



**Office for Standards  
in Education**

**Inspection report**  
**Tyssen Community Primary School**

**Hackney Education Authority**

Dates of inspection: 21-22 June 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act

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## **Basic information about the school**

Name of school:	Tyssen Community Primary School
Type of school:	Primary
Status:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Headteacher:	Ms S Windross
Address of school:	Oldhill Street Stamford Hill London N16 6QA
Telephone:	020 8806 4130
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body at the above address
Chair of governors:	Ms A Jaisingh
Local education authority area:	Hackney
Unique reference number:	100244
Name of reporting inspector:	Mrs L McGill HMI
Dates of inspection:	21-22 June 2004

## Introduction

1. Tyssen Community Primary School is situated in Stamford Hill in north London. The school's roll has increased over the past year and, at 350 pupils, is larger than average. The school's population is ethnically diverse, reflecting the local area, and many of the pupils are learning English as an additional language. A significant number, including refugees and others new to the country, are in the early stages of acquiring English. Almost half the pupils are eligible for free schools meals, which is well above average. The proportion of pupils who have identified special educational needs is also high, at 43 per cent. Included in this figure are 15 pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Ten of these pupils attend the school's resource base for autistic pupils. There is a high degree of pupil mobility; there has been a change of 41 per cent in the school population in the past academic year. On entry to the school, the pupils' attainment is below average.

2. The school was inspected in January 2002. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

3. The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues from the inspection of January 2002. The school was visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) on six occasions to monitor the progress being made.

4. In June 2004, two HMI inspected the school, assessing the standard of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of January 2002.

## Main findings

5. In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. The main findings of the inspection are:

- although standards of attainment remain below what is expected for the pupils' ages, better teaching and higher expectations have led to faster progress and, for some pupils, significant gains in their learning. Many pupils are beginning to make up ground and standards are moving closer to national expectations in many lessons. The school's intervention strategies with target groups have been effective in many cases;
- the results of national tests and tasks in 2003 were below those achieved nationally at both key stages. There were some improvements from the previous year, for example, in English at Key Stage 2. The results for 2004 were not available, but unconfirmed results at Key Stage 1 show an improvement in reading, and the school anticipates an improvement at Key Stage 2 in mathematics. A good deal of effort has been put into boosting the attainment of pupils in Year 6, but this year group had significant gaps in their learning, a legacy of weaker teaching in the past;

- in all of the lessons, the pupils made at least satisfactory progress; their progress was good in two thirds of lessons, attributable largely to the improvements in teaching. The pupils' good attitudes and their understanding that they come to lessons to learn also have a positive effect on their achievement. The school is able to demonstrate, through its tracking information, that the rate of progress is accelerating for many pupils and that some have made better-than-expected progress over the past year;
- the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. High quality work in religious education increases the pupils' knowledge and understanding of different faiths, and the many cultural backgrounds represented in the school are valued and celebrated. The pupils know right from wrong;
- the pupils' attitudes to learning are universally positive. In two thirds of the lessons, attitudes and behaviour were good or very good. The pupils are well motivated and responsive to their teachers. They work willingly at their tasks and the oldest pupils show a good degree of maturity. A few pupils, however, find it harder to maintain their concentration, and attention can wander, especially in whole-class parts of lessons and when they do not have the support of an adult. The pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is good;
- attendance is good and above the national average for primary schools. Healthy competition keeps the pupils aware of the need for sustained, regular attendance. Most pupils arrive at school on time;
- the quality of teaching has improved significantly and was satisfactory or better in all of the 27 lessons. In two thirds of the lessons, the teaching was good or very good, and the teaching in Key Stage 2 was generally strong. Teaching in the resource base for autistic pupils was very good. The nursery class provides a rich and stimulating environment for learning. The school is well aware of the need to continue to check the quality of teaching and provide support where it is needed;
- the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and for those who are learning English as an additional language is effective. Those pupils who have identified needs are given good support in lessons and in small withdrawal groups. The resource base provides effective support for its pupils;
- the school's curriculum is broad and appropriately balanced. Increasingly, links are being made between subjects and more lessons include the routine use of information and communication technology (ICT). The school is also extending the range of extracurricular activities and offers lessons for parents as well as pupils. This has served to strengthen links with parents and the local community;
- the school's systems for assessment have developed well, and assessment information is increasingly used to identify where further work is needed, to set targets for groups and individuals, and to inform the plans for individual

lessons. Tyssen's work on assessment is sought after by other schools as a model of good practice;

- the headteacher provides strong and determined leadership. She has effectively harnessed the skills of the senior managers and forged a successful team which shares a vision for where the school is going. Senior staff, and governors, understand fully the school's strengths and weaknesses and know not only what needs to be tackled as a priority, but where, strategically, the school is heading over the next few years. The school's plan for improvement is a useful tool, and the vision of the school as "technologically creative" is an exciting one. The roles of middle managers are developing well;
- the local education authority (LEA) has given the school good support over its time in special measures. Input has been effective in bringing about improvements in teaching and learning, and in systems for planning and assessment. Recently, the LEA has sensibly scaled down its support as the school is better able to determine its own priorities and evaluate its success.

