

Tor Bridge Primary School

Miller Way, Plymouth PL6 8UJ

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The rate of pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 has not been good enough in English and mathematics.
- In tests at the end of Year 6 in 2013, standards in reading and writing were significantly below the national average.
- The achievement of boys in Key Stage 2 is well below that of girls.
- The quality of teaching in much of Key Stage 2 is not consistently matched to pupils' needs or abilities and does not engage them well enough in learning.
- The most able pupils in Key Stage 2 are not challenged well enough to ensure they fully meet their potential.
- Actions taken by leadership and management, including governors, have not been effective enough to improve teaching and pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, achieving well.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2.
- Behaviour has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Pupils behave well. Their behaviour, and maturity, around the new campus is very positive and staff work well to keep them safe.
- Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the area resource base for children with speech and language difficulties, achieve well at the school.
- The teaching of phonics in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 is good enabling pupils to make good progress in reading and writing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons. In addition, they made a few short visits to observe pupils learning and playing, and listened to a few pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and some pupils.
- The inspection team observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information about pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding information, the sports premium action plan and some pupils' books.
- The inspectors took account of the 13 responses to the online survey (Parent View) to provide a helpful picture of parents' views of the school. Inspectors also took account of 17 questionnaires from school staff.

Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Marian Marks

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is based on a large campus where pupils share their sports and dining facilities with pupils from a secondary school and a special school. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action, at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are similar to the national average.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is very low, with a very few speaking English as an additional language. There are many more boys than girls.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional government funding in this school is average. This is for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The governing body has been re-formed following the move to the new site and is therefore relatively new.
- Two teachers left the school last year. New staff have been recruited, both of whom are on temporary contracts.
- The school meets the government's current 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 at Key Stage 2 so that all groups of pupils achieve higher standards by:
 - providing appropriate training for staff so that the pace and challenge of pupils' learning improves
 - holding teachers to account for the progress of pupils that they teach
 - ensuring that the learning of boys across Key Stage 2 in reading and writing improves and more closely matches that of girls
 - improving the quality of marking so that it is all of a high standard
 - providing more challenging tasks for the most able pupils in Key Stage 2 so that they meet their potential.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - rigorously monitoring lessons and checking pupils' books to ensure that all groups make at least the progress expected of them
 - ensuring that the governing body focuses more sharply on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in Key Stage 2.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Not enough pupils in Key Stage 2 achieve well enough. This is due to a lack of challenge in lessons as well as a lack of tasks that fully match pupils' abilities and interests. As a result not all pupils make the progress expected of them or of which they are capable. This is particularly true of boys.
- Pupils enter the Reception class with skills that are below the levels expected for their age, and often well below in communication, language and literacy. Because of good teaching and some exciting learning a large proportion of children in the Reception class make good progress. As a result many reach the levels, or are close to the levels, expected of them by the time they enter Year 1.
- Consistently effective provision at Key Stage 1 builds successfully on pupils' previous learning so that by Year 2 they achieve average skills in reading, writing and mathematics. This was evident in literacy where pupils showed high levels of enjoyment as they created non-fiction booklets about dinosaurs. They presented their work in different ways and boys showed as much interest in the tasks as girls.
- Pupils' reading and writing skills in Reception, and Years 1 and 2, are developing well because of the successful way in which the school has organised the teaching of phonics (matching letters and sounds) so that boys and girls enjoy each daily session.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress often slows down because there is a lack of challenge and inspiration in some of the lessons. Progress improves in Year 6 where pupils start to catch up again but there is too much ground to make up. As a result, by the time they leave the school not all pupils make the progress they should from the end of Key Stage 1 and not enough pupils attain the higher Level 5 in English or mathematics.
- Test results at the end of Year 6 in 2013 were significantly below the national average in reading and writing. Overall standards in mathematics were similar to the national average.
- Boys' learning is particularly limited because tasks across most of Key Stage 2 do not engage boys well enough or inspire them to work harder. Girls attain much better than boys in reading at Key Stage 2.
- In mathematics practical tasks engage boys better than in literacy, but overall outcomes are similar.
- Across the school pupils eligible for additional funding make at least the same progress as other pupils in their class in English and mathematics. The attainment of eligible pupils at Key Stage 1 in 2013 was better than other pupils of the same age in the school and better than the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The attainment of eligible pupils at Key Stage 2 was similar to that of other pupils in the school in reading. In writing and mathematics, they were the equivalent of about one term behind other pupils. Achievement gaps are closing: in Key Stage 1 because of carefully targeted support and activities; and in Key Stage 2 the gaps in mathematics and writing are small.
- Similarly effective additional provision helps pupils with special educational needs to make the same good progress as their class-mates in Key Stage 1, and better progress than their classmates at Key Stage 2 because of the good additional support they receive.
- Pupils in the area resource base for speech and language difficulties make at least good progress and achieve well. This is because learning is very well tailored to their individual needs and abilities. As a result, they are well prepared for returning to their own primary schools by the time they are seven years old.
