

Tower Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116142
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	379207
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Stephen Lake

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Panter
Headteacher	Linda Tansley
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 February 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 22 lessons or parts of lessons observing eight teachers. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils, and spoke to a number of parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's self-evaluation documents, the school development and improvement plan, the governing body minutes, the school's assessments of pupils' attainment and progress, the records held on pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, school policies, and reports from the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from pupils, staff and 121 parents and carers.

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

- The impact upon overall attainment of the large number of pupils who join and leave the school other than at the normal times.
- The effectiveness of the school's strategies to improve the achievement of higher-attaining pupils.
- The effectiveness of the school's strategies to improve attainment in English.
- The impact of the improved outdoor area upon learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Tower Hill Primary is just slightly smaller than most schools. It serves mainly the residential area around the school. The majority of pupils are White British but around one in five pupils comes from other ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average but almost none is at an early stage of English language acquisition. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is average. The main needs are speech, language and communication difficulties but also include pupils who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. Many more pupils than usual move out of or into the school other than at the normal times. The school has recent awards of enhanced Healthy School status and the sport Activemark. It has also been awarded Beacon status for its singing. A breakfast club is run by the school.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Tower Hill Primary is an outstanding school. Pupils achieve well because of the extremely high focus on continuous improvement that characterises everything that the school does. Progress throughout the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, is outstanding. Parents and carers think very highly of the school and links with them are outstanding. Outstanding teaching and a good quality curriculum ensure that pupils are keen to learn. Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that pupils not only feel extremely safe but have an excellent understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exemplified by their outstanding behaviour. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding. Excellent partnerships with other schools and agencies provide valuable additional support for those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Good strategies for promoting community cohesion also ensure that pupils make a strong contribution to the school and the local community.

Attainment is improving rapidly throughout the school. By Year 6, attainment has risen to average and is continuing to rise as pupils build upon the much-improved attainment in Years 1 and 2. The low starting points of the well above average proportion of pupils who join the school other than at the normal time holds down overall attainment at Year 6. Nevertheless, these pupils often make accelerated progress during their time in the school. The attainment of those who have been at the school continuously from Year 2 to Year 6 is above average, particularly in mathematics. The school has correctly identified that, to raise attainment further, more pupils need to attain above average results, especially in writing, and this is a main focus of this year.

Key to this school's success is the work of the outstanding leaders and managers at all levels, including members of the governing body. All staff are closely involved in setting challenging but realistic targets for further improvement. Members of the governing body are very well involved in supporting and challenging the school. Budget management is excellent. A relentless pursuit of excellence over the last four years has led to exceptional improvement in the school. The clear commitment to ensure that pupils should be the very best they can possibly be is seen in all areas of school life. The school has a very accurate view of its strengths and areas for improvement, and uses this information extremely well in the high quality school development and improvement plan. The progress of pupils has improved significantly since the previous inspection and challenging targets set for pupils'

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performance are often exceeded. These factors indicate an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to raise attainment further, by September 2012, the school should:
 - ensure that strategies in the curriculum for improving writing are fully embedded
 - build upon the best practice seen in the school to ensure all lessons contain activities that challenge and motivate all pupils, especially the more-able, to achieve their very best, particularly, but not only, in writing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Children start school with skills that are well below those normally found at that age, especially in communication, language and literacy. They make excellent progress to start Year 1 very well prepared for learning, although their very low starting points mean that skills are broadly average. Pupils build securely upon this very good start and, as a result, attainment is rising throughout the school year on year. Pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to reach above average standards this year, especially in mathematics.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning, as can be seen in the much-improved attendance and positive attitudes to learning. The improvement in learning over the last few years is linked closely to the way that teachers plan lessons that motivate and challenge pupils. For example, in an outstanding mathematics lesson observed in Year 6, all pupils were challenged by an extremely motivating mathematical game that made developing their calculation skills highly enjoyable. Some pupils were given an open-ended investigation, using the interactive whiteboard, which allowed them to continually build upon their success and move forward rapidly in their learning. They responded extremely well to this challenge, even exceeding the teacher's high expectations because of the stimulating and challenging nature of the task. The school is particularly effective at dealing with the very high number of pupils who join the school during Years 3 to 6. They make accelerated progress due to the way lessons are matched very closely to their needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same high rates of progress as other pupils. This is due to high quality support from talented teaching assistants and lessons where tasks are closely matched to their needs. The few pupils with English as an additional language are similarly supported to enable them to also make outstanding progress. Pupils demonstrate strong capabilities in information and communication technology (ICT). High quality work was observed in art and music, reflecting the emphasis on creativity and the award of Beacon status for singing.