## **Key issues**

6. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:

- continue to strive to raise standards;
- further strengthen the quality of teaching in order to accelerate learning;
- improve the pupils' concentration and independent learning skills.

## **Inspection findings**

### **Standards achieved by the pupils**

7. Overall, standards of attainment remain below what is expected for the pupils' ages. However, better teaching and higher expectations of what the pupils should achieve have led to improvements in progress, and, for some pupils, significant gains in their learning and achievement. Work in the pupils' books and on display shows that many pupils are beginning to make up lost ground, and the standard of their work is much closer to national expectations in many lessons. The school has used assessment information to select target groups who were given additional support, and the intervention strategies have been effective in many cases. For example, the "15 minutes a day" programme has successfully boosted reading skills.

8. The results of the national tests taken by the pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in 2003 were below those achieved nationally. The results at Key Stage 1 were also well below those of schools in similar circumstances, but at Key Stage 2 the percentage achieving the expected Level 4 was above the average for similar schools in science, in line with similar schools in English but below this in mathematics. The results for 2004 were not available, but unconfirmed results at Key Stage 1 show an improvement in reading, and the school

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anticipates an increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in mathematics at Key Stage 2. The school put a great deal of effort into providing booster classes and smaller teaching groups in order to help the pupils in Year 6 make up lost ground, but this year group had significant gaps in their learning, a legacy of weaker teaching in the past.

9. In lessons, standards in English are broadly satisfactory and most pupils make good progress. Standards in reading are generally within the expected range, although skewed towards the lower end; there are few pupils whose attainment in reading is above expectations. However, the standards achieved by the pupils represent good progress from a relatively low baseline on entry to the school. Those pupils who have particular difficulties in reading are quickly identified and given appropriate additional support, which is having a positive impact. In contrast, the few pupils who are able readers could be further extended by more challenging work.

10. The pupils make sound progress in developing their writing skills, but standards in writing do not yet match those in reading. Spelling and the understanding and use of correct grammar and punctuation are generally weak, but work on display shows that the pupils' use of imagination and their ability to write for a range of purposes are growing. Many pupils enter the nursery class with poorly developed speaking skills, or with a limited understanding of English. They make satisfactory progress over time and, by the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are confident to speak to the whole class. Skilled teaching in the upper years of Key Stage 2 has helped the pupils learn to answer complex questions, express opinions, develop their thoughts and present ideas to the class. Listening skills are less well developed. Despite frequent reminders from teachers, many pupils, especially younger ones, find it hard to listen to others. This is sometimes because they are so enthusiastic about making a contribution, and at other times because the whole-class part of a lesson has overrun and the pupils' concentration has waned.

11. In mathematics lessons, standards are below average overall, but there are signs of improvement; for example, in the pupils' recall of facts, which is generally speedier, and in their ability to apply what they have learned to solving problems. In the reception class, the pupils count with enthusiasm and most recognise and name written numbers. In the nursery class, activities such as exchanging money for tickets reinforced the pupils' understanding of one-to-one correspondence. Many of the pupils are well on the way to the goals expected by the end of the reception year in terms of their knowledge of number. In Year 2, the pupils were working on presenting information in graphs and tables because the teachers had identified this as an area of weakness. Most of the pupils understood the purpose of a block graph, but only the higher attaining pupils were able to pose questions in order to interrogate or interpret the information. In Key Stage 2, some pupils grappled with the grid method of multiplication. They understood how to partition numbers, but their insecure knowledge of multiplication tables slowed their progress and inhibited their ability to say whether their answers were correct or not. Even in Year 6, some pupils preferred to count on their fingers, rather than rely on their mental calculation skills, when working out the perimeters of compound shapes. However, their ability to reason, explain and apply strategies has improved.

12. In lessons in other subjects, such as religious education, history and ICT, the standards achieved by the pupils were close to what is expected for their ages. The installation and frequent use of a suite of computers and interactive whiteboards in some classrooms have enabled the pupils quickly to make up some of the ground they had lost.