- Primary sports funding is used effectively to provide additional activities and coaching expertise for all groups of pupils, helping them to keep fit and lead healthy lives.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is not yet consistently good in Key Stage 2. Teaching in this key stage does not match the different needs and abilities of pupils well enough, neither does it sufficiently challenge pupils by providing interesting or inspirational tasks.
- This results in some pupils, particularly boys, losing interest and not building on their previous skills. As a result too many pupils are not fully prepared for the next stage of their education. In one class, for example, pupils enjoyed a game in which they made up their own connectives for their sentences in English. However, the task did not fully challenge all groups and for some it was too easy. As a result not all pupils reached their potential.
- Marking of pupils' work across Key Stage 2 is variable. It does not always help pupils to achieve their next steps in learning. Marking is good in Year 6 where helpful advice ensures that pupils understand how to improve further.
- Teaching in Year 6 is lively and well organised and pupils learn well here. However, past inadequacies mean that too few pupils achieve the levels of which they are capable by the time they leave to go to secondary school.
- Good teaching in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2 typically provides exciting activities and resources and challenges pupils to work at a fast pace. This results in pupils enjoying their learning and completing tasks quickly and achieving well.
- Teaching assistants provide good quality care and support for all groups but in some lessons in Key Stage 2 expectations of what pupils should be able to achieve are not high enough and limit the amount of progress that they make. Additional support for pupils with special educational needs ensures that these pupils achieve well across the school.
- Homework is provided regularly, and builds well on work completed in school. The vast majority of younger pupils are able to take reading books home daily, fostering positive links between home and school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Leaders have worked hard to improve pupils' behaviour in all areas of the school. Since the previous inspection new procedures have been introduced and the curriculum has been extended to engage and interest most pupils. As a result pupils now behave well in and around the school.
- Pupils have positive attitudes and are polite and kind to each other. The large campus is used well by pupils and they are tolerant and supportive towards one another.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is evident in their consistently good attendance and the low number of exclusions over the past two years.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Older pupils told the inspectors that they enjoy lessons, feel really safe and that there is good behaviour in the playground. They know the importance of staying safe on the internet and in the community.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 understand what bullying is and say that it is extremely rare at the school. Observations of school records and of pupils playing and working showed this to be true. Their good behaviour is promoted well by the wide range of different activities, the before- and after-school clubs and the different trips that the school provides.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through their regular learning about other cultures. Through assemblies and residential experiences for Years 5 and 6, pupils have an accurate view of life outside their school. They regularly raise money for different charities and have helped to improve their own outdoor area through growing vegetables and other plants.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because, occasionally, a few pupils, mainly boys, lack enthusiasm for their tasks.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The leadership and management of the school, including governance, require improvement because actions to rectify weaknesses in teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 have not yet been successful.
- Although the school does check up on the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2, this has not been followed up with sufficient training and support to improve some of the shortcomings which have been identified.
- In contrast to this, checks on teachers' performance and follow-up actions have secured strong improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1.
- Effective use of additional funds such as the pupil premium and primary sports funding also shows that there is the capacity to improve further.
- The headteacher has high aspirations for the school and with other leaders and the governing body she is working to improve weaker teaching and achievement at Key Stage 2 through linking with other local schools and sharing good practice.
- The curriculum has improved and has been developed with a wealth of opportunity for pupils to learn about spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through themed weeks. The curriculum promotes literacy and numeracy well for the younger pupils but is not yet fully successful in engaging boys, particularly at Key Stage 2.
- Leaders make effective use of the national standards for teaching to improve teachers' skills. There are some examples of staff undertaking additional qualifications and training so that they can seek promotion and progress up the pay scales because they help their pupils to make better progress. Newer and temporary teachers at the school have not had enough opportunities to undertake similar training.
- Well-managed additional support for those with special educational needs promotes equal opportunities and eliminates any discrimination.
- The local authority works well with the school and provides good support which has contributed to the improvements for younger pupils and for those with special educational needs. They are aware of the weaknesses at Key Stage 2 and have already begun to provide additional support to improve teaching but this has not yet begun to impact on pupils' achievements. The local authority provides good support to the area resource base to ensure that pupils with speech and language difficulties achieve well.
- Safeguarding meets requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors fulfil their statutory duties and undertake regular training to ensure that staff safeguard pupils' welfare. They contribute effectively to decisions about additional funding, resulting in those pupils who receive it making progress at least in line with other pupils. Governors ensure the effective use of sports funding by providing additional expertise to help pupils keep fit and healthy. Governors regularly monitor the school and check the performance of staff. However, the governing body is relatively new. It has not focused sharply enough on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in Key Stage 2, or on the impact of steps the school has taken to improve these matters. Governors have nevertheless been instrumental in improving outcomes for younger pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1.

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	113327
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	431193

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	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Devine
Headteacher	Cathryn Tompkins
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 July 2012
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