

# Tower Hill Community Primary School

Moor Avenue, Witney, OX28 6NB

**Inspection dates** 13–14 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement.

- Although pupils left the school in 2012 with Key Stage 2 results that are in line with national expectations, they did not have the reading skills that were expected of them.
- Many pupils do not routinely read outside of lessons for pleasure or for research purposes.
- Teaching in Key Stage 1 does not always match the level of the work to the range of pupils' abilities, so pupils too often repeat work or have tasks that are too easy for them.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 do not always know how to improve their work as teachers' comments do not provide enough opportunity for them to reflect on what they have learned.

### The school has the following strengths

- The inspirational headteacher, supported by able middle leaders, is making sure that pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 is improving strongly.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching across the school and have taken effective steps to bring about further improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good, reflecting the school's high expectations of respect for others, good manners and courtesy.
- Governors work closely with the school and have been effective in bringing about improvements over recent years, for example in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work, and held many discussions with pupils, both formally and informally.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a variety of documents, including school data about the progress pupils make throughout the school, their attendance and behaviour, safeguarding information, and records of how the school manages the performance of the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors took account of 12 responses to the on-line questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and 18 questionnaires returned by staff.

## Inspection team

Clare Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

George Logan

Additional Inspector

Philip Littlejohn

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school, where most pupils are of White British heritage. There is a larger proportion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families than that found nationally.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2011. Years 5 and 6 pupils are taught as a mixed-age class for this year.
- There is a breakfast club and after-school care run by the governing body.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) is above the national average.
- The proportions of pupils who are supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, are higher than the national averages.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 to consistently good by:
  - ensuring the work set is pitched correctly to pupils' existing skills and knowledge so that work is not repeated and that pupils make good progress in their learning during each lesson
  - encouraging pupils to reflect on what they have learned in lessons, and their teachers' comments, so they are aware of exactly what they need to do to improve their achievement.
- Improve pupils' skills in reading across the school by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to read for pleasure and for research.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children enter the school with skills in reading, writing and communication that are below those expected for their age. Although they make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, as they move up the school the progress they make in English and mathematics is uneven, with more progress being made in Key Stage 2, especially in Year 6.
- Pupils do not make good progress in English and mathematics in Key Stage 1, although there are signs of improvement in 2012 compared with previous years.
- Pupils leaving the school at the end of Year 6 achieved better results in national tests in 2012 than in previous years. However, their reading skills were not as developed as their writing skills.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, those who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium and those from a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller background, make progress in line with their classmates because of effective support provided by the school for each pupil.
- Pupils use their skills in phonics (using sounds and letters) to help them to read, but they do not routinely use books for research or for reading further about a topic or authors that interest them.
- Pupils do not learn as quickly in Years 1 and 2, where work set does not always take into account the differing needs of the pupils, with the result that there is some repetition of learning for some more-able pupils.
- Pupils learn best as they move through Years 4, 5 and 6. Here learning activities interest and engage pupils, and encourage them to challenge themselves in trying harder work. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were encouraged to select mathematics problems to calculate percentages that they would find tricky so they could think about, and justify, which mathematical approaches they would use to solve the problems, and all pupils in this mixed-age class make good progress in their learning.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching in Key Stage 1 does not allow pupils to make the progress of which they are capable in developing their reading, writing, communication, and mathematical skills.
- Lessons in Key Stage 1 are not planned with sufficient attention to the abilities of all the pupils in the classes, and as a result some pupils repeat work, or tackle tasks that are too easy for them, or do not have enough help to make the progress of which they are capable. Where teachers talk for too long, a few pupils lose concentration.
- Pupils are encouraged to think about their work and how confident they are with what they have learned in the lesson. This is successful in Key Stage 2, but has limited impact in Key Stage 1 where pupils tend to refer to whether they have completed a task rather than how well they have understood it.
- Pupils do not make routine use of library or other books to develop their research skills or to read books by familiar authors for pleasure.