13. In all of the lessons, the pupils made at least satisfactory progress; in two thirds, good progress was made. This is attributable largely to improvements in teaching, especially the higher expectations for the pupils' achievement which have led to more challenging work. The pupils' positive attitudes and their understanding that they come to school to learn are other powerful contributors to improvements in progress and achievement. The school is able to demonstrate, through its tracking information, that the rate of progress is accelerating for many pupils and that some have made better-than-expected progress over the past year.

### **The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

14. The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies raise important issues about living and working together in a diverse society, and the pupils are encouraged to reflect on difference and similarity; however, references to God and a broadly Christian ethos are few. Thoughtful work in art also encourages the pupils' spiritual development. The pupils are given responsibilities in class and in the wider school context; for example, by contributing to the school council. Their ideas have been sought for forthcoming improvements to the playground, and the pupils are encouraged to think about their environment; the corridors contain attractive displays which reflect the pupils' ideas about reducing litter and encouraging biodiversity in the school's grounds. The pupils are sociable and friendly; they clearly know right from wrong and understand and act upon the school's golden rules. The pupils are polite and aware of others, holding doors open for their classmates and adults. In lessons, the pupils are aware of and accept the differing needs of the autistic pupils who join them. The school values and celebrates its cultural and religious diversity and this is reflected in some thoughtful work and displays about different faiths. Some displays are labelled in community languages. Older pupils are confident to talk to others about what they believe in and different viewpoints are accepted and discussed openly. The current Years 5 and 6 are undertaking project work which is contributing well to the pupils' cultural development, and is broadening their horizons as they visit places of architectural, geographical and cultural interest across London.

15. The pupils' attitudes to learning are universally positive. In two thirds of the lessons, attitudes and behaviour were good or very good. The pupils were well motivated and responsive to their teachers; they were eager to please and showed enjoyment in what they were doing. Their confidence in themselves as learners has grown and the desire to learn is firmly embedded, but the pupils' enthusiasm can occasionally get the better of them and they will call out answers or rush to do things with insufficient thought. They worked willingly at their tasks and the oldest pupils showed a good degree of maturity. A few pupils, however, found it harder to maintain their concentration, and attention wandered, especially in whole-class parts of lessons when sitting on the carpet, or when working without the support of an adult. The pupils' behaviour in class and around the school was good. In the playground, the pupils played well together and they moved sensibly along the school's lengthy corridors.

16. Attendance levels are good and above the national average for primary schools. It is clear that the pupils enjoy school and look forward to coming. Healthy competition keeps the pupils aware of the need for regular attendance. Most pupils arrive at school on time.

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**The quality of education**

17. The quality of teaching has improved significantly over the past year and was satisfactory or better in all of the 27 lessons. In two thirds of the lessons, the teaching was good or very good and the teaching in Key Stage 2 was generally strong. Teaching in the resource base for autistic pupils was very good. The nursery class provides a rich and stimulating environment for learning and good teaching helps the pupils gain confidence and skills.

18. The teachers and teaching assistants work well together to support the pupils' learning. There are warm relationships in classes and high expectations of achievement and behaviour. The teaching is increasingly responsive to the needs of individuals and groups of pupils, and the match of work to the pupils' different abilities has improved. Lessons are well organised and generally move at a good pace, although there were a few occasions when the whole-class parts of lessons overran. Where the teaching was good or very good, the teachers had good subject knowledge and asked skilled questions which probed the pupils' understanding and built well on what they already knew. However, in some lessons which were satisfactory overall, the teachers' subject knowledge was not strong enough to deal quickly with questions that arose from the pupils, or to offer explanations in different forms to make sure all understood fully. The quality of displays is generally good, celebrating the pupils' achievements and inviting further comment and discussion.

19. The provision for those pupils who have special educational needs and for those who are learning English as an additional language is effective. The pupils are given good support in lessons alongside their classmates, or are withdrawn for more intensive support. Better planning for each individual enables most pupils to have their needs met within the classroom. Provision for the group of pupils identified as having autistic spectrum difficulties and placed at the resource base is good. The pupils benefit from intensive work within the base, combined with individually timetabled arrangements for their inclusion in lessons in the main school.

20. The school has well-established systems for planning lessons. Intentions for the pupils' learning are clearly identified for each lesson, and suitable activities, well matched to the pupils' learning needs, are provided. This has resulted in a clear focus to lessons, which is explained clearly to the pupils so they understand the purpose of what they will be doing. Short-term planning is supported by good medium and long-term planning, and by schemes of work.

21. The school has worked intensively to improve its systems for assessing the pupils' achievement and for tracking their progress. There is now a wealth of information about each pupil, which is increasingly being used to identify where further work is needed, to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils, and to inform the planning for individual lessons. There is a clear understanding of what the pupils have learned and what they need to do to make further progress. Analysis of the information has also highlighted differences in rates of progress between classes, indicating that, although expectations have risen, there is still room for further improvement. Teachers from other schools have begun to approach Tyssen to learn about the good assessment procedures which have been developed.

