

Tower Bridge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100813
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	376468
Inspection dates	9–10 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Barnard Payne

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	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandra Di Vito
Headteacher	Rosie Compton
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 June 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 seven teachers in 13 lessons and also observed a sample of intervention groups and an assembly. During the inspection, most of the pupils in Years 5 and 6 were out of school on a residential visit, but inspectors scrutinised their books and spoke to some of those who were left about their work. They also held meetings with other pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's plans and policies, including those for safeguarding. Inspectors also looked at questionnaires completed by 18 pupils, 22 staff and 34 from 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 progress and achievement of Key Stage 2 pupils to determine whether the school is continuing to raise attainment in English and mathematics.
- The consistency of teaching in enabling all pupils to reach at least the national average in English and mathematics.
- The consistency of marking and teachers' assessments in enabling pupils to understand how well they are doing and their future targets.
- The extent to which the school's curriculum development is leading to improved outcomes for all groups of pupils.

Information about the school

Tower Bridge Primary School is a just below average-sized primary school. Over 80% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and over 50% speak English as an additional language. Over 50% of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high compared to the national average. Twenty five per cent of pupils require additional support from the school, and a further 15% also receive support from outside the school or have a statement of special educational needs. Most of these pupils have difficulties with speech, language and communication. Compared with other schools, a high number of pupils join or leave the school at times other than the usual ones. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of a Nursery and a Reception class. The school has achieved the Artsmark Gold, Sport England Activemark and International School (Foundation Level) awards.

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

Pupils at Tower Bridge Primary School make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, reaching the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Their progress in Key Stage 2 has been affected by staff turnover and some inconsistencies in teaching quality in the past and also by a significant number of pupils joining the school during this key stage; nevertheless, they reach the national average in English and mathematics, which shows satisfactory progress by all groups, including those learning English as an additional language, those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is also satisfactory, but it is improving, with mostly good use of assessment information to support pupils' learning.

The school provides a wide range of learning experiences, making effective use of its location and of a variety of partnerships. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthily and develop a satisfactory level of skills to contribute to their future economic well-being, including in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).

A significant strength of the school is its promotion of a clear set of values that are fully adopted by the pupils. A parent/carer commented: 'Children are offered extra support to boost their confidence and achieve their potential. The school promotes respect and good discipline.' Pupils enjoy school. Their behaviour and the contribution they make to the school and wider community are outstanding. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also outstanding; they help create a highly cohesive and happy school.

The school's leadership has established a strong ethos, which ensures pupils feel well cared for and safe. Staff are proud to be part of the school and strongly share its values, which are reflected in a high level of mutual respect between staff and pupils. Leaders and managers have established effective systems to track pupils' progress and monitor teaching and learning. However, these have not yet led to consistently good progress across the school. The school's self-evaluation is accurate; it has rightly prioritised improving pupils' writing, as this aspect is significantly weaker than reading and mathematics and has affected overall progress. Not all teachers have set consistently high expectations for standards of writing at Key Stage 2 or given pupils sufficient opportunities to appreciate examples of high-quality writing. The school's cross-curricular themes have not been well used to set writing challenges.

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Although pupils' attainment has dipped over the past year, the school has largely maintained and, in some aspects, improved upon its provision since the inspection in 2009: for example, attendance is now above average and teachers make more consistent and effective use of marking and assessment. This shows that the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in writing in Key Stage 2 to bring it up to the national average, with increasing numbers of pupils exceeding it, by July 2013, by:
 - setting consistently high expectations for the standard of writing expected by the end of Key Stage 2
 - giving pupils more opportunities to analyse and understand examples of high-quality writing
 - setting writing challenges in cross-curricular work.
- Ensure a consistently good or better standard of teaching to maximise its impact on pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 by:
 - making better use of the school's assessment and marking system to set pupils higher challenges, particularly in their writing
 - ensuring that planning provides the frameworks and guidance necessary to help pupils improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils are consistently keen to do well and they are always ready and willing to learn. There are notable examples of progress being accelerated by the best teaching. In literacy lessons in Key Stage 1, the teachers' planning sets challenges for all ability groups and the deployment of support staff has a direct impact on progress. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils made good progress in developing their phonics skills because they contributed well in a lively participative session; their books showed that this leads to good progress in writing, with increasing use of adventurous language. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were exceptionally well supported through the teacher providing clear strategies to help them write their own stories based on the book *Not Now Bernard*. Pupils start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with exceptionally low levels of skills, particularly in communication, language and literacy. By the end of Reception, they have made good progress and are just below the level expected for their age. This good progress continues through Key Stage 1, leading to pupils reaching the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress; in the Year 6 groups over the past two years, progress has been much better in reading and mathematics than writing. Current work shows that progress in writing is improving due to the strategies being employed. Intervention groups have a particular impact on improving pupils'

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speaking, listening and reading skills. Pupils joining the school later than at the usual times, particularly during Key Stage 2, make satisfactory progress.

The impact of the school’s Artsmark and Activemark awards is evident in other outcomes for pupils. Their cultural development is significantly enhanced by the wide-ranging arts provision. Active participation in sports and other physical activities contributes well to pupils’ adoption of healthy lifestyles. Pupils from a very wide range of backgrounds get on exceptionally well with one another, both in and outside lessons. An active school council takes a role in decision making and has contributed directly to the promotion of healthy lunches. Pupils play a significant role in their local community, for example by regularly reading their own writing to residents in a nursing home and performing at local music events.

