

# Towers Junior School

Windsor Road, Hornchurch, Essex RM11 1PD

**Inspection dates** 9–10 December 2015

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The executive headteacher, head of school and assistant headteacher are highly ambitious for pupils. Their ambition and high expectations for pupils are shared fully by governors and staff.
- Governors are skilled, knowledgeable and provide effective support and challenge to the school.
- Leaders and managers work effectively as a team, and have been successful in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, which are now good.
- As a result of improvements in teaching, all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been well above the average since the previous inspection.
- There is strong support for leadership amongst staff. Morale in the school is high and there is a shared commitment and determination to secure further improvements.
- Pupils are very polite, kind and courteous. Their behaviour is good, and they have strong attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are good. There is a strong culture of safeguarding, care and support for pupils. This ensures pupils feel safe, attend regularly and achieve well.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. This helps in their understanding of what is right and wrong, and in showing respect for each other and beliefs of other people.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not always know their learning targets in English and mathematics to help them check their own progress towards achieving them.
- Sometimes, teachers' questioning is not probing enough to deepen pupils' understanding and extend their thinking.
- Marking and feedback on pupils' work in mathematics and other subjects are not as strong as in English to strengthen pupils' understanding.
- Achievement in mathematics is not as strong as in reading and writing.
- The school's work on preparing pupils for life in modern Britain is not sufficiently developed.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to outstanding by ensuring that:
  - pupils know their learning targets in English and mathematics and use them in lessons to help them check their own progress towards achieving them
  - teachers ask questions that are probing to check and deepen pupils' understanding and extend their thinking
  - the marking and feedback of pupils' work in mathematics and other subjects are as effective as they are in English to strengthen pupils' learning.
  
- Raise the achievement of pupils in mathematics by ensuring that:
  - pupils routinely practise and apply the skills they have learned in mathematics in other subjects and topics
  - pupils, particularly those who are lower attainers, always complete their work to consolidate their knowledge and understanding before moving on to the next mathematical concept.
  
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that pupils have further opportunities to widen their understanding of different cultures and faiths to fully prepare them for life in modern Britain.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The executive headteacher, head of school and assistant headteacher and governors are highly ambitious for pupils. They work effectively as a team to improve the school, and have secured the school's capacity to improve further. A culture of high expectation permeates the ethos and work of the school to enable good teaching, learning and behaviour to flourish. Staff feel valued, and morale in the school is high.
- Actions since the previous inspection have helped to drive improvements, including in the leadership of teaching, which is now good. Leaders have been successful in tackling weaker teaching and underperformance through providing effective support and training to staff. Staff, including those who are relatively new to teaching, are very positive about the support and training they receive to improve the quality of their teaching. As a result, the quality of teaching is good and pupils make good progress. The management of teachers' performance is closely linked to pupils' progress, and teachers' pay rises are only considered when there is sufficient evidence of sustained good performance.
- Senior leaders work closely with middle managers on school improvement. Middle managers know the school's main strengths and areas for development. They produce their own action plans for their subjects, and these feed into the school development priorities. They undertake book scrutinies to check the progress pupils make. Middle managers have been involved in checking the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility, and senior leaders have plans in place for these checks to be more frequent.
- Leaders and managers ensure that pupils' progress is carefully monitored. Checks on pupils' progress ensure that leaders, managers and staff identify pupils who are not doing as well as they should. Additional support is put in place to help these pupils make better progress. As a result, different groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs, make good progress. However, senior leaders have plans in place to check pupil progress more frequently to strengthen this process to bring about rapid progress. Through this, leaders ensure that they tackle any discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, and is planned so that it is relevant and meets the needs and interests of the pupils. However, the curriculum is yet to ensure that achievement in mathematics is as strong as it is in reading and writing. There is a range of clubs and after-school activities for pupils to participate in, including computing, and textile and cooking activities and sporting events. Pupils enjoy learning French, playing musical instruments, doing drama and being part of a choir.
- Pupils get on well with each other and show high levels of respect, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils say the school's religious education curriculum helps them to understand people of other faiths. However, they stated that they would welcome more opportunities to celebrate cultural diversity and visit different places of worship to widen their understanding of different cultures and faiths represented in modern Britain. The inspectors agree with them.
- British values are promoted through learning about democracy and Parliament, including pupils electing members of the school council, selecting head girl and head boy and participating in school debates on current issues. In a Year 6 history lesson on the Holocaust, pupils learnt about tolerance, respect and individual liberty, as well as exploring moral issues and what is right and wrong.
- Senior leaders and governors ensure that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. There is a range of additional support available for disadvantaged pupils, including small-group support to reinforce basic skills in literacy and numeracy, and to further develop their social and communication skills. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress with their learning, with attainment gaps rapidly closing between them and their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The primary physical education and sport funding is used effectively. It has increased pupils' participation in a wide range of sporting activities through clubs and sports competitions. The funding has enabled the school to enhance the confidence and skills of staff in teaching physical education and improving outcomes for pupils.
- A large majority of the parents responding to the online survey, Parent View, say that the school is well led and managed. All staff responding to the staff questionnaire agree with them.
- The local authority provides effective support through specific advice and support, including working with leaders to improve the quality of teaching. The local authority rightly believes this to be a good and improving school.

