

# Towers Infant School

Osbourne Road, Hornchurch, Essex RM11 1HP

**Inspection dates** 1–2 March 2016

**Overall effectiveness** **Outstanding**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- The executive headteacher, ably supported by the head of school, provides inspirational leadership. Both leaders are uncompromising in their pursuit of high standards and outstanding progress for all pupils.
- Governors make a compelling contribution to continuous improvement at the school. This ensures that the school's values to 'BUILD for our future' are fully realised.
- All leaders, including those responsible for subjects, make a discernible impact on the excellent quality of teaching and pupils' progress throughout the school.
- Teaching is outstanding. All teaching staff have high expectations that all pupils should succeed. Teachers ensure that pupils thoroughly enjoy learning.
- Pupils, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged, make excellent gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is considerably better than the national averages.
- Relationships throughout the school are exceptional. This cultivates a safe, encouraging and cheerful atmosphere. Pupils' academic and personal achievements are celebrated by all staff.
- Pupils' behaviour is commendable. They have extremely positive attitudes to school life and have resilient attitudes to learning in lessons.
- The early years provision is outstanding. Children make an excellent start and exceptional progress. As a result, they are exceptionally well prepared for new challenges in Year 1.
- Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the quality of education provided for their children. One commented that 'my overall view of Towers Infant School is exceptional. The day-to-day running of the school is of the highest standard.' This opinion was typical of the many reported to inspectors during the visit.
- School leaders are aspirational for all aspects of pupils' learning. They have identified further improvement of physical education and development as a priority in the early years.
- Safeguarding is effective and processes to protect children and pupils are securely in place.

## **Full report**

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

- Further improve pupils' physical development in the early years.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The executive headteacher and head of school are unrelenting in their determination to continuously improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. The scale of their success is shown in the outstanding achievement of pupils and the highly motivated and skilled staff team. Everyone is proud to learn and work at the school.
- Leaders are committed to providing high-quality professional development for staff. Significant improvements in teaching quality have been achieved since the previous inspection. Staff appreciate the comprehensive training they receive. They are clear about their targets for improvement. These are correctly linked to outcomes for the pupils and teachers' own ambitions and stage of career.
- Leaders monitor staff performance closely. They are quick to celebrate excellence and skilled at coaching teachers to improve further. Newly appointed teachers and leaders are very well supported. They recognise this and are positive about their future careers in the school.
- The school's curriculum is remarkably well organised. Leaders place emphasis on pupils' strong achievement in the basic skills. Teachers plan imaginative topics to bring learning alive in other subjects. Pupils are motivated by their learning and enjoy the many enrichment opportunities on offer. For example, in Year 1, pupils received a visit from a zoo ranger who shared their collection of unusual animals. Pupils' learning was developed very well because they then researched and wrote detailed and precise fact files about the animals.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is a great strength. Every opportunity is taken for pupils to experience the work of authors, artists and composers, including at lunchtimes. While pupils patiently queue for lunch, they talk about the title of songs playing, identify the composer and sing along to the tune. This creates a sociable, well ordered and happy ambience.
- The school very actively promotes fundamental British values. Pupils demonstrate a high degree of mutual respect towards each other and awareness of their community. Pupils are currently involved in improving local parking controls to make the approach road to school a safer place for pedestrians. Pupils' wider skills are developed by writing to local residents, publishing posters and visiting the council chambers.
- All leaders, including those responsible for subject areas, use assessment information to carefully track pupils' progress throughout the school. Leaders quickly identify any potential barriers to achievement and make sure that additional support is provided to address underachievement. The few pupils who do not achieve the expected standard in phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) at the end of Year 1 successfully catch up and achieve the standard by the end of Year 2.
- The additional funding provided by the pupil premium is used very well. Disadvantaged pupils are financially supported to attend trips, clubs or events after school. The funding is having a very positive impact on their academic progress, including for children in the early years.
- All pupils have access to regular physical education. The sport premium funding adds additional value to the school's provision through a range of clubs after school, including yoga, athletics and football. Gifted pupils are identified early and signposted to professional organisations for coaching.
- Parental engagement is exceptional. There is a high degree of support for homework and excellent attendance at the weekly achievement assemblies and 'Stay and Share' afternoons. Parents receive meaningful and regular communication about their child's learning and progress at consultation evenings, in newsletters and on social media.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The governing body makes a very strong contribution to leadership and management. Governors are professional in their work and play a key role in setting the future direction for the school. They are skilled and offer a broad range of very effective support to the school.
  - Governors ask perceptive and challenging questions. Due to this, they know the school extremely well and are able to closely monitor that goals are being met.
  - Governors are successful at holding the senior leaders vigorously to account for all aspects of the school's work, including the use of the pupil premium and special educational needs funding. Because of this, they check effectively that all pupils make rapid progress in their learning.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and managers have successfully created a culture of vigilance where the welfare of pupils is at the heart of school life. Senior leaders take swift and

