

Tower Hill Community Primary School

Moor Avenue, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX28 6NB

Inspection dates 7–8 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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.

- Determined and focused leadership by the headteacher, governors and staff has resulted in strong improvement since the previous inspection.
- Teaching has improved and is now consistently good. Some is outstanding. As a result, all pupils achieve well.
- Good use of information about pupils' progress ensures that challenge and support for these pupils are put into place quickly when needed. As a result, the most able pupils are now reaching their potential and pupils who fall behind quickly catch up.
- Pupils feel safe. They recognise how constantly using the values that they have learned about promotes strong relationships and helps build a positive atmosphere where everyone gets along well.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They behave well in lessons, at playtimes and lunchtimes, and when moving about the school. They are polite to adults and to each other.
- The school's leadership, including the governing body, uses the information it has about pupils' progress to allocate resources and ensure money is being well spent. This includes the additional funding allocated for the pupil premium and for sports.

It is not an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not always do their best work when writing. At times, they do not remember to use the correct spelling and punctuation and their writing is not always as neat as it should be.
- Pupils do not always make the improvements to their work in response to teachers' advice and guidance.
- The school does not use the information it has about children's learning and progress in Nursery to pinpoint precisely which aspects of learning children are finding most difficult.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 18 lessons taught by 11 teachers. In addition, they made a number of short visits to lessons.
- The inspectors looked at current and past information about pupils' progress and pupils' work in books and on display.
- The inspectors also looked at documents relating to behaviour and safeguarding, the school's own assessments of its strengths and areas requiring improvement, and school improvement planning.
- The inspectors met with small groups of pupils to talk about their learning and to find out what they thought of the school. They heard some pupils read.
- Inspectors also met with staff and governors. The lead inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to parents informally at the start of the school day. They took into account 22 responses shown in the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also considered the school's own parent survey.
- The inspectors took note of 24 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Georgina Beasley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Wolfson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Tower Hill Community Primary School is smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- About two-thirds of pupils are from White British backgrounds, with the remainder from a number of different minority ethnic backgrounds. A small number are from Gypsy Roma backgrounds.
- A well above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and children with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The headteacher is a national leader of education and supports other local schools.
- The school manages a breakfast club and after-school club which run everyday.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that all staff insist that pupils follow the school's expectations for:
 - remembering to spell the words that they should know correctly, using accurate punctuation and writing neatly every time that they write
 - making improvements to their work in response to teachers' advice.
- Improve the school's systems for collecting and using the information on children's learning and progress in Nursery to:
 - pinpoint precisely aspects of learning that are weaker
 - ensure that as many children as possible reach the levels expected for their age before they start the Reception class in developing their communication and language, physical and personal, social and emotional skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve well. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is rising strongly and is now above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children start Nursery with abilities and skills that are generally below those expected for their age, especially in their speaking. Although most get off to a good start in the Nursery, staff do not always use information on progress to plan learning that supports the precise needs of the children, especially in communication and language. Children make good progress in the Reception class, although some do not reach the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the extra support for their learning in reading and mathematics. Some make outstanding progress.
- Pupils read widely for pleasure and to find information for their learning in a range of subjects. Reading in Year 1 and Year 2 has improved, and pupils use their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) to work out unfamiliar words. This helps them to gain a clear sense of what they are reading.
- The most able pupils enjoy being challenged to do harder work. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 relish finding the most relevant and fastest time to solve increasingly difficult number problems such as 'What is 39% of 400?' in mathematics. Across the school, the most able pupils support others in lessons. This requires them to explain clearly what the learning is about, which in turn helps to clarify their own understanding.
- Progress in physical education is good. Pupils develop good levels of skill in a varied range of sports and physical education activities, such as athletics and orienteering.
- Through learning about and discussing values, pupils have good knowledge and understanding of, and respect for, different cultures, religions and beliefs.
- Gypsy Roma pupils make good progress overall to reach at least average levels. Some make outstanding progress and do better than this to reach their potential.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium receive individual and small group support to ensure that they make good progress across the school. Most reach the same levels as their classmates by the end of Year 6. The school has successfully tackled a dip last year in the proportion of pupils in this group making more than expected progress. A good number are reaching above average levels again in reading, writing and mathematics this year.
- There has been increasing emphasis this year on pupils using accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation and writing neatly. Although this is improving their writing skills in literacy lessons, pupils do not yet write consistently with neatness and accuracy across different subjects.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is always at least good. Some is outstanding.
- The atmosphere in lessons is such that pupils are interested and engaged in learning activities for much of the time. Pupils are confident to give opinions, to answer questions even if their responses are wrong, and to ask questions if they are stuck or need further clarification about what they are doing. Expected outcomes are shared with pupils so that they know precisely what a good piece of work will look like.
- Teachers set tasks that are at the right level of difficulty for their pupils and build effectively on previous learning and skills. They ask questions that enable them to check what pupils already know and can do and then give additional challenge or support to keep the momentum of learning going.
- Teaching assistants give good support to disabled pupils and those who have special educational

