

Townhill Junior School

Benhams Road, Townhill Park, Southampton, Hampshire SO18 2NX

Inspection dates

7–8 February 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not evaluated the work of the school in sufficient depth. They have not ensured that newly devised systems, processes and agreed policies are consistently implemented. This means that until very recently, improvements have been too slow.
- Teachers do not set work at the right level for pupils, particularly for the most able, disadvantaged and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Teaching does not ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their various starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils, most-able pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make sufficient progress.
- Governors do not challenge school leaders sufficiently. They are not rigorous enough when evaluating the impact of additional funding on pupils' progress.
- Leaders do not fully evaluate the use of additional funding, such as pupil premium. This means that they do not know how effective their actions are in helping to raise standards.
- Actions to improve pupils' attendance are not yet effective. The rates of persistent absence are too high especially for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils' behaviour is not consistently positive both in lessons and around the school. Leaders' systems to promote this are not yet secure.
- The school's website does not meet statutory requirements.

The school has the following strengths

- Science is taught well. Teachers are challenging pupils through investigations. The work in pupils' books is of a very high standard.
- Leaders use the PE and sport premium effectively to offer a wide range of extra-curricular sports which pupils and parents value.
- Some teaching is very strong. Where teaching is most effective, teachers know their pupils very well and design tasks that precisely meet their needs. Where this happens, pupils make rapid progress as a result.
- Standards in writing have improved. Pupils successfully apply their writing skills across the curriculum.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that all pupils make good progress, by ensuring that:
 - teachers use detailed assessment to closely match learning to pupils' needs
 - teachers have high expectations of all pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs/and or disabilities
 - leaders act to secure high-quality teaching across the school.
- Strengthen the impact leaders have on improving pupils' outcomes, by ensuring that:
 - the school's systems, processes and policies are consistently implemented
 - leaders systematically monitor and review the impact of their actions using information about pupils' achievement, attendance and exclusions
 - leaders refine their actions, in a timely manner, in the light of their self-evaluation
 - leaders rigorously evaluate the impact of additional funding on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils
 - attendance is improved for all groups of pupils
 - systems and approaches for managing behaviour are implemented consistently at all points during the school day.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess the effectiveness with which this additional funding is used.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, leaders and teachers have not taken sufficient account of pupils' starting points in Year 3 and this has slowed progress for all pupils. This has been a barrier to school improvement because teachers' expectations have been low.
- Leaders and governors know the improvements that they must make to ensure that pupils achieve good outcomes. However, they also know that their school's self-evaluation and improvement plan lack precision. Current plans do not focus sharply enough on the actions that must be taken to improve pupils' outcomes. They do not identify precise targets to help improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, the most able pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The headteacher, who was seconded three years ago, still remains at the school. This demonstrates his commitment to both the school and the wider community. Parents, leaders and staff at all levels greatly appreciate the stability he has provided. Leaders have tackled issues as they were uncovered but not with the urgency required to secure the school's rapid improvement.
- The 2014 national curriculum was not implemented promptly enough. This meant that some pupils were not fully ready for the greater demands that this curriculum requires. As a result, they were not well prepared for the national tests in 2016. Many pupils did not meet the expected standard. In addition, current Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are having to catch up with aspects of their learning.
- Leaders have anecdotal evidence about the impact of additional funding, such as that to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in school. However, as with much of the work of governors and leaders, the impact of these activities on pupils' progress is not clearly understood because they have not been systematically reviewed and evaluated.
- Leaders have not evaluated the frequency of incidents recorded in the accident book. Recording systems are not robust enough to enable leaders to evaluate information, and take prompt and effective action. The school does not meet current guidance relating to medical policies.
- Senior leaders show a determination to improve standards and their introduction of more focused systems for assessment and monitoring has supported the improvement in pupils' progress. However, these new assessment and tracking systems are not yet used consistently and effectively enough to eradicate differences in the progress made by different groups of pupils.
- Over the last year, leaders have worked well with local authority advisers and other local schools to implement improvements. As a result of highly focused staff training, coaching and regular monitoring, the quality of teaching has improved.
- The school's curriculum is broad and rich and engages pupils through a range of opportunities. It supports pupils' better progress, especially in writing. Across the school, pupils are routinely applying their English skills in a range of different subject areas. Leaders ensure that the religious education (RE) curriculum, in particular, develops pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. This prepares pupils for life

in modern diverse and multicultural Britain, through teaching about a variety of different faiths.