appropriate action to identify and support any child at risk of harm. The school's work with external partners, including the police, to protect children from the threat of radicalisation has been shared by the local authority as an example of effective practice.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers plan activities in all subjects that are challenging, fun and meaningful. As a result all pupils concentrate well and demonstrate resilience during lessons, reflecting the highly positive attitudes to learning throughout the school. Pupils are upbeat about their learning and keen to talk to visitors about their ideas and activities.
- The teaching of phonics is very effective. This, combined with structured homework and exciting classroom book corners, encourages pupils' to read regularly. Typically, pupils are confident, fluent and expressive readers at the end of Year 2.
- Teachers place a high priority on pupils' writing development. Teachers are extremely adept at planning interesting writing tasks for all pupils. These are well matched to their different ability levels, including for pupils who need extra help to catch up. As a result, very high standards in writing are achieved by the end of Year 2.
- Teaching across the school is exemplified by high expectations and skilful questioning that extends all pupils' learning. This is a particularly strong feature in mathematics lessons. In one class, pupils explained in detail to each other how they solved a complex problem. They were able to present logical reasons and use accurate, technical vocabulary to communicate their steps to success.
- Teachers and learning support assistants are skilled at using assessment information during lessons. This helps them to address any misconceptions quickly so that all pupils are supported to keep up and progress very well. Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are also making excellent progress due to this.
- Frequently, in line with the school's marking and assessment policy, pupils reflect on their own work. They also help their friends to make improvements and respond to their teachers' marking. In doing so, pupils make rapid gains in their learning.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is outstanding.
- Welfare arrangements are extremely robust, including first aid provision. Careful assessments are undertaken to make sure pupils are safe at school and when they attend any off-site educational visits.
- Pupils are taught to recognise unsafe situations. Visits from safety organisations, such as the fire brigade and road safety, help to consolidate pupils' understanding. Pupils can explain accurately and confidently how to keep themselves healthy and safe, including when they are online.
- The school's open-door approach enables parents to talk to leaders and staff regularly about any concerns or worries about their children. Inspectors' findings were confirmed by parents, pupils and staff, who maintain that the pupils are safe.
- Lunchtime is an important event at school. Supervision by adults is considerate and nurturing. This creates a sociable atmosphere where pupils enjoy chatting, discuss healthy lunch choices and the music playing. The vast majority of pupils are using utensils effectively and competently tidy away.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The school has established a set of values known as 'BUILD' (be respectful, unity, independence, love of learning, determination). When pupils show respect, tolerance, resilience or teamwork, it is celebrated. Weekly 'Star Builders' are recognised and enjoy wearing a yellow builders' hat for the day.
- Pupils are incredibly proud of their school, their own and each other's achievements. In the hall, pupils were captivated when they watched Reception class children perform their first ever assembly. They listened carefully and provided encouraging applause for their friends.
- Pupils report that there is no bullying at the school. Records confirm this. However, pupils know what to do if they witness or experience it. One pupil said 'our teachers just don't tolerate bullying'.

- A unified and motivated staff team contribute to the school's purposeful and orderly atmosphere. All adults lead by personal example, demonstrating the school's 'BUILD' values in all their work. This fosters highly positive and supportive relationships throughout the school.
- The school encourages and expects very good attendance and punctuality. Leaders monitor this carefully and provide support for families to overcome any barriers. As a result, attendance rates are above average. One parent explained, 'My children look forward to school every day. They have made fantastic progress since September.'

