

George Tomlinson Primary School

Harrington Road, Leytonstone, London E11 4QN

Inspection dates

8–9 February 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, ably assisted by governors and senior school leaders, has made significant improvements to the school since taking up her post.
- Governors and the local authority were instrumental in putting in place this dynamic and effective leadership team. They provided support and challenge in equal measure because they knew that the school needed to improve rapidly.
- The headteacher and her team have put professional development and training at the heart of improving the quality of teaching.
- Teachers are keen to develop their practice, encouraged by the rising standards they see as a result.
- Leaders know the school's strengths and identify areas for improvement appropriately. However, it is not always clear in their plans what impact their actions will have on outcomes for pupils.
- Standards are rising and progress is improving. However, pupils do not always have the spoken language skills to explain their ideas in depth. This can limit the amount of progress they make, especially in key stage 2.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are courteous and respectful. They understand the importance of persevering; their resilience helps them to try their hardest in lessons.
- Attendance is improving. Rates of persistent absence have decreased but remain too high.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years provision. They learn well because adults provide a range of stimulating activities for them.
- The new curriculum that the current leaders have introduced offers pupils opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in key stage 2, by ensuring that:
 - pupils' spoken language skills develop further so that they can explain their learning in greater depth
 - plans have clear, measurable impact statements that relate directly to pupils' outcomes.
- Ensure that persistent absence decreases.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since joining the school in September 2016, the headteacher has rapidly improved the quality of teaching and learning. This has successfully overturned the steep dip in outcomes of the last few years.
- The new leadership team has set the bar very high in terms of expectations for behaviour and academic performance. Staff and pupils are rising to those expectations. This has resulted in significantly improved outcomes, particularly at key stage 1.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths. They prioritise well. For example, when they took up their roles, they ensured that improving safeguarding procedures was at the top of the agenda. However, they do not always identify precisely how their actions will affect outcomes for pupils. For example, when reviewing pupil premium spending, leaders noted that disadvantaged pupils were able to participate in curriculum trips but did not specify what impact this had on them academically or socially.
- The leadership team ensures that teachers are well supported to improve their practice. Professional development has been and remains central to improving the quality of teaching and raising standards.
- The local authority acted swiftly in supporting the school when standards began to drop. It was instrumental in putting in place the new governing body and supporting governors to recruit the dynamic leadership team that has made so many positive changes.
- The leadership of support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective. The additional funding is used to ensure that staff are well trained to meet pupils' needs. When the new person responsible for coordinating this area took over, she ensured that pupils' needs were correctly identified and appropriate interventions put in place to accelerate their progress.
- Leaders ensure that the pupil premium funding is spent judiciously to remove barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. For example, they have introduced a range of measures to improve attendance for this group which have been successful.
- Parents who left comments on the Ofsted survey free-text facility, as well as those who spoke to inspectors, were overwhelmingly positive about the school. Many of them noted the impact new leaders have had on improving provision.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils learned about democracy by having their own elections at the same time as the most recent general election. The school runs a successful international day every year, which celebrates the diverse backgrounds of pupils, their families and the wider community.
- The new curriculum that leaders have brought in is wide and varied and provides strong opportunities for pupils to learn about and understand the world. The curriculum is well supplemented by a range of exciting trips and visitors to the school. For example, the animatronic dinosaur that visited last term inspired some vivid writing.

- The physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is spent wisely. Sports coaches run a range of clubs before, during and after school. Participation rates are high, and pupils are enthusiastic about the different activities on offer. Leaders ensure that those who most need it are invited to attend. For example, the sports coaches run a sports breakfast club to get disadvantaged pupils into school early and give them a healthy start to the day.

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly effective:
 - they have a range of valuable skills and experience that they bring to their roles
 - they challenge school leaders to pursue the very highest standards
 - they celebrate what has already been achieved but understand there is yet more to be done
 - minutes of their meetings clearly show where they ask perceptive questions so that they get the full picture and can hold leaders to account
 - they show strong commitment through their visits to school and attendance at meetings
 - they put pupils' interests at the heart of all they do and fully support the school's vision and ethos.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. New leaders and governors have been diligent in developing a really strong culture of safeguarding across the school, backed up by highly effective systems that are understood by all staff.
- Training is regular and comprehensive. The procedures for recruiting and vetting staff are thorough. Staff are clear about how to report any concerns. The designated safeguarding lead evaluates all concerns and makes referrals to outside agencies as necessary. These are carefully logged and followed up to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are kept safe.
- Procedures for administering first aid and tending to medical needs are robust and overseen by a trained paediatric nurse.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Due to the rapid improvements brought about by the leadership team, teaching is good. This good teaching is contributing to pupils' rapidly improving outcomes.
- Learning time is used effectively. Transitions in and out of groups, or between lessons, are smooth. Pupils are well organised and have the equipment they need to get on with their work. Classrooms are well laid out. All this contributes to a productive learning environment.
- The teaching of phonics is highly effective. Adults are skilled at identifying when pupils are ready to move on and when they need more time to reinforce a particular sound. This ensures that pupils learn at a pace which most suits their needs. Adults use

consistent routines and strategies so pupils become familiar with them. This develops pupils' confidence and helps the pace of learning.