Pupils feel very safe in school. Pupils from all ethnic groups show each other mutual respect and work together harmoniously. They have an excellent understanding of right and wrong and feel valued. Pupils reported virtually no bullying and trust the

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adults to deal with any that might occur. They demonstrate great maturity in the polite and courteous way they speak with visitors. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community life by taking on a wide range of responsibilities. For example, the very active school council which makes PowerPoint presentations to the governing body, school prefects or the gardening done by each class in the school’s ‘Ecohub’ garden. In addition to the usual activities to support the local community, pupils also sell parents and carers vegetables from the school garden. Pupils take advantage of the many opportunities for physical activity in the school grounds and after school. They are enthusiastic about the opportunities they have to keep fit and healthy, as noted by the enhanced Healthy School and Activemark awards. Notwithstanding the average attainment, pupils’ strong ICT capabilities, strong personal development and above average attendance ensure they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Pupils learn extremely well in this school because of the consistently high quality teaching and the creative curriculum that is highly motivating for all groups of pupils. The provision for pupils’ personal and social development is outstanding. The drive on making the curriculum more closely related to pupils’ needs results in lessons with a clear context that helps pupils understand what they are learning and why. The school has introduced a wide range of additional strategies to help develop pupils’ writing skills, such as identifying the key elements of creative writing and teaching these systematically. Drama is integral to learning in this school as the school has

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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identified the improvement made to writing by developing pupils’ speaking and listening skills. For example, in an outstanding English lesson observed in Year 3, pupils made excellent progress developing their understanding of speech in a story by acting a scene from ‘The Iron Man’ in the school’s very well-equipped drama studio. They then demonstrated the understanding they had developed by writing out suggestions for speech by characters in the story. The curriculum is being developed further during this year to provide even more activities that stimulate writing. The school has also identified the need to provide more activities within the curriculum to extend pupils identified as gifted and talented. Strong links have been developed with other local schools to support these pupils. These strategies are already having an impact, as can be seen by the rapidly improving attainment, but are not yet fully embedded. A very wide range of visits and visitors support learning further and the very good range of before- and after-school clubs, including Judo and street dance, make an excellent contribution to pupils’ personal development.

Teachers prepare lessons that stimulate pupils to learn. ICT is used extremely well to support teaching and learning across the curriculum. Teachers are very skilled at knowing just what questions to ask to challenge pupils and extend their learning. A significant strength of the teaching is the regular assessment of pupils’ progress that is used extremely well to match work to the different abilities within the classes.

The care, guidance and support in this school are exemplary. All adults provide excellent guidance for pupils on how to stay safe and healthy. The school works very closely with parents and carers to support their children’s learning at home. Those pupils identified as gifted and talented are given suitably challenging learning targets and they gain additional support through the strong partnerships with other local schools. The breakfast club is well attended and pupils say that they thoroughly enjoy it and are looked after extremely well. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are supported very well in school and invaluable additional help is gained through the strong links with external agencies.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is extremely effective at embedding ambition and driving improvement. The highly effective headteacher has brought together all staff into a cohesive team. Together with the governing body, they have an extremely well developed ambition to drive forward school improvement. Robust procedures are in place to monitor and

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evaluate the effectiveness of the school. Monitoring of teaching and learning is excellent and information gained is used extremely well to set targets for continuous professional development.