## Outcomes for pupils

## are outstanding

- Due to pupils' sustained progress throughout Key Stage 1, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has remained well above the national averages for a number of years.
- Significant numbers of the most-able pupils attain even higher standards in their reading, writing and mathematics. Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school, in reading and writing, have been closing rapidly since September.
- Rapid rates of progress are reflected in pupils' work books and lessons, including science. Notably, pupils are confident and articulate speakers. They are able to adapt their speech to engage a range of different audiences.
- The monitoring of pupils' progress is rigorous and regular. The school's own assessment information is accurate. It currently demonstrates the high levels of achievement will be sustained in 2016 in all subject areas, in relation to the new standards set out in the national curriculum. This is consistent with the work seen in pupils' books and on display.
- The teaching of phonics is highly effective. The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard by the end of Year 1 is well above the national average. Any pupil who does not meet the expected level is supported effectively to catch up in Year 2, including pupils who have special educational needs or disability. Standards are likely to be sustained this year.
- Regular visits to the school library, exciting book corners and helpful homework encourage pupils to read extensively and for pleasure. One pupil commented 'reading is my favourite activity'.

## Early years provision

## is outstanding

- Many children start school with skills below those expected for their age. By the time they leave the Reception Year, the proportion reaching a good level of development is higher than average.
- Staff know individual children very well. Home visits before children join the school enable parents to contribute to plans about their child's care, guidance and support. This helps children to settle quickly.
- Rules and routines are clear. They are understood very well by the children. Consequently, children appreciate how to work, play and tidy away together amicably.
- The well-balanced organisation of teaching ensures that pupils experience daily, teacher-led activities to secure basic skills in reading, writing and number. This works alongside an excellent range of learning and play opportunities in all other areas.
- Teaching staff have detailed and accurate knowledge about all children's development. They use careful and accurate assessments to tailor activities to children's learning needs. This secures rapid progress from children's starting points, including for disadvantaged children.
- The most-able children are identified early and are challenged in their learning. They were observed creating and recording their own number sentences, which extended their learning. One child told his friend, 'I know what four add four is, it is the same as two groups of four. Look here on my board.'
- All areas of learning are reflected, including in outdoor space. Leaders have correctly identified that children's physical development is not as well developed as other areas. Leaders have already focused resources to address this, with visible results. For example, many children now use the correct grip when using tools for drawing and writing.
- Leadership in the early years is outstanding. Safeguarding requirements for the early years are fully met and implemented.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	102309
<b>Local authority</b>	Havering
<b>Inspection number</b>	10008681
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	269
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Adele D'Silva
<b>Executive headteacher</b>	Janet Lobley
<b>Telephone number</b>	01708 447407
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.towersinfant.co.uk">www.towersinfant.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@towersinfants.co.uk">office@towersinfants.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4–5 July 2011

## Information about this school

- The school is average in size, increasing since the last inspection from two to three forms of entry.
- Most children join the Reception class in the September following their fourth birthday.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, the additional government funding the school receives to provide support for pupils who are looked after by the local authority or those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low compared to the national average. The majority of pupils are from a White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons in all classes. They were accompanied by school leaders to jointly observe in each year group.
- Inspectors observed pupils in lessons, during assemblies at play and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors listened to Year 2 pupils read. They also held conversations with pupils to gain their views about their school.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, head of school and other leaders with responsibilities.
- Inspectors took account of the 87 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents. They also spoke to parents visiting the school during the day.
- Inspectors took account of the 31 responses to the staff questionnaire and 54 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- A meeting was held with three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of the school's documents, including the action plan and current assessment information about pupils' progress
- A meeting was held with a representative from the local authority.
- A range of pupils' work was scrutinised in exercise books and on display.

## Inspection team

Kirstie Fulthorpe, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Martin Beale	Ofsted Inspector
Lando Du Plooy	Ofsted Inspector
Hilary Ryan	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
M1 2WD

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