

Tower Bridge Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 100813 |
| Local Authority | Southwark |
| Inspection number | 323352 |
| Inspection dates | 9–10 June 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Linda Pickles |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 209 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Bruce Cheltenham |
| Headteacher | Ms Rosie Compton |
| Date of previous school inspection | 15 May 2007 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Fair Street Tower Bridge Road London SE1 2AE |
| Telephone number | 020 7407 2959 |
| Fax number | 020 7234 9039 |

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|--------------------------|----------------|
| Age group | 3–11 |
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Tower Bridge Primary is an average sized school in the London borough of Southwark which provides full- and part-time Nursery provision. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above the national average, the largest group being of Black African heritage. The majority of pupils do not have English as a first language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average; these are predominantly moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. Levels of pupil mobility are higher than the national average. The school was awarded the Activemark in 2007. The school hosts on-site after-school childcare provision managed by an external provider.

Key for inspection grades

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| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Tower Bridge Primary provides a good education for its pupils. Pupils from culturally diverse backgrounds work and play together in an environment that is well ordered and harmonious, and the school provides a good range of high-quality learning experiences for them all. Pupils' personal development and well-being is good because of the school's comprehensive systems for closely monitoring and supporting pastoral care and guidance. Pupils from different backgrounds and abilities achieve well due to good teaching and learning. Parents hold the school in high regard, and of the questionnaires that were returned a very large majority were wholly positive. As one parent said, 'The progress my child has made in their learning is wonderful. Staff are very approachable and always happy to help.

Standards have improved since the last inspection, when they were significantly below average. Inspection evidence shows that current pupils are on track to attain standards that are broadly average in English and mathematics from below average starting points, which represents good achievement. As a result of good teaching, pupils are now making good progress, and recovering from previous underachievement. In a small proportion of lessons, however, some activities provide limited challenge for higher-attaining pupils. Although academic guidance provided for pupils is satisfactory, there are inconsistencies in the frequency and quality of marking that informs pupils how they can improve further.

Pupils say that they enjoy school, and feel safe and well cared for. They demonstrate good attitudes to learning, participate enthusiastically in a range of extra-curricular activities, and can explain the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They have a well-developed understanding of the diverse cultures within their school and local community, and treat each other with respect. The systems for monitoring and improving attendance have had a positive impact, and attendance is satisfactory.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides a very clear vision of how the school should develop, which is shared by all staff. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning, and prompt action to address identified weaknesses, have led to an improvement in the quality of teaching, which is now good. The school has improved since the time of the last inspection because of good leadership that has focused on improving teaching and assessment, and on putting in place an exciting and relevant curriculum that meets the needs of all its pupils.

The school uses its finances well to provide good value for money. This ensures that expenditure is appropriately directed to improving the learning environment and enhancing the curriculum in art, cooking, and information and communication technology (ICT). The headteacher has fostered extensive links with a range of local businesses and deployed additional funding to further enhance curriculum opportunities effectively. Governors provide good challenge and support, and contribute to strategic planning for improvement and monitoring the impact of initiatives. The improvements since the last inspection demonstrate that the school has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage. The majority of children enter the Nursery or Reception with skills and understanding below those expected for their

age, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development, and language for communication and thinking. As a result of good teaching, children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and move into Year 1 with standards broadly in line with national expectations. Children with learning difficulties and/or difficulties, and those with a first language other than English, make progress in line with their peers. Children willingly participate in activities, engage with their learning, and sustain good levels of concentration. Planning is matched to the needs of the children, particularly in adult-led activities. Provision for children's independent learning, however, offers a limited range of activities for them to choose from, both indoor and outdoor, which restricts some active learning opportunities. In some instances a small proportion of children are not sufficiently directed to engage in child-led activities, and this can lead to some boisterous play. Children's personal development is good. They work and play cooperatively, taking turns and sharing equipment well and the majority demonstrate good standards of behaviour and awareness of others. Adults working in the Early Years Foundation Stage have good relationships with children, and transition arrangements are strong. Parents are kept regularly informed of their child's learning and welfare. Welfare provision is good, and arrangements for safeguarding are well established and are understood by staff. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and had accurately identified child-led play as an area for development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching challenges the more-able pupils to raise attainment consistently to the higher levels.
- Improve the consistency of marking across the school, so that pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- Improve the quality and range of active learning opportunities both inside and out of doors in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 from attainment on entry that was below national expectations. In 2008, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were in line with national averages, with higher attainment in reading and mathematics than writing. Assessment data for the current Year 2 cohort indicate that standards in 2009 will exceed national averages, showing that pupils are making above expected progress. The school has taken action to improve standards in reading and writing, and this is having a direct impact on standards in Key Stage 1. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from different ethnic groups make good progress, which is in line with their peers.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2008 show an improving trend. Attainment in English was in line with the national average; there was improvement in mathematics and science, although they remained significantly below the national average. Data show that pupils who had been at the school for the whole of the key stage made satisfactory progress overall. Assessment data for the current Year 6 cohort indicate that standards in 2009 will be broadly in line with the national average and that pupils are making above expected progress from attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, which was below average. The school has established robust systems to regularly monitor the progress and attainment of all pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and pupils with a first language other than English, make progress in line with their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and appreciate the rich and varied opportunities presented to them. They display positive attitudes to learning, showing care and respect for each other, and have good relationships with adults. They feel safe in school and believe that adults look after them and sort out any concerns they may have. Pupils enjoy lessons and show good levels of concentration and participation. Behaviour in classrooms and around school is good. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of right and wrong, and awareness of the diverse cultures in school and the local community that supports their good social, moral and spiritual development. They understand why a good diet and exercise are important for a healthy lifestyle and are aware of how to keep safe, including during use of the internet. They greatly enjoy the trips and there is a good level of participation in extra-curricular activities, including study support, sport, cooking and drumming clubs. Pupils think that they are listened to and their views are taken into account through the school council. The personal, social and health education programme makes a particularly important and effective contribution to the development of the pupils' skills and prepares them well for life after school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. The overall quality is now good, with some satisfactory and outstanding lessons observed. Teachers manage behaviour well and create a good climate for learning. Assessment information is used well to plan activities that are matched to the wide range of ability levels in all classes. Planned opportunities for pupils to share their ideas with each other and reflect upon their learning are a consistent feature across the school. In lessons where the teaching was outstanding, pupils were actively engaged in their learning through the use of interactive resources, a brisk pace was maintained, and plenary sessions effectively tested pupils' understanding of what they had learnt. Where teaching was satisfactory, planning limited opportunities for pupils to extend their learning, particularly at the higher levels. Teachers use a varied range of teaching strategies, including individual, group work and also guided groups, where additional adults are used effectively to support the learning of pupils with identified needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has improved since the last inspection and now provides rich and varied opportunities that make a strong contribution to pupils' enjoyment. Good use has been made of the newly introduced International Primary Curriculum, which has provided enhanced breadth and balance. The Creative Partnerships 'Change Schools' programme has further enriched the curriculum, for example by instituting the Building Bridges project, which combined skills and knowledge from across the whole curriculum, particularly art and craft, design technology. The school now makes good use of its local environment to enhance pupils' experiences. Many enrichment activities, such as trips to local landmarks including London Zoo and the Natural History Museum, and the residential visit to Treginnis Farm through the 'Farms for City Children' scheme, widen pupils' understanding of the world outside their immediate locality. The revised curriculum makes good curricular links across subject areas, and recent refurbishment has

enhanced ICT provision to support pupils' future economic well-being. The curriculum is further enriched with a varied range of extra-curricular activities, which are well attended, including football, choir, booster classes and the Light Club, which supports pupils' spiritual development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The provision for pastoral care, guidance and support is good. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare are good, and child protection procedures and safeguarding arrangements are secure. The school has devised extensive tracking procedures to ensure that provision is in place for all vulnerable pupils, and systems for monitoring and promoting attendance have led to an improvement in overall attendance levels. Robust systems are in place to promote good behaviour, and this has led to a reduction in the number of pupils excluded. The school's monitoring of pupils' emotional development, as well as their academic development, is a strength and informs planning for interventions effectively. The school's focus on inclusive practice has a good impact on pupils' personal development and well-being. The current inconsistency in marking means that academic guidance is only satisfactory. Pupils, across the school, are not always given guidance that would help them to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The very good leadership and management of the headteacher have ensured that the school has made progress in all areas since the last inspection. She demonstrates committed leadership with a clear focus on raising standards, and is ably supported by an effective leadership team who share a common vision. The systems for self-evaluation are strong and inform planning for improvement against clearly defined success criteria. Areas for development have been accurately prioritised, and support from the local authority has been effectively deployed to support middle managers. Leaders and managers at all levels have a good understanding of the school's performance and regularly monitor the quality of provision for their areas of responsibility. The extent to which managers measure the impact of their role and their contribution to whole-school improvement is well developed, and the school's use of challenging targets is having a direct impact on the good progress made by pupils. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. A plan and clear actions are in place for promoting pupils' understanding from a local, national and global perspective, particularly through the linking-schools initiative with America and Bangalore. Extensive links have been forged with local businesses to promote learners' well-being through the funding of trips and resources, which have had a marked impact on improving the quality of provision. Governors are supportive and well informed, and provide a good level of challenge, contributing to the school's good capacity to improve.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being? | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 2 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 3 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress | 2 |

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 |

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 2 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 2 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

23 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tower Bridge Primary School, London, SE1 2AE

Thank you so much for making us all so welcome when we visited your school. Many of you took the time to talk to me and my colleague during the two days we spent at your school.

You told us about how happy you are at school, and this is shown in your attendance, which has improved. You told us you think your school is a good school, and we agree. Your parents, too, think the school helps you to make good progress and takes good care of you. Here are some of the things that are good about your school:

- you enjoy coming to school and enjoy your learning
- you get on well with each other and with the adults in school
- you enjoy all the trips you go on, and going to after-school clubs
- your headteacher leads the school well and makes sure that you make progress in your learning.

Here are some of the things we have asked your school to do to improve further:

- we have asked your headteacher to make sure that you make as much progress as you can in every lesson
- we have asked teachers to make sure that when they mark your work, they tell you how you can make it better
- we have asked teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes to make sure that children can choose from lots of things to play with.

You can help by continuing to behave well, working hard, and being sure to come to school every day.

Yours faithfully

Linda Pickles

Lead Inspector