

Townhill Junior School

Benhams Road, Townhill Park, Southampton, SO18 2NX

Inspection dates 14–15 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The recent history of this school is an inspiring success story. Leadership and management are good because leaders at all levels, including governors and in particular the headteacher, have rapidly changed this school from one that is failing its pupils into one that is good, with the capacity to improve even more.
- As a result of good teaching, pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and their attainment is rapidly improving.
- Teaching in Year 6 is outstanding, so this is where pupils make the most progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons so pupils' attitudes towards school are very positive. Music, sport, art and drama are particular strengths.
- The school works well with the community and parents and carers hold the school in high regard.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and behave well in lessons and around school, including on the playground.
- Pupils who need extra help, for whatever reason, are exceptionally well supported and make good progress as a result.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely and speak clearly and confidently. They use their skills in mathematics, reading and writing well in other subjects and are well prepared for secondary school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few lessons in the lower school, pupils do not produce enough work because they are not always given sufficient time to finish their tasks.
- Leadership in English is not as well developed as in other subjects; its impact is less because methods for checking pupils' progress are less secure.

Information about this inspection

- The school was notified about the inspection two days before it started.
- Inspectors saw teaching in every class. They observed 17 lessons, taught by 11 teachers. Some lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board of Governors, the headteacher, staff and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work. They heard pupils read and scrutinised their work in their exercise books and on classroom wall displays.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including: plans for what pupils will learn in each subject, plans for the school's future development, the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe, pupils' attendance records, minutes of governors' meetings, reports from the local authority, records of how pupils' progress is checked and tracked and records of how the school checks on the quality of teaching.
- The views of parents and carers were taken into account through the scrutiny of the school's own survey of parents' and carers' views and a discussion with a representative group of parents and carers. No parents and carers had responded to the on-line survey (Parent View).
- Returns from 30 questionnaires completed by staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Chris Nye, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Elizabeth Strange	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- The school is larger than average for a primary school. It shares a site with an infant school and children's centre, both of which are subject to separate inspections.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and the progress that they make.
- The proportions of disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and who are supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are more than in other schools in England. Most have moderate or specific learning difficulties, behavioural difficulties or speech, language and communication difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is above the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Since the school was made the subject of special measures at its last inspection, an Interim Executive Board has been responsible for the governance of the school. The headteacher has been in post since June 2011, a few months before the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen further the quality of teaching by:
 - embedding recent improvements in the lower school so that all lessons are good or better
 - allowing sufficient time in lessons for pupils to be able to carry out and complete set tasks.
- Strengthen further subject leadership by:
 - embedding recent improvements in English leaders' skills in monitoring and supporting pupils' achievement in reading, writing, speaking and listening so that their progress improves even more rapidly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The school has rapidly and securely reversed a history of underachievement. Since September 2011, pupils have made progress that is similar to or better than expected in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups. This is because the quality of teaching has improved dramatically.
- In Years 3 and 4, although pupils make the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics, this has been slower than in other year groups. The school has taken effective action to address this, and there is clear evidence that pupils are now starting to make faster progress as a result, especially in mathematics.
- In Years 5 and 6, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has rapidly improved over the last two years. In last summer term's national tests, pupils' attainment exceeded the national average in writing and mathematics, and was similar to this in reading. This represents a considerable improvement on previous years and pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 are well placed to continue this upward trend.
- Standards of handwriting and presentation, which had been poor in the past, are now good, especially in the upper school. This is because of a strong focus on teaching handwriting and the high expectations of teachers.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely and use their skills in literacy and numeracy in other subjects. For example, in a science lesson, pupils were confidently using their mathematical skills to measure the volume of water in an experiment on evaporation.
- Parents, carers and pupils express very positive views about learning and progress.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs make good progress relative to their starting points, and some make outstanding progress. This is because they are exceptionally well supported by effective teaching programmes which are delivered by well-trained staff. As a result, gaps between what they and other pupils can do are closing fast in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium do particularly well. This is because the funding pays for well-planned and targeted support. As a result, in the most recent national tests, eligible pupils in Year 6 exceeded the national average for all pupils attaining and exceeding expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- During the inspection almost all observed teaching in all subjects, including English and mathematics, was good and a significant proportion, especially in Year 6, was outstanding. No inadequate teaching was observed. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection and is the main reason for the improvement in pupils' standards of achievement.
- Pupils who were interviewed by inspectors said that they enjoyed their lessons and felt that this was because the teaching motivated them and helped them to learn well. This positive attitude is reflected in lessons and behaviour is good. The parents and carers who met inspectors also expressed high levels of confidence in the quality of teaching.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and lessons provide effective support for their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
- Lessons are well planned and structured and careful account is taken of how well pupils learnt in previous lessons. Activities are carefully planned to meet the wide range of pupils' needs and abilities.
- Teachers use questioning effectively to challenge pupils and judge the extent to which they understand what they are learning. They listen carefully to pupils' responses and when misconceptions occur, they adjust their teaching accordingly and lessons generally proceed at a

brisk pace as a result.