22. The school's curriculum is broad and appropriately balanced. There is a suitable emphasis on improving the pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics, and a wide range

of intervention groups is used to supplement whole-class provision. Increasingly, relevant links are being made between subjects; for example, more lessons include the routine use of ICT. Homework is also appropriately linked to what is being learned in class. The school is extending the range of extracurricular activities and offers lessons and classes for parents, as well as pupils. This has served to strengthen links between the school and parents and the local community.

### **Leadership and management**

23. The headteacher provides strong and determined leadership. She has effectively harnessed the complementary skills of the senior managers and has forged a successful team which shares her vision for where the school is going. Her personal style inspires loyalty from staff at all levels. The deputy headteacher and senior teacher drive initiatives with enthusiasm and commitment, leading well by example. Efforts are now being directed at improving the leadership roles of middle managers. Training and support provided by the LEA have helped middle managers understand the part they play in raising standards and analysing test results, and in monitoring achievement, progress and teaching across the school. There is still further work to do in developing their role in observing classroom practice; subject leaders are keen to improve this aspect of their work. The school is rapidly developing its procedures for self-evaluation. For example, the inclusion manager has carefully analysed data about pupils who have special educational needs, and raised questions about the relative incidence of special educational needs between boys and girls, ethnic groups and year groups. There is a clear plan for future development and for addressing the issues raised.

24. The school's plan for improvement shows clearly that there is a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It articulates the school's priorities and shows where, strategically, the school is heading over the next few years. The plan is a useful tool for improvement. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have a vision for developing a "technologically creative" school, which is an exciting prospect for the future.

25. The role of the governing body has developed well during the school's time in special measures. A temporary chairman provided a good model, and the recently appointed chair of governors has taken on the role with enthusiasm and commitment. There is a clear determination to see the school continue to move forward and support the headteacher and staff, but also to ask challenging questions and evaluate performance.

26. Significant improvements have been made to the school's environment. Classrooms and the long corridors have been decorated in soothing colours and are enhanced by effective displays of work. Unused classrooms have been cleared of clutter and the school successfully absorbed a great deal of resources from a neighbouring school which closed. The perimeter of the grounds has been secured and vandalism is much reduced. Work to improve the outdoor areas has just begun. These improvements give powerful messages to pupils, staff and parents that the school is changing for the better.

27. The LEA has given the school good support during its time in special measures. In the early days, support was less effective in bringing about change, but over the past 15 months has been well focused and the impact is visible in the school's work. The input of consultants and advisers has been instrumental in bringing about improvements in all of the key areas, and has supported the strengthening of the governing body. Recently, the LEA has

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sensibly scaled down its support as the school is better able to determine its own priorities and evaluate its success.

### **Implementation of the action plan**

28. The inspection report of January 2002 required the school to address five key issues. These related to: raising standards in English and mathematics; improving the quality of teaching and learning; improving leadership and management; raising the quality of short-term planning; and making more use of assessment to inform teaching and learning. Overall, the school has made good progress in tackling these issues, although there is still work to do to in raising standards and in further improving the quality of teaching in order to increase the pupils' rate of progress.

29. Initially, the pace of improvement was slow but, after the appointment of the headteacher, improvements gained momentum. The headteacher was quickly able to gauge what needed to be tackled first and set out a plan for the school's improvement. Her clear direction and sense of purpose were welcomed by staff, and teamwork and a shared responsibility and commitment are now strong. The staff group is stable. Changes have been welcomed and acted upon by the staff, and this willingness to work hard to a common aim has served the school well.

30. The quality of short-term planning and the systems for assessment are good. The teachers plan in year group pairs and the school's monitoring procedures ensure consistency and appropriate coverage of the curriculum. Work on improving assessment systems has been well led by the deputy headteacher, who is now working with teachers to give them more responsibility for managing assessment and determining future steps for their own pupils.

31. Senior staff have worked well to improve the quality of teaching. Areas of strength and weakness were quickly identified, and a high degree of support was given to those teachers who needed to strengthen their practice. These steps were successful, overall, but the school acknowledges that there is still scope to bring about further improvement in some cases.

## **Appendix – Information about the inspection**

The school was inspected in January 2002 by HMI under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in June and November 2002, in March, June and October 2003, and in March 2004 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of January 2002.

In June 2004, two HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, and was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Twenty seven lessons or parts of lessons, two assemblies and two registration sessions were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunch times and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff, the chair of governors and a representative of the LEA. Informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was also taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of January 2002 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.