## ■ The governance of the school

- Since the previous inspection, the governing body has increased its effectiveness through undertaking reviews and further training. It has also formed a joint governing body with the infant school on-site. This has greatly improved communication between the two schools to benefit the pupils, including strengthening the transition between Years 2 and 3.
  - Governors are very ambitious for pupils and have high expectations for their outcomes. They know the school well, including its strengths and areas for development. They know how well pupils are doing through analysing performance data, visiting the school and receiving information from the executive headteacher. They provide a good level of support and challenge to senior leaders to bring about improvements.
  - They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching in the school, and have provided effective support to senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching. They manage the performance of the headteacher well, and know about the performance management process for teachers and how the quality of their teaching is linked to any decisions about pay awards.
  - Governors are skilful in ensuring that all the financial resources that are available to the school are managed effectively, including the pupil premium and the physical education and sports funding, and their impact on pupil outcomes.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Governors are trained in safeguarding issues, including in Prevent training, and they visit the school to make safeguarding checks and work closely with senior leaders to ensure that pupils are safe. Staff receive the appropriate training on safeguarding, are aware of the school's child protection procedures and know what to do if they have any concerns.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Leaders and managers have been effective in improving the quality of teaching, which is now good. Weaker teaching has been addressed and staff are provided with effective support and training to improve the quality of their teaching. As a result of good teaching, pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics have improved since the previous inspection, and are now good.
- There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere for learning across the school and a strong work ethic. This is because staff have high expectations for pupils, and pupils have positive attitudes to learning and want to do their very best.
- Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes help them to work together well, share ideas and listen to each other's views and opinions. For example, in a Year 4 lesson on biographical writing, pupils were very engaged in discussions, debating the importance of chronology in a biography. They did this in a considered way, showing respect for each other's views. Speaking and listening are strong features of lessons, and this particularly helps pupils who speak English as an additional language to make good progress with their literacy skills.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively as a team to ensure pupils learn well. Teaching assistants provide good-quality support to meet the specific needs of pupils, particularly the weaker attainers, including pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs. As a result, these pupils make good progress.
- The teaching of reading is particularly effective. Pupils have daily lessons on guided reading to develop their reading and comprehension skills, and to give them a range of strategies to read. Pupils say they enjoy reading and that staff help them to read. They are encouraged to read at home and have reading records to keep an account of what they have read.
- Writing is particularly strong across the school. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to write at length in English and across other subjects and topics to improve their writing skills. There is good emphasis on pupils improving their grammar, punctuation and spelling. The school has published a book of poetry to celebrate the quality of pupils' written work.
- In response to the new curriculum, a new system for assessing pupils' progress has been implemented. This is closely linked to the expectations of what pupils should be able to do at different ages in subjects. The assessment information is used well to assess the progress of pupils, and teachers use this information to plan the learning for pupils.

- The quality of marking of pupils' work has improved significantly since the previous inspection, in line with the school's policy on marking. Pupils are given clear and often detailed guidance on how to improve their work, and pupils respond to the comments in teachers' marking. This is helping pupils to deepen their understanding and make further progress with their learning. However, marking in mathematics and other subjects is not as strong as it is in English.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Pupils learn a range of calculation skills to solve mathematical problems. For example, in a Year 5 lesson pupils were able to convert decimals into fractions and learn about the relationship between decimals, fractions and percentages. Pupils also do a short session on practical mathematics every day, which they enjoy. However, learning in mathematics sometimes moves on too quickly for some pupils, particularly for those who are lower attainers. As a result, they do not always complete their work and consolidate their understanding fully of the mathematical concepts they are learning. Pupils do not always practise and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects and topics to help them make more progress with their mathematics.
- Teachers routinely ask pupils questions about their learning. However, sometimes the questioning is not probing enough to check and deepen their understanding and extend their thinking.
- In lessons, pupils do not always know their targets in English and mathematics so that they can use them to check their own progress towards achieving them.
- Most parents responding to the online survey, Parent View, are happy with the homework their children receive.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school, have strong attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. As one pupil said to an inspector, 'everyone loves learning'.
- There is high-quality care and support for pupils, and effective safeguarding systems and procedures ensure pupils are safe from any harm. Pupils say that they feel safe and can approach a member of staff with ease if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being. They are taught about unsafe situations and know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying and cyber-bullying. They say that pupils are kind and bullying is rare; this is confirmed by the detailed records that the school keeps. Pupils from all backgrounds get on well with each other, both in lessons and outside in the playground during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Pupils know how to keep healthy, and they enjoy their healthy school lunches. Their increased participation in sporting activities as a result of the physical education and sport premium funding contributes positively to their physical health and well-being.
- Pupils are given a range of responsibilities, which they fully value and enjoy. For example, pupils say that prefects and junior travel ambassadors help children to stay safe.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- There are high expectations of how everyone should behave, and pupils understand the behaviour systems and know how to behave in different situations. Pupils are very polite and courteous, and show high levels of respect to staff and each other. They conduct themselves very well at all times, and their positive attitude to their learning impacts strongly on the good progress they make with their work.
- Pupils say behaviour is always good, and is improving. In lessons, pupils are eager to learn and interact with each other. However, occasionally a few pupils lose concentration, especially when they are not sure what to do. However, any disruption to learning is rare.
- Attendance is broadly average and improving. Punctuality is good and improving, as are levels of persistent absence. The school works effectively with parents to improve attendance and punctuality. There have been no recent exclusions.

