skills, and they enter Year 1 below the age-expected levels, particularly in these aspects. The outdoor area has some



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interesting activities, but the organisation of these lacks imagination in some aspects to help develop childrens' learning more quickly.

Staff work appropriately together as a team, but there is not always a consistent approach between rooms or base areas. Some good self-evaluation is helping identify priorities for improvement, for example moving and raising the quality of the outside area promises much. Staff forge a positive partnership with parents, which is maintained well throughout the year and helps ensure children's welfare needs are met.

*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

Around 25% of all parents entitled to, returned the questionnaires. This rate of return is on the low side compared to the national picture. Those parents voicing concerns outweighed those with more positive comments. The concerns were sometimes very specifically centred on their own experiences or that of their child. There were some common concerns around pupils' progress, disruptions to staffing and the way the school responds to suggestions and views. Inspectors spent time investigating these concerns. The school recognises that there have been disruptions to staffing, causing some classes to have several changes of teacher, but these have often been caused by the normal reasons for staff turnover. Pupils' progress, while satisfactory for many, is another area where inspectors endorse the view of parents and carers; some pupils could make more progress. Inspectors discussed with staff how this might be achieved.

The school provides open evenings for parents to discuss either their children's progress or other aspects of the school's work. These evenings are well attended. Senior leaders recognise that for some parents and carers, better communication can be achieved and have plans to improve it. Other parents and carers spoke highly of the school, particularly its ethos, care and the way it helps pupils become 'caring and polite'. Some testified to their child's own positive experiences and enjoyment of school which appears to be confirmed by the overall level of parental satisfaction shown in the table.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at George Tomlinson 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 79 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 486 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	62	28	35	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	56	27	34	4	5	2	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	35	44	36	46	7	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	37	30	38	17	22	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	32	41	36	46	6	8	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	33	36	46	14	18	3	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	44	33	42	10	13	1	1
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)	23	29	33	42	12	15	3	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	33	34	43	16	20	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	37	31	39	9	11	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	34	33	42	9	11	8	10
The school is led and managed effectively	26	33	37	47	8	10	7	9
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	43	33	42	9	11	2	3

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.**



13 January 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of George Tomlinson Primary School, London E11 4QU**

I am writing to let you know about the findings from the inspection we carried out recently. The majority of your parents and carers think you are happy at school and that it provides a satisfactory education for you. We agree.

Here are some of the things we found out

- The youngest children settle in the Nursery and Reception classes happily and enjoy all of the activities that take place. Overall they learn satisfactorily.
- You behave well and try hard in lessons which helps you to make satisfactory progress.
- Well done for reaching average levels in some subjects like mathematics when you leave and achieving satisfactorily in most aspects of your work.
- You are good at keeping active at playtimes and know lots about eating healthily
- Staff work hard to make sure you feel valued and a part of what is going on.
- The range of things you do, such as learning languages, learning about rain forests and sports competitions, sound exciting.
- The school helps those of you who sometimes find work difficult or are learning how to speak English.
- Teaching is satisfactory and getting better.

We have asked the school to do three things to help it improve further

- Give all of you more guidance and opportunities to improve your extended writing and mathematics work, particularly for the boys and those in Years 1 and 2.
- Help your teachers to make lessons even more fun and help increase the pace of your learning.
- Build on the way the lessons and activities (we call it the curriculum) help you to learn basic subjects more quickly, especially activities such as computer work, writing and mathematics.

You can help your teachers by keeping up your good behaviour and making sure that you let your parents or carers how you are getting on as they like to know.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Hodge

Lead inspector

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