needs, especially those who have a statement of special educational needs, to enable them to be fully involved in learning in lessons. They repeat teachers' questions to check that the pupils have listened and understood, and help to ensure that they fully understand what is expected when completing tasks.

- Small group and individual teaching successfully helps pupils build well on previous learning and skills. Personalised support by adults and older pupils helps younger readers to practise their reading skills and learn to talk about what is happening in stories. In mathematics, pupils improve their ability to calculate quickly and to solve number problems confidently.
- Teachers check pupils' written work closely. They give clear guidance in marking, praising pupils when they have been successful and indicating what they need to do next to improve. While many pupils make the necessary improvements in their writing and mathematics books, this is not consistent in all year groups and in other subjects.
- Adults do not track children's progress in Nursery in the same detail as in the Reception class and across the rest of the school. As a result, the school is not clear enough about the precise skills and understanding children are finding most difficult.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils learn about 'values' throughout their time at the school. They recognise that this helps them to remember how to get along with others and to think about how their actions affect others' feelings.
- Pupils learn the importance of leading healthy lives through a varied range of activities, including numerous opportunities to take part in sport. They enjoy the weekly house sports competitions and other activities that take place at lunchtimes and after school. Pupils who are play leaders carry out an important role in organising activities at playtimes.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils learn about numerous different situations when they need to keep themselves safe at school and at other times. Pupils know about the different kinds of bullying, are adamant that incidents rarely if ever happen but that if they do, they are confident that they will be dealt with immediately.
- Attendance has improved significantly this year and is currently above average. Pupils go into school quickly when asked so that lessons can start on time.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Attitudes are not outstanding because some pupils do not always do the best work that they can in all subjects and with all teachers.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, in close partnership with staff and the governing body, has successfully raised expectations and aspirations for pupils' success and so raised the school's profile in the local community. It is now recognised as a good school and has become many parents' first choice for their children's education. All parents who spoke to inspectors and nearly all who responded to the online questionnaire are positive about the school and would recommend it to others.
- As part of her role as a national leader of education, the headteacher has given effective support to another local school to help it secure good improvement to pupils' learning. The schools work closely together to share good practice and to increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching across both schools.
- The planning and delivery of subjects and topics help to ensure good progress and promote pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Care is taken to ensure all pupils are able to take part in all activities planned for their classes and year groups. Workshops for the most able pupils enable them to extend their learning further outside school.
- The school has good procedures for checking all aspects of its performance. Information about pupils' progress is used to decide whether teachers have met the targets set for them as part of performance management procedures and to make decisions about whether to award a pay

increase.

- Staff responsible for leading subjects have an accurate view of progress and the quality of teaching across the school. Similarly, those responsible for the learning of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs work effectively in making sure that these pupils are supported well. These leaders frequently meet with teachers and teaching assistants to check progress in pupils' books and to plan actions and training to make further improvements to teaching and learning.
- The local authority has given the school good support in improving the quality of teaching. Consultants for literacy and mathematics have provided effective staff training in checking progress and planning successful learning.
- The additional funding for sport pays for a qualified coach to deliver the teaching of skills in a wide range of sports, including tennis and cricket. Pupils enjoy taking part in many additional clubs and fixtures as a result of this addition to staffing.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has played a full and relevant role in supporting the school in its drive for improvement. Governors' understanding of pupil progress information helps them ask challenging questions when actions have not always gone to plan. Individual members bring different skills and expertise which have been used effectively to ensure statutory requirements, including those related to safeguarding, are met. The 'concern, cause and countermeasure' report produced for every governing body meeting helps all governors to review the school's performance and evaluate whether the quality of teaching and the resources are making the planned difference to pupils' progress. They have a clear awareness of the quality of teaching across the school and understand how the school's performance compares to that of others.

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	123019
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	442473

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	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liam Walsh
Headteacher	Tracey Smith
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 March 2010
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