- Teaching in Key Stage 2 is strong, especially in Years 4, 5 and 6. Teachers encourage pupils to try learning in different ways, and work is set at the correct level to make sure pupils learn the best that they can. Pupils enjoy working in groups and on their own, and they learn quickly with little time wasted. As a result, pupils showed good progress in those lessons observed during the inspection in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly. In Key Stage 2, comments made by teachers in pupils' books, and careful questioning of pupils in lessons help pupils to know what they need to do in order to improve their work. This support is not as well developed in Key Stage 1.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils are polite, well mannered, and show respect to their peers and to adults. They behave well around the school at playtimes and between lessons.
- Pupils benefit from the school's focus on values such as responsibility, respect and consideration for others, and all pupils actively highlight where there are examples of good behaviour for teachers and pupils to celebrate. This reinforcement of good behaviour means that the school is a positive and welcoming place to learn.
- At lunchtimes, those pupils having a hot meal sit around tables laid with tablecloths for pupils to serve each other from casserole dishes. This creates a calm, family-like atmosphere and reinforces the high expectations of manners and respect for others that the school promotes.
- In lessons, pupils are eager to participate in discussion, often asking if they do not understand, and are confident in their explanations of their learning to others in their class.
- As a result of the school's efforts, such as using part of the pupil premium to appoint a learning mentor to emphasise the importance of attending school to pupils and parents, the attendance rate is now much closer to the national average.
- Pupils say that bullying, including prejudice-based bullying, is very rare and is dealt with effectively by the school when it does happen. Pupils feel safe in school and are familiar with how to keep themselves safe using the internet.
- These positive aspects of behaviour are supported by the few parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), those spoken to during the inspection, and the views of parents gathered by the school during the school year.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has led to improvements in pupil achievement at Key Stage 2. Pupils' behaviour has also improved as a result of an approach which reinforces the values of respect and responsibility. The headteacher has also ensured that attendance rates have risen.
- Leaders throughout the school have an accurate awareness of its strengths and areas to develop. They have brought about convincing improvements in the achievement of pupils in Key Stage 2 by developing pupils' writing and mathematical skills. Leaders have rightly identified that pupils' skills in reading are not as good as they could be throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching is improving strongly as a result of frequent checks by leaders and robust performance management. Teaching skills have improved in Key Stage 2, especially as a result of specific in-house training. For example, teachers are making more use of questioning to find out how well pupils understand what they are learning.
- The school treats all its pupils as equals, ensures that all are involved in school life and that there is no discrimination. It provides additional support to develop academic and social skills where needed so that the school creates a purposeful atmosphere for learning.
- The range of subjects the school teaches is broad and balanced, and has developed quickly since 2011 to meet the needs of pupils. In particular, pupils' behaviour reflects the social, moral, spiritual and cultural provision that is a strong feature throughout the school. For example, the active school council involves all pupils in making sure their opinions are heard, older pupils are involved as reading buddies to younger pupils, and within assemblies pupils identify and reward examples of positive behaviour.
- Pupil premium funding is spent on a range of initiatives to ensure that pupils who are eligible make progress in line with their peers. For example, individual tuition for pupils who need extra support with their mathematical, reading, writing or communication skills means that all pupils involved make progress.
- The local authority has provided effective support, such as an annual review of learning and progress in each year group, to ensure that the school is improving strongly.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- The governors are enthusiastic and closely involved in the continuing developments across the school. Each class has a governor attached to it and keeps in touch through writing as well as through frequent visits to school. The governing body uses data provided by the school to systematically challenge and support the headteacher. It has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas to develop across all areas of the school, and is aware of how the performance of the school compares to other schools. The governing body has influenced the rising level of pupils' achievement and improvements in the quality of teaching through setting challenging, yet realistic, performance management targets for the headteacher. It provides training where needed for individual teachers to support their professional development and makes effective decisions regarding teachers' pay linked to their performance. Governors know how the pupil premium is spent to ensure that eligible pupils learn as well as their peers and analyse the impact of what is spent rigorously. They are continually developing their own skills and knowledge to ensure the school is improving strongly.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123019
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	402125

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

<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>	187
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Liam Walsh
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tracey Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2–3 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01933 702599
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