

Townsend Primary School

Townsend Street, London, SE17 1HJ

Inspection dates 23–24 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Townsend is an improving school where the progress pupils make across all subjects is better than that seen nationally.
- Teaching has improved so that it is mainly good, with some that is outstanding. Teaching assistants contribute well to the progress pupils make in lessons.
- The headteacher, strongly supported by the deputy headteacher and governors, has introduced rigorous systems to check on the progress pupils make. This has raised achievement.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good and contributes to the positive ethos of the school. Pupils confidently welcome visitors to the school.
- Parents and carers feel well informed because the school makes concerted efforts to engage them and they speak positively about the progress their children make. One parent or carer said, 'The school has had a difficult time but is now improving significantly; teachers are good and children are doing well.'

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There is not enough outstanding teaching.
- Work is sometimes too easy for more-able pupils.
- Marking does not consistently provide pupils with next steps in learning, particularly in mathematics. Pupils do not regularly get opportunities to respond to feedback.
- In observing teaching and learning, leaders do not always identify the areas for development which will provide teachers with the best guidance on improving their practice.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 17 lessons, of which five were conducted jointly with senior leaders. They analysed the work in pupils' books and listened to pupils reading.
- A range of documentation was reviewed including the school's analysis of the progress pupils make, the school's development plan, the school's evaluation of its work and monitoring of teaching, governing body minutes, and logs relating to behaviour and absence.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body, the vice chair and an associate governor, a representative from the local authority and groups of pupils. The questionnaires completed by 27 members of staff were also taken into account.
- The views of parents and carers were sought at the beginning of the school day and the inspection team took account of eight responses from Parent View, the Ofsted online survey.

Inspection team

Mirella Lombardo, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Monica Raphael	Additional inspector
Stephanie Rogers	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school and has recently restructured into a one form entry school. The vast majority of pupils come from minority ethnic heritages, with the largest proportion from African backgrounds. Nearly half of all pupils speak English as an additional language which is much higher than that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and pupils with a parent or carer in the armed forces, is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is much higher than the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not make use of any off-site alternative provision for its pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - making sure more-able pupils are given sufficiently demanding work
 - making sure teachers' comments in marking, in particular in mathematics, identify what pupils need to do next to improve their learning
 - giving pupils regular opportunities to respond to teachers' marking so that they can practise and better understand how to improve their work.
- Increase the effectiveness of leaders in improving the school by making sure that when they monitor teaching and learning, the areas for development are clear and are focused on the specific weaknesses that need to be tackled to improve practice.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children enter the Nursery with skills below the levels typical for their age. Children make good progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is because of the effective questioning used by adults to check on what children know and to extend their learning and because of the range of purposeful activities provided both indoors and outdoors.
- Achievement in Key Stage 1 has improved and is now broadly average in mathematics and writing. The most recent assessments indicate that standards in reading are now improving and pupils are on track to reach the higher levels in reading this year.
- Younger pupils have a good understanding of letters and the sounds they make because they are taught in groups according to their ability and there has been a strong focus on improving reading and pupils applying their skills in writing. For example in a Year 1 class, the use of an alien puppet who needed help with labels for everyday objects engaged pupils in writing for a purpose. The proportion of pupils who exceeded the expected standard in the phonics screening check last year was above average and the school's information indicates a similar picture this year.
- In Key Stage 2 the number of pupils on track to reach the higher levels in English and mathematics is improving. By the time pupils leave the school, standards are broadly average. Current Year 6 pupils are likely to do better.
- Pupils make faster progress across Key Stage 2 than is seen nationally. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the use of well-focused individual education plans and support that meets their specific needs. The school is working towards gaining the British Dyslexia Mark and the employment of a speech and language therapist is providing specialist support for identified pupils.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make better progress than their peers nationally. This is because teachers use information about the gaps in their understanding to identify individual support for them in lessons.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language perform as well as their peers in the school. This is because of the strong focus in lessons on developing pupils' vocabulary and the use of small-group support.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress. This is because the extra funds are spent on additional adults in the class and a specialist teacher to work with pupils in small-group work. Average point scores show that the gap between the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils is closing, more so than seen nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- Much teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers explain clearly what pupils need to learn in the lesson, often using information technology. The pace of learning is good and teachers use good questioning to check on pupils' understanding and to extend their thinking.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, adults help children to develop their speaking skills and improve their vocabulary. For example, in the Nursery, children outdoors were asked to describe the snow using magnifying glasses and then to feel and describe the texture of ice in a bucket.
- Teaching assistants contribute well to the progress pupils make. For example in a Year 4 class, the teaching assistant used accurate mathematical vocabulary and a range of resources to help pupils learn how to divide numbers.
- Teachers use a range of approaches to interest pupils in learning. For example in a Year 6 class, the teacher took pupils to the hall so that they could set out opposing views in preparation for writing a balanced argument. In a Year 2 class, the teacher used drama to explore the thoughts and feelings of a character. At the end of the lesson pupils confidently shared their writing,

which was of a good quality.

