

George Tomlinson Primary School

Vernon Road, London, E11 4QU

Inspection dates 7–8 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics across the school from very low starting points so that they reach standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, with some that is outstanding. Teachers plan well-structured lessons. They know their pupils well and motivate them to do their best.
- High levels of support from teachers and other adults for pupils who need extra help or who are at the early stages of learning English ensure that these pupils make good and, sometimes, outstanding progress right from the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- School leaders and the governing body want the best for all the pupils and are effective at bringing about improvements in teaching and achievement. They ensure that teachers check up on pupils' progress regularly and make good use of this information to organise extra help for any pupils who are falling behind.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are outstanding and this helps them to learn well. They are always polite and welcoming, and they like to help each other in lessons. They enjoy school very much and know how to stay safe.
- The learning opportunities and experiences offered by the school make a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is outstanding.
- The school is a very harmonious and friendly community where pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding throughout the school. This is because teachers do not have consistently high expectations of their pupils and do not provide them with enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning in lessons.
- Not enough pupils throughout the school are making outstanding progress to ensure that they reach the highest levels of attainment by the time they leave Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons taught by 19 teachers. These observations included the teaching of phonics (letter patterns and the sounds they represent). Many of these observations were made jointly with the headteacher of the school.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, a representative of the local authority, parents and carers, staff, including senior and middle leaders, and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including teachers' planning, the school's self-evaluation and development plans, assessment information, monitoring files, governing body minutes, external reports, safeguarding documentation and samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with them about their enjoyment of books.
- Inspectors considered the 45 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the three parent and carer emails (received by the inspection officer), the 16 parental letters and the 37 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Beverley Perin, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Jane Richmond	Additional inspector
Christopher Crouch	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional support through the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average, with the largest groups being of Indian, Pakistani and Eastern European heritage.
- Over half the pupils speak English as additional language and a small proportion arrive at the school with little or no English.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. Most of this group have speech, language and communication needs.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school is in the middle of a five-year phased building programme to expand the school to meet local demand for school places.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
 - making sure that all teachers have high expectations of pupils, especially the most able in mathematics, and always set work at the right level to allow them to make exceptional progress from their different starting points
 - making sure that all teachers plan lessons that actively engage pupils in their learning, providing them with more opportunities to work in groups
 - using more open-ended questions to explore and develop pupils' learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below national expectations. Children make good progress because of the carefully planned provision and stimulating learning environment. Nonetheless, many children leave Reception with below average skills, especially in literacy.
- Rates of progress have increased throughout the school so that they are now consistently good. At the end of Year 6, all pupils in mathematics made at least the progress they were expected to make. A good proportion made more than this, especially in reading and writing where progress was outstanding. As a result, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are now broadly in line with the national average. Pupils' progress is not yet consistently rapid to enable them to reach the highest levels of attainment, especially but not exclusively in mathematics, because expectations of the pupils are not always high enough.
- In reading, pupils are enthusiastic and confident and the school encourages reading at home. Just occasionally, weaker readers, however, do not always make systematic use of phonics when trying to read unknown words. In writing, standards have improved and inspectors saw many instances of pupils writing independently in exercise books, drafting work on mini-whiteboards and trying to improve their handwriting.
- The proportion of pupils passing the Year 1 phonics-screening test was below average, but represented a good achievement from pupils' starting points.
- Pupils from Indian, Pakistani and Eastern European groups are making good progress because of the good support they get. This is especially true for pupils who join the school with little or no English when they get extra help in small groups or individually.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, make good, and often outstanding, progress because of the extra guidance and support they receive.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress, but gaps, although closing, still remain between their achievement and the achievement of other pupils, especially in English. This is because these pupils did not make the same outstanding progress in reading and writing as other pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most parents and carers who responded to the online survey said that the quality of teaching is good.
- Teachers are enthusiastic, keen to improve and committed to their pupils' success. They encourage pupils to try hard. Relationships are excellent. The classrooms promote learning because they are interesting and exciting places for pupils. Occasionally, opportunities are missed for pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning by working together in small groups to find solutions and solve problems.
- In the best lessons, the pace is good and teachers enable pupils to understand what they are going to learn by giving them explicit learning intentions and steps to success. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils were identifying features of historical stories. To enable pupils to do even better, the teacher showed them how to use the appropriate language and provided different resources suitable for every pupil's needs. This helped them to develop their writing skills, practise skimming and scanning text and improve their vocabulary choices.
- Other adults provide individual support that enables disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to make good progress. For example, in one lesson, a pupil was helped to create a bar chart using coloured blocks and this brought the bar chart to life for him.
- Questioning has improved since the last inspection and pupils are keen and eager to try and

answer, with no fear of embarrassment should they get the answer wrong. Some teachers, however, do not use open-ended questions enough to get pupils thinking for themselves.

