

Townsend Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100814
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	354898
Inspection dates	30–31 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Taylor

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbie Walsh
Headteacher	Anne Stonell
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2009
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 20 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 12 teachers as well as nursery nurses and other support staff. They held meetings with pupils, members of the governing body and staff and spoke to parents and carers bringing their children to school. Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including those related to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, attendance data, pupils work, local authority reports on the school, curricular documents and safeguarding information. They analysed questionnaires received from 122 parents and carers as well as those completed by staff and pupils.

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

The extent to which the improvements to pupils attainment in 2010 are being maintained and how well the historic weaknesses in writing have been addressed.

How well teaching and improvements to the curriculum enable pupils to learn.

How well the Early Years Foundation Stage provision has improved since the last inspection.

The contribution that leaders make to school improvement and the extent to which community cohesion, parental links and partnership have been strengthened.

Information about the school

Pupils in this average-sized school are drawn from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. A small number are at the very early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above the national average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is average.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery in September or January on a part-time basis. They join Reception in September or January of the year in which they have their fifth birthday. The school runs a breakfast club managed by the governing body. After-school provision, managed by an external provider, is available on site but was not part of this inspection. The school has gained a number of awards which include the Active Mark, Healthy Schools and Eco Schools awards. Due to regeneration of the local area and re-housing of families, the school roll has decreased markedly since its last inspection.

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

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Good leadership, including that provided by the governing body, means the school has improved well since its last inspection. Leaders have a good understanding of what still needs to be improved and a good capacity for continued improvement.

Children get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception because of the excellent improvements to accommodation, and because provision has improved greatly since the last inspection and is now good.

The school has made good strides in tackling the legacy of underachievement.

Consequently, attainment has risen markedly and is in line with the national average by the time pupils leave. The best improvements have been in reading and mathematics, which have been the main school focus areas for the longest time. Attainment in writing, notably the content of pupils work and their enthusiasm for writing, has started to improve, but remains too low, especially for the oldest pupils. Pupils skills in handwriting, punctuation and spelling remain weak.

The school provides a warm welcome to families. Parents and carers are rightly confident that their children are happy in school, enjoy learning and are well cared for. Staff forge good, trusting relationships with pupils.

Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming. They have an increasingly strong voice within the school and a clear sense of pride in their improving school. They note how behaviour has improved and that they have more opportunities for creative expression, through art, physical education, music and drama for example.

In Years 1 to 6, there are strengths in much of the teaching, such as the staffs subject knowledge, their expectations of pupils, the quality of questioning and the contribution that support staff make to the teaching and pupils learning. However, there are still some inconsistencies in marking, the pace of lessons and the clarity of teachers explanations; in addition, some teachers still expect pupils to listen for too long. This is why learning and progress are satisfactory rather than good: the school recognises the need to focus on the provision of additional small group work and interventions to raise attainment, given the success of this work to date.

The school has begun to broaden the curriculum, for example by creating topic work, introducing themed events such as science week and increasing the number of visits and visitors. Although the curriculum is still developing, it has improved well. This results in very interesting displays of work that celebrate pupils achievements. Improvements are also helping to increase pupils enjoyment and contribute well to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspections.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2012, ensure that at least 75% of pupils throughout the school are reaching age appropriate standards in writing by:
 - placing much more emphasis on teaching pupils how to develop neat, legible handwriting and to apply the basic skills of punctuation and spelling to their writing across all subjects
 - ensuring that all teachers are able to model neat, joined handwriting
 - ensuring marking of writing across all subjects pinpoints pupils mistakes, guides pupils towards improvement and encourages them to take action to address their mistakes
 - providing pupils with time to correct and refine their work.
- By July 2012, in order to accelerate pupils progress, strengthen the overall quality of teaching by:
 - sharing more widely the good practice that exists within the school
 - addressing the inconsistencies, especially those linked to marking, pace of lessons, the clarity of teachers explanations and reaching a good balance between teacher talk and pupils having time to work independently
 - ensuring that the learning objectives presented to pupils are easy for them to understand.
- Build on the successful curriculum development work already started by:
 - extending enrichment opportunities, for example the number of visits, clubs and links with the wider community
 - developing partnerships with other schools and organisations so as to share and learn from best practice

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Achievement is satisfactory. Throughout their time in the school, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make at least satisfactory progress. Some make good progress, though progress is not yet consistently good across all classes and for all groups of pupils. Attainment in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 has historically been low. It improved markedly in 2010, slightly exceeding the national average in English and mathematics as a good proportion of pupils reached the higher levels of attainment. Current data and inspection evidence indicate that this picture is likely to be maintained at the end of this academic year. Teaching Year 6 pupils in two smaller English and mathematics sets, along with one-to-one tuition and small group work, is helping to accelerate all pupils progress and challenge the more able. Writing standards, compared to mathematics and reading, are relatively weaker across the school. Although the content of pupils writing and choice of vocabulary have improved, basic skills such as accuracy in punctuation and spelling remain weak.