- The headteacher introduced a new mathematics scheme, which teachers adapt as necessary to meet the specific needs of their classes. This ensures that expectations for what pupils can achieve are high and that pupils learn skills systematically, building on what they already know.
- Reading is promoted well and pupils develop a love of it. The fairy tale themed library is attractive and well organised. Pupils are given the responsibility of being the school librarians. The well-ordered shelves and neatly arranged tables and chairs are testament to the pride they take in their work. The new reading scheme introduced in key stage 2 ensures that pupils develop more sophisticated skills to build on their understanding of phonics.
- The curriculum offers opportunities to write across a range of subjects and teachers use these to maximum effect. Pupils learn skills and techniques in their English lessons and have a chance to apply these in other subjects as well.
- Pupils' written work is of good quality because teachers provide them with effective guidance and prompts. Pupils are given plenty of time and support to edit and hone their work. However, this is not the case when they are talking and explaining their learning. Their spoken language skills are not as well developed as their writing skills and this limits their ability to express themselves, especially when working at greater depth.
- Subjects other than English and mathematics are also taught well. Teachers use a range of strategies and resources, including video clips and discussion, to ignite and sustain pupils' interest. The standard of teaching in PE is good, so pupils develop strong sporting skills. This means the school is very successful in local sports competitions.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities learn well and show positive attitudes in lessons. Teachers plan activities that support their learning, for example to include using resources and prompts. Additional adults are well deployed. They offer help judiciously so as to build independence and to avoid pupils becoming over-reliant on them.
- Teaching meets the needs of disadvantaged pupils well. Teachers discuss how pupils are doing at regular progress meetings where they share ideas and, where necessary, put in place additional interventions to accelerate progress.
- Teachers regularly use the curriculum content to challenge stereotypes and promote diversity, social cohesion and a strong moral compass. Pupils in Year 5 had to write a letter to dissuade a bully from his reprehensible actions. Their work showed how deeply they understand the detrimental effects bullying can have.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils feel safe at school and know that adults want the best for them. They learn about ways to stay safe, for example in case of fire and on the road, and how to avoid being drawn into knife crime.
- There is a strong culture of promoting online safety. Pupils are very clear that you must never give out any personal details. They also understand that you can use technology to bully others and are alert to this happening. They would tell an adult and have faith that the adult would make sure it stopped.
- Pupils understand that bullying is something that happens persistently and is different from falling out with your friends. They know that it can take the form of cyber bullying or name-calling or can be physical. As with online bullying, they trust that adults would solve any issues that occur.
- There is a range of support for pupils' emotional and mental well-being. Pupils praise the counselling service and know they can access it easily if they need to talk. One boy even referred to it in his writing, explaining to a bully that his victim had had to seek counselling.
- Pupils' physical well-being is promoted through the high-quality and wide-ranging sporting activities the school offers. Pupils also talk about how the new initiative where they are encouraged to eat fruit and vegetables and drink water in the afternoon has heightened their understanding of a healthy lifestyle.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They believe it is vital to have a 'growth mindset' because it means you are resilient, do not give up and are happy to try new ways to learn. One pupil described a hero he was writing about in his myth as having a growth mindset. These attributes contribute to the good progress pupils make.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to listen and respond to each other's views through debates within the curriculum and philosophy lessons. They do so with grace and respect.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Behaviour around the school and in the dinner hall is calm and orderly.
- Pupils enjoy their play and play together well. There are lots of different opportunities outside, including those for active play, but also quieter spaces for reflection. Pupils take responsibility for putting out and tidying up equipment. They also ensure that everyone has someone to play with.
- Record-keeping of behaviour incidents is comprehensive and detailed. Leaders analyse these records and respond to any trends or patterns that might emerge.
- Pupils talk positively about the 'Good to be Green' scheme. They say they are all keen to stay on the green card. Inspectors saw teachers using this system to manage behaviour well in classes, eliminating any possibility of disruption to lessons.
- Pupils are well-organised learners. They have everything they need in lessons so that learning time is maximised. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were confidently using alternate colour pens when editing their writing.