- The English and mathematics leaders are committed to improving the teaching in their subjects and achieving better outcomes for all pupils. Senior leaders have provided them with effective professional development and support. This has enabled the English and mathematics leaders to support their colleagues, which has contributed to improved teaching in these subjects. These leaders have a more accurate understanding of pupils' progress and attainment through their improved use of assessment information.
- The vast majority of staff who completed Ofsted's survey are proud members of the school and feel well supported by the leadership team and their colleagues. They recognise the improvements the school has made, and are motivated by recent training and development opportunities. Leaders have shared their aspirations for the school and, as a result, teachers and teaching assistants have a clear understanding of the current priorities. Leaders have built these school priorities into the performance management of staff to further improve teaching.
- Pupils make strong progress in science. Inspectors saw some exemplary work. There was evidence of challenge for all pupils including the most able, disadvantaged and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders have ensured that the primary physical education (PE) and sports funding is used appropriately and that its impact on pupils' learning is evaluated. There is a wide variety of after-school sporting clubs, which pupils enjoy. The range of equipment provided at breaktimes and lunchtimes means that fitness is promoted well through play.

Governance of the school

- Governors do not have all the necessary information to hold school leaders properly to account. As a result, there is limited evidence of the necessary rigour and challenge in the records of governors' work.
- Regular visits to the school keep governors informed about standards. They check on the school's current priorities. Governors' level of challenge has been of a low level, due to leaders' incomplete self-evaluation. The school's self-evaluation document lacks precise targets and evaluation of the impact of actions already taken. Governors are well aware of the need to sharpen both the school's self-evaluation and its strategic planning. Clear targets need to be set for all improvements.
- Governors are aware of how the funding for disadvantaged pupils was used last year but have not challenged leaders on the impact of this spending on improving pupils' outcomes.
- Governors are aware that the school's website is not compliant with regulations. More needs to be done to ensure that all information and policies published on the school's website meet statutory requirements and are fully up to date.
- The new governing body, established this year, recognises the challenges the school faces and is determined to support leaders in bringing about rapid change. They are ambitious for the school and have taken proactive steps to involve the local authority

in providing additional support. This has been welcomed by school leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. Staff, parents and pupils agree that the school offers a safe, secure and inclusive environment.
- There are effective systems in place to secure the well-being and safety of pupils.
- The governing body recognises the importance of safeguarding and all governors have completed up-to-date training. However, they have not been effective in confirming that all the statutory checks are in place, or in assessing whether all staff understand the safeguarding policies and processes.
- All relevant safeguarding training is up to date and records of staff attendance at training are diligently managed. Safeguarding is given a high priority in school and senior leaders follow up concerns thoroughly, although record-keeping could be improved. Leaders work diligently to engage wider expertise to offer timely support for vulnerable pupils. Leaders are persistent in following up all concerns. Those responsible for safeguarding work closely with outside agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils are supported well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good across the school.
- Where learning is not effective it is because teachers do not check pupils' learning frequently enough. As a result, teachers do not always provide the necessary guidance to pupils to overcome their misconceptions or build on their strengths.
- Teachers do not use time productively in all lessons. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, can achieve. Too often, the learning tasks set by teachers for these pupils are not challenging enough.
- Where teaching is stronger, pupils' needs are met well and they are motivated to learn, behave very well, and make good progress over time. Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not match pupils' learning tasks closely enough to their starting points and so the learning activities are not sufficiently challenging. Consequently, learning lacks pace and challenge, and pupils' progress slows.
- Most pupils are keen and eager to learn. This was typified by a pupil who commented that, 'I would like the work to be harder because I like a challenge.' However, a few teachers are not harnessing pupils' enthusiasm for tackling learning with increasing levels of challenge. When teaching engaged pupils' interests, they were curious, articulate, confident and engaged. For example, in an RE lesson pupils were motivated to successfully reflect on abstract concepts, such as truth. This was challenging and required them to think deeply.
- Leaders have improved the teaching of mathematics through effective ongoing training. However, the new approaches are inconsistently applied and progress in

mathematics across the school remains too variable. For example, sometimes pupils do not get the opportunity to develop, consolidate and deepen their knowledge, or stretch their thinking, because teachers have not taught the progression of mathematical skills clearly enough.