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Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening so that they explain their thinking and articulate their ideas and opinions well.

Pupils good attitudes to learning, desire to do well, and their willingness to persevere were evident in almost every lesson observed and contribute well to their learning and progress.

Pupils learn well in some lessons. For example, during intervention groups, children listened well and were keen to show what they know, ask questions and to benefit from the additional attention and help. Similarly in an English lesson, pupils in Year 5 made excellent progress in formulating persuasive arguments for and against animal rights. Learning and progress were also good in a mathematics lesson in Year 1, when pupils learned from practical experience how to solve simple money problems involving buying fruits and exchanging coins.

Pupils develop a good understanding of, and respect for, British and other cultures. They behave well and are friendly, polite and considerate. They grow in confidence and willingly take on responsibilities around the school. Their involvement in community events and extra-curricular activities is as yet more limited. Pupils say they feel safe in school, noting that staff are kind and take care of them. They develop a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, and enjoy physical activities and healthy school dinners.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ 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?

Strengths in much of the teaching include the staffs good subject knowledge, questioning skills, high expectations and planning for different abilities. Skilled teaching assistants are deployed well and used flexibly. They make a strong contribution to pupils learning by teaching different ability groups or supporting the class while the teacher works with pupils who have special educational needs.

In the better lessons, teaching has a brisk pace with a good balance of teacher input and time for pupils to work independently or together. This was the case in mathematics lessons in Year 6. Teachers here are also skilled in plugging the gaps in pupils knowledge, and, are flexible enough to adjust their plans when it becomes clear that pupils need additional teaching or more practise before moving on.

In lessons that are satisfactory rather than good, the learning intentions are occasionally not explained simply enough, the pace is too slow, or pupils are expected to listen passively for too long and then do not have enough time to learn through practise. Occasionally explanations are muddled so that some pupils become confused, and learning objectives are not always easy for pupils to understand. Teachers are generally aware of shortcomings in pupils handwriting but do not always model neat and well-presented handwriting themselves.

Assessments are satisfactory. In most lessons, teachers question pupils well to challenge their thinking and use assessments effectively to match work to different abilities and set targets for pupils. Marking, however, is irregular in some classes and subjects and generally does not do enough to alert teachers to pupils mistakes, challenge pupils or guide them towards improvement. In particular, marking of pupils writing in all subjects does not always pinpoint mistakes and guide pupils towards making improvements.

The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils personal development, health and physical development, as reflected in the school achieving the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. The improvements currently being made, such as linking subjects together, holding themed weeks and increasing the number of visits and visitors, are adding to pupils engagement and learning. Pupils say how much they enjoyed a topic on liquids and gasses as part of science work, as well as a visit to the Imperial War Museum and making eggless fruit cakes as part of their Word War II project. Similarly in an assembly on science week led by Year 1, pupils had clearly learned a good deal. Lunchtime and after-school activities are popular, but fairly limited. Good care, guidance and support mean pupils settle quickly, are well cared for and feel safe. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and their families are well supported. Breakfast club provides a welcoming environment in which pupils can enjoy each others company. The schools sterling work to address persistent absence has been very effective in bringing attendance to a satisfactory level. Persistent absence has also declined and is now low.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteachers continued strong leadership, with the support of the new deputy headteacher, means that they drive improvements well. They set challenging targets for pupils and staff, while maintaining good staff morale as reflected in the staff questionnaires. The schools action plans identify the right priorities, with clear success criteria and lines of responsibility. The school has invested heavily in training, which has helped to raise staff performance.

As the school has travelled on its journey of improvement, the headteacher has begun to delegate responsibilities more widely and to coach others to develop their leadership skills. Although a few middle leaders roles are still developing, they are a good team who are enthusiastic, ambitious to make improvements and have good knowledge of their subjects. Several have also developed good practice in their own teaching that can be shared.