- A large majority of parents responding to the online survey, Parent View, agree that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved.

## Outcomes for pupils

## are good

- The outcomes for pupils have improved since the previous inspection.
- Attainment in reading, writing, mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling has been significantly above average in 2014 and 2015. In 2015, attainment of pupils further improved in reading, writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling, but not in mathematics. Attainment in mathematics was stronger in 2014 than in 2015.
- As a result of improvements in the quality of teaching, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's own information shows that pupils make good progress throughout the school in reading, writing, mathematics and other subjects. Evidence gathered during the inspection, including through scrutiny of pupils' work in books, lesson observations and analysis of the school's assessment information, shows that current pupils across all classes are making good progress.
- The most-able pupils are challenged well in lessons, and are given harder work by their teachers to help them make the progress of which they are capable. In the tests at the end of Year 6 in 2014 and 2015, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in reading, writing, mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling was well above average.
- There is a strong emphasis on reading in the school. Pupils love reading and they read widely and enthusiastically. Those who are lower attainers in reading in Year 3 are able to use their knowledge and understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters make) to read difficult and unfamiliar words.
- Writing is a strength of the school. Pupils are encouraged to write at length and across the different subjects and topics to improve their writing skills. There is a good emphasis on grammar, punctuation and spelling. This helps pupils make their writing lively and engaging.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is good, but is not as strong as in reading and writing. Pupils do not always consolidate their learning of mathematical concepts before moving on to the next topic, and they do not always practise and apply the mathematical skills they have learned in mathematics in other subjects and topics.
- Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because they are identified quickly when individual support is needed.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well. There are rich opportunities in lessons for them to use their speaking and listening skills, and they receive additional support to help them make good progress with their learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In the tests at the end of Year 6 in 2015, the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates narrowed markedly in reading, writing and mathematics. They do better than other pupils nationally in reading and writing and the attainment gap between them and pupils nationally is very small.
- The school prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	102313
<b>Local authority</b>	Havering
<b>Inspection number</b>	10001992

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	262
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Adele D' Silva
<b>Executive headteacher</b>	Janet Lobley
<b>Telephone number</b>	01708 449 872
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.towersjs.havering.sch.uk">www.towersjs.havering.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@towersjs.havering.sch.uk">office@towersjs.havering.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17–18 September 2013

## Information about this school

- The school is an averaged-sized junior school.
- A large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs is average compared with similar schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support from pupil premium funding (additional money provided by the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- Since the time of the previous inspection, there have been a number of staffing changes, including the appointment of an executive headteacher, senior leadership team and new class teachers. A joint governing body has also been established with Towers Infant School, with a new Chair of the Governing Body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 22 lessons, of which seven were joint observations with the executive headteacher, head of school or assistant headteacher. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour and attitudes in classrooms, and at breaks and lunchtimes.
- A meeting was held with pupils from different background and abilities to discuss their learning and views about the school. Inspectors also listened to pupils read in Years 3 and 6 and discussed their reading with them.
- The inspectors held discussions with senior and middle leaders and four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. A discussion was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors examined a range of school documents, including information on pupils' progress across the school, improvement plans and checks on the quality of teaching. They also examined the school's records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance.
- The inspectors scrutinised pupils' books across the school and written work to see what progress they make, and the quality of teachers' marking and feedback to pupils.
- The inspectors took account of 32 responses received from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, inspectors spoke to parents in the playground at the start of the school day and considered several letters from parents.
- The inspectors also considered 33 questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Avtar Sherri, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Bryant	Ofsted Inspector
Brian Oppenheim	Ofsted Inspector



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