The school is active and very effective in tackling discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity. Adults pay very close attention to how groups and individuals are performing and this extends beyond the academic to their personal development. Detailed records of the progress made by individual pupils are used extremely well to set targets for learning. Safeguarding requirements are met extremely well. All adults are trained regularly in child protection and procedures to keep pupils safe are meticulous.

The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is good. A detailed audit of pupils’ backgrounds and needs is used effectively to plan actions for promoting pupils’ understanding of local, national and global perspectives. Good use is made of the excellent partnerships, such as the link with the education centre at Kew, to extend pupils’ understanding of communities outside the United Kingdom.

The governing body is very well involved in evaluating the work of the school. All members of the governing body visit the school frequently and monitor its work rigorously. Excellent budget management is enabling a high level of adults to support learning. Parents, carers and pupils are consulted regularly and their views taken into account in the high quality school development plan.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children receive a very good start to their education. The excellent links with parents

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and carers and pre-school playgroups, and well-established routines, ensure that children make a very good start to school. High quality care helps children to feel very secure and confident and welfare needs are fully met. Inspirational leadership shows a very clear understanding of how to make further improvements. For example, a DVD has been prepared for parents and carers as part of induction so that they know how to support their children effectively when they start school. Children’s personal development is excellent; children display positive attitudes and learn to relate extremely well to others. The very good partnership between children and adults and a focus on praise ensure rapid improvements in children’s behaviour.

All adults work together very well to ensure a good balance between teacher-directed activities and independent choice that ensures consistently high quality teaching and helps children develop as learners. A rich and stimulating environment is provided for children, especially in the much-improved outdoor area, with a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities. To make even better use of this area, the school is developing more opportunities for children to make an independent choice of activities. An exciting and creative curriculum gives time for children to explore, practise and develop skills, and consolidate their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. A consistent and intensive focus on teaching children about letters and sounds (phonics) is effective in improving children’s communication, language and literacy skills. Rigorous assessment procedures ensure that adults have an excellent understanding of the progress individual children are making and use this effectively to challenge them to achieve more. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are assessed early and high quality support provided. There are excellent links with external agencies that provide additional support to meet the individual needs of the children extremely well.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A well above average proportion of parents and carers completed questionnaires about the school. These are overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the school. A number chose to add comments. Typical of these is ‘Tower Hill Primary School and all its staff have made such an impression on my children that they just love going to school. They really enjoy learning.’ Inspection evidence supports the positive views of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Tower Hill 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 121 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 195 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	91	75	28	23	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	90	74	31	26	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	78	64	42	35	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	82	68	39	32	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	83	69	38	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	82	68	37	31	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	71	59	49	40	1	1	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)	63	52	48	40	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	75	62	43	36	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	66	55	52	43	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	62	51	58	48	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	86	71	35	29	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	89	74	31	26	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



9 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tower Hill Primary School, Farnborough GU14 0BW

Thank you so much for making us welcome when we came to visit your school. We really enjoyed finding out, from talking to you and reading your questionnaires, just how much you enjoy school. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour.

Yours is an outstanding school. We agree that the adults look after you exceptionally well and give you an exciting curriculum that makes learning enjoyable. Here are just some of the other things that we liked a lot.

- You achieve well and make outstanding progress in your learning.
- The teaching is excellent and your teachers use the information on your progress very well to set work that is challenging and exciting.
- The way the school works with your parents and carers is outstanding.
- The school is led and managed extremely well. Your headteacher makes sure that everyone works very well together to make the school even better.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and healthy, and make a good contribution to the running of the school.

To help make your education even more effective and help you attain higher standards, especially in writing, we have asked the school to:

- make sure that all lessons provide activities and opportunities that really challenge and motivate those of you who find learning easy, especially in writing
- make sure that all teachers use the ideas found in the very best lessons to plan lessons that challenge you to do your very best.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard and striving to be the very best you can.

Thank you again and congratulations on all you do to help make your school such a success.

Yours sincerely
Stephen Lake
Lead Inspector

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