- In the few instances where teaching is less effective, the pace of learning slows because teachers spend too much time explaining what they want pupils to do and do not allow them enough time to carry out their tasks or activities.
- The best teaching is extremely well organised so that no time is wasted. Imaginative activities and inspirational teaching effectively encourage pupils to use their skills to solve problems in real-life situations. For example, in a mathematics lesson pupils were accurately and enthusiastically undertaking complex calculations of the areas of different bathroom floors in order to work out the comparative costs of re-tiling them.
- A strong focus on teaching phonics (linking letters to the sounds that they make) is starting to have a positive impact on raising standards in reading. Other adults are well trained and support individual pupils who struggle with their reading and writing especially well.
- There is a very effective marking policy which is rigorously and consistently applied across the school. Teachers' written comments in pupils' books are detailed and provide clear guidance on how to improve. Pupils are actively encouraged to respond to these comments and a strength is the way in which they assess their own progress against very clear success criteria. As a result, pupils are keen to improve and take responsibility for their own learning.
- The recent introduction of 'homework projects' has further improved pupils' attitudes towards their learning and the pride that they have in their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The good quality teaching has been a significant factor in improving behaviour across the school, which is now good. Pupils are friendly and polite to adults and each other and behave well in lessons because they are interested in what they are learning. In the playground pupils are polite, considerate and play well together.
- The school has an effective behaviour policy which is consistently and fairly applied. As a result, relationships between adults and pupils are warm, supportive and based on mutual liking and respect. As one pupil commented to an inspector, 'We couldn't have a better school.'
- The few pupils who find it hard to behave well are exceptionally well supported. For example, systems are well established to deal with isolated incidents of challenging behaviour in lessons without disrupting the learning of others.
- Incidents of bullying are rare and are always dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and extreme behaviour such as racism. They feel confident in confiding in adults when things go wrong and demonstrate a well-developed understanding of what is right and wrong.
- Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy coming to school and feel safe and well cared for. The parents and carers who met an inspector said they felt that behaviour was good and well managed by the school. This positive attitude is reflected in the recent, but significant, improvement in attendance, which is currently above the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- The passion and vision of the highly regarded headteacher and his determination to make the school a success is the driving force behind its improvement. He expects the best and has worked tirelessly to raise staff morale and instil a 'can-do' ethos which does not accept failure as an option. This is the main reason why a history of underachievement has been rapidly and securely reversed. He has developed a highly effective leadership team which has worked together very successfully to rapidly tackle past inadequacies in teaching and raise the standard of pupils' achievement. Consequentially, the school demonstrates a strong capacity to continue on its improvement journey.

- The management of teachers' performance is rigorous and links appropriately to salary progression. It is well organised and is a key element in driving improvement. Frequent and wide-ranging monitoring closely links the quality of teaching with improvements in pupils' achievement. Where weaknesses are identified, immediate and well-focused training and support are given. The impact of this is closely analysed and follow-up work is undertaken if the pace of improvement is not swift enough.
 - The school accurately evaluates its own performance. Clear and detailed strategic plans are effective because they are well informed by accurately analysed data and take full account of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They clearly identify appropriate actions and criteria against which the success of these can be measured.
 - The leadership of subjects is good overall, although in English leaders are at an earlier stage of embedding their skills. They recognise that more needs to be done to ensure that the impact of their monitoring helps to further support the teaching of reading, writing, speaking and listening, especially in the lower school, so that progress is swifter.
 - The subjects that pupils study are well planned to ensure that they build on the skills that they need to make good progress in literacy and numeracy. An interesting and broad range of subjects are taught and a strength is the way in which sport, drama, art, music and information and communication technology is enhancing pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development and enriching their learning.
 - The local authority provides effective and proportionate support, particularly since the school was judged to require special measures. Regular monitoring and specific training, for example in phonics, has been planned carefully, but has reduced recently to reflect the growing ability of the school to operate without external help.
 - The school works exceptionally well with parents and carers and the local community. A particular strength is the effective way in which parents and carers who do not easily engage with school have been encouraged to become more interested in their children's education. For example, strategies such as homework projects and guidance on how parents and carers can support their child's learning have been developed to encourage closer home/school links.
 - All safeguarding procedures are securely in place, meet statutory requirements and are rigorously applied. Leaders effectively promote equality of opportunity for all members of the school community and are proactive in tackling all forms of discrimination.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Under the leadership of the very effective Chair of the Interim Executive Board, knowledgeable governors support and challenge the school well. They are kept well informed about the quality of teaching and how this links to performance management and pay progression. They are fully involved in judgements concerning staff promotion. They ensure that resources are used efficiently to support the school's drive to improve outcomes for pupils. For example, they have approved the use of the pupil premium funding to make sure that individual pupils who need more help are supported in lessons and they have closely monitored the impact of this on pupils' achievement. Governors have set suitable performance targets for the headteacher which link clearly to the school's improvement plans.
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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

Unique reference number	116134
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	398129

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	279
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Felicity Martin
Headteacher	Matthew Sambrook
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 September 2011
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