- In marking, pupils are given helpful targets to show them how to improve and useful feedback on what they have done well. Pupils value this and are beginning to respond to the comments in their books.
- Progress slows in the few lessons where teachers talk to the pupils for too long and do not allow those who can to move ahead at a faster pace, once they have grasped the concept. This is because expectations of all pupils are not always high enough.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium are making faster progress because the school has increased the number of support staff working with them and provided individual tuition and small-group teaching. Consequently, these pupils narrowed the gap to make the same progress as their peers in mathematics in Key Stage 2 last year.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and in the playground is exemplary. They are charming, polite and welcoming to each other and to adults. When pupils join the school with little or no English, other pupils try to help them understand and make sure they are not left alone.
- Pupils of all backgrounds get on well with each other and are proud of their friendly, multicultural school. There is little bullying and pupils in Years 5 and 6 told inspectors that they do not tolerate teasing or bullying of others and that they look after younger pupils. They are aware of all forms of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying, and choose their vocabulary carefully: 'We do not like to hurt each other.'
- Pupils know all about what constitutes extreme behaviour and respond well to the school's effective programmes to help keep them safe. Pupils know that they will be treated fairly and that the school values their views. They are highly aware of issues around internet safety and apply what they learn to their daily lives.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding and, typically, they enjoy working together in pairs, offering each other mutual support. Pupils bring a sense of maturity and interest to their learning.
- When, rarely, behavioural incidents do occur, the school has well-established systems for managing them consistently and effectively. The pupils are clear about consequences and enjoy the rewards for positive behaviour that they receive.
- Attendance has improved year-on-year and is now above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, governing body and staff work with a shared purpose to bring about the school's vision that every child will achieve their best in a happy and caring environment.
- Since the last inspection, senior and middle leaders have played a significant and effective role in enabling the school to improve in all areas of its work. This has been achieved against the backdrop of an extensive and long-running building programme.
- Senior and middle leaders know the school well and have improved the way they check pupils' progress. This has helped them to identify the school's priorities and plan developments accurately.
- Using a rigorous analysis of pupils' performance, teachers are given ambitious, challenging but achievable targets to improve pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.
- Leaders are influential in evaluating and supporting teachers and teaching assistants to improve their practice through regular lesson observations and giving feedback, teaching the class together, training and coaching. They make sure their judgements are accurate by

checking them with professionals from outside the school.

- The school promotes equality of opportunity well and works hard with individual families to make sure that children at risk of not doing well make good progress. Pupils are encouraged to value and respect different religions and cultures in lessons and through assemblies, visits and sporting and musical extra activities. There is a zero tolerance of any form of discrimination and, as a result, the school is a harmonious multicultural community.
 - The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides many opportunities for topic work chosen by the pupils. There is a good range of visits, for example, to the Olympic Park and the Houses of Parliament. Pupils have abundant opportunities to reflect and think deeply about how best to help those in need. This ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective.
 - The local authority supports school leaders effectively in improving the quality of their leadership.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It receives training and development externally and from the leadership team. Governors monitor the work of the school closely through regular visits during which individual governors meet the headteacher, their link subject leader and observe lessons. Governors contribute fully to the school's self-evaluation processes and understand how the school is doing in relation to other similar schools. They commission termly external reviews of the school, challenging the headteacher to act swiftly on any recommendations. Governors have supported the headteacher in tackling underperformance and reward and support good teachers so that the quality of the teaching is now good. They know what is being done on salary progression and promotion issues. The governing body is informed about the outcomes of the school's annual performance management targets for teachers. Governors have a good awareness of pupil performance and the performance of different groups, including those supported by the pupil premium. Minutes of meetings verify that governors ensure value for money. All statutory duties are met, including arrangements for safeguarding.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	103075
Local authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	404852

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	562
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Woolley
Headteacher	Mandy Stewart
Date of previous school inspection	January 2011
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