- Overall, teachers do not use assessment information to inform planning and learning opportunities consistently enough. As a result, teachers' expectations of a small minority of pupils are too low. Learning is insufficiently challenging, especially for the most able, disadvantaged and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Where teaching is effective, teachers provide clear instructions to pupils and challenge pupils further. They provide pupils with many opportunities to correct, edit and improve their work.
- Teaching assistants support learners well because they have a clear understanding of their role. When they have a good understanding of what pupils know, and what they need to learn next, their support enables pupils to make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Most parents and pupils agreed that pupils feel happy and well looked after at school. However, a few raised concerns about the behaviour of pupils. Not all pupils conduct themselves well during lunchtimes and this is reflected in the high number of accidents recorded by the school.
- Most pupils in the school are enthusiastic, confident and articulate. They have the capacity to be self-assured learners. However, there are a few pupils who are reluctant to participate in class discussions and slow to start their work.
- Pupils' physical well-being is supported through the effective use of a PE specialist to deliver PE lessons. The range of sporting opportunities provided to pupils both within the school day and beyond is impressive. Some of these include golf, dodgeball, tag rugby and wheelchair basketball.
- Pupils understand the importance of staying healthy through regular exercise and eating healthily. They spoke enthusiastically to inspectors about getting involved in the after-school sports clubs and their enjoyment of physical education.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe. The school provides pupils with the opportunity to learn about cycling safety, stranger danger and e-safety for example. Pupils have a good understanding of e-safety. A few parents raised concerns about bullying. However, the pupils who spoke to inspectors said bullying in the school was rare and they know who to go to for help.
- A strength of the school is the emotional support it affords to children and parents. The introduction of the 'skills centre' has improved transition from the infant school. Systems are in place to ensure that pupils who feel vulnerable are offered timely

support and guidance, helping them to develop emotional resilience and improved social skills.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. The behaviour when pupils enter class and begin their lessons is not as calm and orderly as it should be. The systems and processes for managing transition points between lessons and breaktimes and lunchtimes are not working consistently well.
- Attendance is not good enough. Leaders have recently implemented a variety of systems to improve attendance which have yet to have a positive impact. Leaders have introduced strategies and reward systems for pupils. However, they have not evaluated which strategies are the most effective, and so have not refined their actions to improve their effectiveness.
- Most pupils display positive attitudes to learning. In a few lessons, when teachers do not plan learning well enough, there is off-task behaviour and low-level disruption. In a very few cases, teachers were observed ignoring low-level disruption.
- Most pupils are courteous and polite, and talk to visitors with confidence. Pupils' conduct around the school is inconsistent. For example, a minority of pupils do not play sensibly on the playground at breaktime and lunchtime.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Attainment at the end of key stage 2 has been below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics for the past two years. However, attainment improved in 2016 and the number of pupils reaching the expected standards in writing and mathematics was in line with other pupils nationally.
- The progress of pupils, measured at the end of key stage 2, in reading, writing and mathematics has been below the national average for the past three years.
- In 2016, too few of the most able pupils attained at a higher standard in the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics, compared to the national average, particularly given their strong starting points.
- In the national tests, in 2016, disadvantaged pupils' attainment was significantly below other pupils nationally. Their progress in 2016 was significantly below the national average rate of progress for pupils with similar starting points.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, in 2016, was significantly below the national average for reading and writing.
- The progress of pupils currently in the school has improved significantly this year. Pupils' work and the school's tracking information show that, overall, most groups of pupils are making stronger progress in reading, writing and mathematics than has previously been the case. However, in a few classes the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is poor.
- The most able pupils are currently making better progress and are now beginning to demonstrate high standards across the wider curriculum. However, in a few classes

the progress that the most able pupils are making is not as strong.

- Disadvantaged pupils currently at the school are making improved progress. There is an increase in the proportion of disadvantaged pupils on track to reach expected levels at the end of the year, across the school.
- Overall, there have been significant improvements in the progress pupils have made over key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics since September 2016.

School details

Unique reference number	116134
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	10024679

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	342
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Turner
Seconded headteacher	David Nicholson
Telephone number	02380 473611
Website	www.townhill-jun.southampton.sch.uk
Email address	info@townhilljuniorschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	November 2012

Information about this school

- Townhill Junior School is larger than the average junior school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than average. Few of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, who are supported by the pupil premium, is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average. However, the proportion with education, health and care plans or statements of special educational needs is well below national figures.
- The headteacher has been seconded from the local secondary school for the last three years.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards. These standards set the minimum expectations for pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics by

the end of Year 6.

- The school does not meet the requirements on the publication of information on its website. It does not provide information about the use and impact of the pupil premium and the information about the content of curriculum is incomplete. Some policies are out of date such as the special educational needs policy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children.
- Inspectors visited 31 lessons; many of these were conducted alongside senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, deputy headteacher, middle leaders, teaching assistants and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books, across a range of subjects. They spoke to pupils on the playground and during lessons, and met with a group of pupils to gather their views.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about reading, and heard some of the pupils read.
- Conversations were held with a number of parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors also considered the views expressed in the three responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- A wide range of school documentation was scrutinised including: policies, strategic planning documents, safety and self-evaluation documents, pupils' achievement, and behaviour and attendance information.

Inspection team

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Becky Greenhalgh	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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