- There are good systems in place to support pupils who have particular behavioural needs. Close work between parents and the school ensures a consistent approach. The pastoral team, including the learning mentor and family liaison officer, provides appropriate interventions so that pupils learn to manage their own behaviour increasingly well. Incidents of poor behaviour for this group have reduced, in some cases to zero.
- Leaders have introduced a range of incentives to encourage regular attendance. There are also robust systems in place to tackle and report absence. This has seen improvement in overall attendance rates and reduction of persistent absenteeism. However, the latter still remains too high.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points and attainment is rising. There have been particularly strong improvements in key stage 1. In 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard by the end of Year 2 from their early years starting points was in line with the national average for all groups in reading and above in writing and mathematics. The previous year, these measures had been very low.
- Key stage 2 results have lagged behind, largely due to a legacy of underachievement that the new leadership is tackling well. As a result of improved teaching, progress of current pupils in key stage 2 is as good as it is in other phases.
- Work in pupils' books shows that they develop increasingly sophisticated use of punctuation and vocabulary in their writing and confidently acquire new knowledge and skills in mathematics. Good progress is also evident in their science and topic books.
- Pupils acquire phonics skills securely because the teaching is systematic and thorough. Teachers then build on this in key stage 2, where pupils begin to develop the skills to analyse texts in a more advanced way. The pupils who read with inspectors, including those from low starting points, used a range of strategies to read confidently and answer questions on the story.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points because of the targeted support they receive both in lessons and in interventions.
- Outcomes are improving for disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged learners. No pupils from this group reached the higher standard in reading or writing at the end of Year 6 in 2016, with very few reaching it in mathematics. In 2017, all these figures rose, with attainment at the higher standard in grammar and punctuation in line with other pupils nationally.
- Rising attainment, the fact that pupils are well-organised learners who are always ready for lessons, and pupils' positive attitudes to learning mean that they are well prepared to move on to secondary school.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make good progress across the early years. Those who start school with little or no English quickly acquire the language they need to join in and make the most of the opportunities on offer.
- The two-year-olds who attend also make good progress. This is because adults understand their needs and provide distinct support for these very young children.
- Adults use clear, simple language appropriate to children's stage of development. This helps children develop their own language well.
- Children behave well. They learn and play collaboratively. Adults encourage them to be as independent as possible, choosing the resources they would like to use in their play and tidying up after themselves.
- Teaching is good. Teachers and other adults know when to intervene to extend children's learning and spark their interest further. For example, an early years practitioner joined one of the youngest children who seemed at a loss at the painting table. They remained engrossed together there for a further 15 minutes, and the child ended up creating something unique of which she was clearly proud.
- In the Reception classes, children are introduced to phonics and quickly learn the sounds that letters and groups of letters make. The teaching of phonics is highly effective. As in key stage 1, teachers are attuned to children's learning and adapt their teaching accordingly. Progress in acquiring these skills is therefore rapid, which prepares children well for moving on to Year 1.
- The environment both indoors and outdoors is conducive to learning. It is tidy and bright and set up in such a way that children can access the resources they want easily and independently.
- Leadership of early years is good. The assistant headteacher with responsibility for early years leads an effective team that keeps children's interests uppermost in mind when planning. This means that the activities and resources are well suited to children's needs and ensure high levels of engagement.
- Parents get involved in their children's learning in a range of ways. They contribute to planning for their child's interests and make the most of stay and play sessions and workshops to help them support their child at home.

School details

Unique reference number	103075
Local authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10041054

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	575
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbie Strowbridge
Headteacher	Verity Carter
Telephone number	020 8539 3577
Website	www.georgetomlinsonprimary.com
Email address	school@georgetomlinson.waltham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 November 2012

Information about this school

- George Tomlinson is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The departure of the previous headteacher in summer 2015 ushered in a period of significant turbulence. The current governing body took up post in May 2016. The current headteacher started in September 2016, with other senior leaders joining the school during that academic year.
- Over four out of five pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Two thirds of pupils speak English as an additional language, some of whom are at the very early stages of learning English. These figures are above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is nearly double the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is broadly average.
- A far higher proportion of pupils join the school other than at the beginning of Reception than is the case nationally.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The governing body manages a breakfast club and an after-school club for pupils at the school.
- The early years provision comprises a Nursery class, which two- and three-year-olds attend part-time, and three full-time Reception classes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classes throughout the school and observed pupils' learning in a range of subjects, including reading, writing, mathematics, dance and geography. The headteacher and other senior school leaders accompanied them on most of these visits.
- The inspection team also looked at the work pupils had completed in their English, mathematics, science and topic books. They also watched an assembly and listened to pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 reading.
- Inspectors took into account the 70 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and the 20 comments left via the free-text facility. They also spoke to parents informally before and during the school day.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils both formally and informally throughout the inspection to gain their views.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, attendance figures, the school's evaluation of its own performance, development plans, and information about pupils' attainment and progress.
- Inspectors met with staff, a group of governors including the chair and the vice-chair, and representatives from the local authority. All of the governors attended the final feedback meeting, as did the school's local authority improvement adviser.
- Altogether, 17 members of staff completed the staff survey. There were 113 responses to the pupil survey. Inspectors took all of these views into account.

Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sheila Cohring	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Pratt	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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