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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

During the inspection, the large majority of teaching observed was good, with a few examples of outstanding teaching seen. Teaching is judged satisfactory because its impact over time does not currently lead to good overall achievement. This reflects high staff turnover in Key Stage 2, which has had an impact on progress. Not all teachers have made good use of the school’s assessment and marking system to set challenging work, particularly in writing, or provided the frameworks and guidance necessary to help pupils improve their work. Teaching is now of a more consistent quality and the establishment of a clear marking scheme now enables pupils to know how well they are doing and what to do next.

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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The school provides a wide range of learning experiences involving a variety of external partners. The school’s adoption of the International Primary Curriculum has provided themes that give a global dimension to pupils’ learning. During the inspection, for example, pupils in Year 3 were studying rainforests and this created a focus for a range of activities. This approach shows the school’s commitment to developing global awareness, a key part of its achievement of the International School Award. The curriculum is good rather than outstanding because it has not yet had a significant impact on raising attainment in English and mathematics.

Good care, guidance and support procedures have improved attendance and contributed to outstanding behaviour. There is effective support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, enabling them to make the same rates of progress as other pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement is satisfactory rather than good because the strategies employed do not currently lead to consistently good progress and achievement through the school. That is why value for money is also satisfactory. The school’s leaders and managers are effective in focusing the school on its key priorities. This is evident in the methods teachers are now using to improve progress, particularly in writing. The governing body is influential, has a very accurate grasp of the school’s strengths and areas for improvement and holds the school to account effectively.

The school has established a good range of ways to engage with and support parents and carers, including providing classes in mathematics and literacy, keeping parents and carers informed through regular newsletters and regularly collecting their views through questionnaires. The school has developed a very wide range of partnerships that greatly expand what it is able to provide for pupils. The school’s promotion of equality of opportunity is good. There are no significant variations in the outcomes for different groups of pupils; there is a very strong understanding of cultural diversity and promotion of positive role models. The school adopts recommended good practice across all areas of its work to safeguard pupils. It has a well-informed understanding of its local community and has built strong links within and beyond it; the curriculum also ensures that pupils develop an understanding of

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the global community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The good progress children make in the Nursery and Reception is due to effective teamwork and good systems for observing children, tracking their progress and using this to plan the next activities. Their welfare and safety is given an appropriately high priority. Children make good progress from exceptionally low starting points; they gain in confidence and learn to make their own choices and play well together. There is due emphasis given to developing communication, language and literacy skills. In a lesson in the Nursery, children undertook a mark-making activity purposefully; the teacher showed pupils her own writing and they learned that marks have meaning. In a Reception lesson, the teacher showed children a letter from Cinderella; they then wrote their own letters back to Cinderella, with the teacher taking suggestions from children. This led to children making good progress in all aspects of communication, language and literacy. There are more limited opportunities for children to explore and investigate independently. The provision is effectively led and managed and enables children to reach levels that are only just below those expected at the end of Reception.

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

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The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Views of parents and carers

The response rate for the questionnaires was low compared to the average for primary schools. Six parents and carers added written comments; three of these were to commend the school for its work, and the other three made separate criticisms about not feeling fully informed about progress, the management of behaviour and staff turnover. However, the overwhelming majority of questionnaires returned show that children enjoy school, and all parents and carers returning questionnaires are happy with their children’s experience at the school. Inspectors found that pupils enjoy school and their behaviour is outstanding. High staff turnover has had an impact on progress, but pupils’ achievement is satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Tower Bridge 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 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 194 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	74	8	24	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	53	14	41	2	6	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	18	53	11	32	2	6	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	53	13	38	3	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	59	13	38	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	16	47	14	41	4	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	44	17	50	1	3	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)	15	44	17	50	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	19	56	14	41	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	59	11	32	1	3	2	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	50	14	41	3	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	50	13	38	0	0	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	18	53	16	47	0	0	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.



11 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tower Bridge Primary School, London SE1 2AE

We really enjoyed our visit to your school. You made us feel welcome and helped us a great deal by talking to us about your work and the school. Your behaviour is outstanding. You make an excellent contribution to your school and in your local area. This is because the school provides a wide range of opportunities for you to meet other people, perform in music events and play a real role in the local community. You make good progress in the Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2 so that, by the time you leave, you achieve the national average in English and mathematics. Overall, your achievement is satisfactory. You have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. You all get on extremely well together.

There are many good things about your school but we have found that you could make quicker progress in Key Stage 2 and have asked the school to:

- improve your writing by setting high expectations for writing, giving you more opportunities to analyse and understand examples of high-quality writing and setting you writing challenges in your topic work
- ensure teaching is consistently good or better, with teachers using the information they have on how well you are doing to set you high challenges, particularly in your writing, and by making sure you always have guidance to help you to improve your work.

You have excellent attitudes in school and are keen to learn. You can help make a difference by really focusing on making your writing the best it can be.

Yours sincerely

Barnard Payne
Lead inspector

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