- Regular volunteers from local businesses hear pupils read. This is improving reading as well as giving pupils an opportunity to read to different adults.
- However, in some lessons more-able pupils are not given hard enough work. This results in them finishing their work early.
- While marking has improved since the previous inspection, inconsistencies remain. Particularly in mathematics, teachers' marking does not clearly identify what pupils need to do to improve their work and pupils do not have enough chance to respond to the feedback. This means pupils do not reflect enough on their work to improve their learning more rapidly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are keen to learn. They are courteous and polite and work very well together in lessons. They make a real effort to welcome visitors to the school.
- Pupils say behaviour has improved in the school and incidents of bullying are rare. One pupil said, 'Bad behaviour is not a problem in this school'. Staff use the school's own behaviour management approach consistently. Pupils were able to explain the 'caring hand' approach to behaviour which, together with peer mediators, encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Parents and carers confirm that behaviour is good and praised the school's approach; for example one parent or carer commented that her child was 'difficult to manage' and was pleased at how well the school had worked to improve his behaviour.
- Behaviour around the school and at playtime is good, for example, in the way pupils walk around the school and in assembly.
- Pupils say they feel safe and have a good understanding of how to keep safe. Pupils learn about keeping safe in the community and take part in cycle proficiency and pedestrian awareness workshops.
- There has been a strong emphasis on good attendance since the previous inspection so that attendance is now above average. The school's newsletters give a high profile to the attendance of each class. Punctuality is also improving.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher gives strong leadership and has high expectations of how successful the school can be. Senior leaders offer suitable training for staff both internally and also by drawing on the expertise of a consortium of four local schools.
- The school's system for making checks on pupils' progress gives teachers information on any gaps in pupils' understanding and has led to the clear identification of any pupils who are underperforming. This makes sure that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the school. The school encourages parents and carers to support their children's learning. Examples include workshops in Nursery and Reception classes about the sounds that letters make, weekly coffee mornings, sessions on topics such as dyslexia or visits by the school nurse. At the coffee mornings, parents and carers highly value the opportunity to meet the leadership team to discuss any concerns they might have and to meet other parents and carers. One parent or carer said, 'It's a chance to meet other parents and talk about things their children are doing in different year groups.'
- Since the previous inspection there is now an emphasis on topic work, both in class and across the school, and in offering a wide range of after-school clubs such as Taekwondo and Funky Feet dance sessions. Pupils learn Spanish and take part in Spanish singing assemblies as well as using Spanish in different subjects.
- Pupils at the end of Year 5 have taster lessons at local secondary schools, for example in Latin, and spoke enthusiastically about the mini Olympics held with four other local schools last

summer. The field trip to Kent, funded by Year 6 enterprise events, enables pupils to take part in rock climbing and a World War 2 experience.. These experiences strongly contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- The way leaders check the quality of teaching and learning does not consistently focus on the key areas for development which will bring about the most rapid and sustained improvements in practice. At times areas of weakness identified do not focus sufficiently on improving learning for pupils. For example, an overemphasis on the management of resources or a particular incident observed does not provide teachers with clear guidance on how their teaching can improve and enable them to apply these improvements more widely to all lessons they teach.
- The school has drawn on the support of the local authority for supporting improvements in reading and in providing a programme of training for leaders with particular responsibilities. This has resulted in improvements in how reading is taught and in how teachers assess the quality of pupils' writing.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors want all pupils to succeed. They use their link governor role to improve their knowledge of how well the school is doing and the quality of teaching. Governors understand how pupils in the school are achieving in relation to other similar schools nationally. They have a good understanding of performance information and receive detailed updates on pupils' progress from senior leaders. They have received training from the local authority on data analysis, safeguarding and the safer recruitment of staff. In addition, the Chair of the Governing Body and vice chair have received training for their specific roles and those new to governance are required to undertake a six-week induction module. Governors have a good understanding of how decisions about promotion are linked to teachers' performance. They manage the school's finances effectively and use the pupil premium funding well to benefit pupils, for example, by employing a tutor for individual tuition and a speech and language therapist. Governors know about the impact of this work. All statutory duties are met, and arrangements for safeguarding are robust and effective.

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	100814
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	404737
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	267
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbie Walsh
Headteacher	Anne Stonell
Date of previous school inspection	March 2011
Telephone number	020 7703 2672
Fax number	020 7252 5885
Email address	office@townsend.southwark.sch.uk

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