The strong governing body are actively involved, fully understand the schools strengths and weaknesses, and are determined to continue to support and challenge it to improve further. They, along with staff, have been proactive in strengthening links with parents, seeking their views, involving them in the school and providing better information about pupils progress and teaching methods. One parent noted that the headteacher is always on hand to talk to parents.

Safeguarding, including risk assessment and staff training in child protection procedures, is satisfactory. The school takes effective steps to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination. Pupils get on well together and gaps in performance are now closing.

Partnerships with the local authority and external agencies are good, though those with other schools and insitutions to share and learn from best practice, particularly in terms of curricular provision, are as yet fairly limited. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion at the school level. Its contribution at the local and wider community level is developing.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Excellent improvements have been made to the accommodation and resources since the last inspection so that the learning environment is bright, spacious, stimulating and well resourced.

Because of the very warm welcome to children and parents and good standards of care, children quickly settle into school, establish clear routines and good patterns of behaviour. They make good progress from starting points that are generally below typical expectations, partly due to the fact that some children are still at the early stages of learning English. By the time they join Year 1, their attainments are broadly average.

Children engage well in a broad range of activities indoors and outside. They play well independently or with others. They develop confidence, good friendships and learn to take care of each other. Children quickly settle to activities at the start of the sessions, for example using computers to paint pictures, listening to stories, and making smoothies. Nursery and Reception staff work very well as a team, have a common vision and understand how young children learn best. They provide a good mix of independent and adult-led activities and interact well with children during play to support learning and move it on. Children in Nursery, for example, were encouraged well to learn early mathematics skills through play when matching numbers on their tabards to the cars they would ride, and when choosing the correct size of wellington boots to put on before going into the garden. Similarly in Reception, children were engaged in various mathematics activities, for example creating simple number stories. The more able were challenged to use number lines or 100 squares when dealing with numbers beyond 20.

There is a strong focus on extending childrens speaking skills. Children also develop a good knowledge of letters and sounds, which help them begin to read and enjoy mark making and attempting to write.

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When adults work and play alongside children, they make timely assessments of their progress and plan how activities might later be amended to extend their learning and reflect their interests. Strong, visionary leadership has helped to model best practice and move provision on at a rapid pace. Data analysis is beginning to be used effectively to highlight strengths and weaknesses in childrens attainment, identify the impact of provision and plan the next steps. Staff work very well with parents to keep them informed and involve them in their childrens education.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers are very satisfied with the school. They feel that their children enjoy attending and that this is a well-led, caring school. The inspection confirms this. A small number of parents and carers are concerned about systems to tackle inappropriate behaviour and their childrens progress. Inspectors found that behaviour has improved and is now good and that the school has good systems to deal with inappropriate behaviour. Inspectors recognise that over time, some of the older pupils have not made the progress they should have made, but can also see that standards are rising and the school has good systems to help pupils at the top of the school to catch up.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Townsend 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 122 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 257 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	82	67	38	31	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	55	52	43	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	70	57	47	39	5	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	49	54	44	3	2	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	68	56	51	42	1	1	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	60	49	53	43	9	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	41	59	48	10	8	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	47	39	53	43	9	7	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	52	43	60	49	5	4	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	39	58	48	8	7	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	40	57	47	6	5	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	54	44	62	51	0	0	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	70	57	47	39	1	1	3	2

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).

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



1 April 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Townsend Primary School, London SE17 1HJ

I am writing to tell you what we found out when we visited your school. Thank you for making us very welcome, talking to us and discussing your work. You told us that your school has improved and we agree.

This is what we found.

You make satisfactory progress and some of you are making good progress.

Standards reached by the end of Year 6 are improving and are now close to average.

You behave well and get on well together.

You have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy.

You enjoy school and develop good relationships.

The staff are improving the curriculum to ensure you enjoy a wider range of activities.

Adults make sure that you are safe, happy and well looked after.

Your headteacher and other leaders lead the school well.

To help you to do even better, we are asking the school to:

improve the standard of your writing, especially your skills in punctuation, spelling and handwriting

make sure you all learn well in every lesson and that teachers use marking to show you what you need to correct and improve your work

continue to improve the learning opportunities that the school offers you, for example by providing more visits and clubs, and more opportunities to be involved in the local community.

You can help by continuing to work hard and by improving your writing, for example by checking your work when you have finished, learning spellings, practising your handwriting and ensuring you use the correct punctuation in all of your work.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Taylor

Lead inspector

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