

Tor Bridge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	113327
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	378682
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2012
Lead inspector	Paul Sadler

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	158
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sharyn Seaman
Headteacher	Cathryn Tompkins
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 January 2009
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	3–4 July 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Paul Sadler

Additional inspector

Marcia Headon

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors spent over seven hours observing 16 lessons taught by eight teachers. An inspector, accompanied by the headteacher, also observed briefly the work of each of nine groups of pupils learning their letters and the sounds they make (phonics). Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and with groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including that relating to pupils' achievement, monitoring and evaluation and safeguarding arrangements. The responses to questionnaires completed by pupils, staff and by 60 parents and carers were analysed.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school and serves an area of mixed private and social housing. Almost all pupils are of White British ethnicity. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils at school action plus or with statements of special educational needs is also well above average. In part, this is due to the fact that local authority specialist provision for the education of 20 pupils aged four to seven with speech and language difficulties is based at the school. In 2011 the school did not meet the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

In September 2011 the school joined a partnership with a secondary school, a nursery school and a special school, governed by a single governing body. The name of the school also changed, having formerly been Estover Primary School. The school is due to move into new purpose-built accommodation in September 2012. Since the last inspection a new headteacher has been appointed and a newly appointed deputy headteacher will take up post in September 2012. The governing body provides childcare for pupils in the form of a breakfast club.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. In order for it to become good, improvements are needed to pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, some of the teaching in Years 3 to 6, and to the precision and use of monitoring and evaluation. The quality of the local authority's provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties is also satisfactory. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils achieve well in Reception and in Years 1 and 2; in Years 3 to 6 their progress is more erratic. Attainment is rising, especially in English. Basic literacy skills are improving, but pupils have limited skills in the use of information and communication technology (ICT), learning independently and the presentation of work.
- The majority of teaching is good, with challenging tasks that pupils enjoy. Good use is made of assessment to plan for their individual needs. In a minority of lessons, however, tasks are mundane and the pace is too slow, so that pupils lose interest and their behaviour deteriorates.
- While most pupils behave well in lessons and around school, in a minority of lessons learning sometimes slows due to the poor attitudes and behaviour of a few pupils. There is little intentional bullying, but younger pupils sometimes feel intimidated by the robust play of older ones. There have been recent improvements to pupils' attendance, which is average.
- Leaders and managers are committed to improving the school and with the increased capacity provided by the partnership and new building, they are in a position to do so. Teaching and hence pupils' achievement are improving through effective management of performance. However, monitoring and evaluation are not always used well enough to identify precisely what needs to be done to bring about rapid improvement. Arrangements to safeguard pupils meet requirements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' behaviour by:
 - raising the expectations of staff and pupils by establishing minimum

- standards of acceptable behaviour, especially in lessons
- ensuring that agreed behaviour policies are applied consistently to all pupils by every member of staff.
- Improve teaching quality and hence pupils' achievement, especially in Years 3 to 6, by:
 - ensuring that all lessons are conducted at a good pace and use tasks that challenge and motivate pupils
 - offering pupils more opportunities to learn independently and to use ICT as a tool for learning
 - enhancing pupils' pride in their work by improving their handwriting and presentation skills
- In order to accelerate the pace of improvement:
 - raise the quality of monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the causes of weaknesses are identified precisely so that strategies to bring about rapid improvement can be put in place.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children start school with levels of skill and knowledge below those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Reception class. For example, a child playing 'teacher' correctly and independently wrote three-letter words on a board and asked her 'pupils' to read them. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 2 attainment in reading is average, with many being independent readers. Pupils in these years also make good progress in mathematics; for example those in Year 1 could identify missing numbers in a sequence, such as 100, 95, ?, 85, 80.

Preliminary results of assessments undertaken by pupils in the current Year 6 suggest a significant improvement in attainment in English, and it is likely that the government's floor standard will be met this year so that attainment overall is broadly average, showing that gaps in attainment with other pupils nationally are narrowing. Pupils at the end of Year 6 are average readers and likely to reach broadly average standards in English and mathematics. They can effectively analyse text and show understanding of what they have read. They also write accurately using a range of genres, for example a suspense story or a factual account. Given pupils' starting points, progress overall in English, including reading, is good. However, work is often untidy with little use of pen or cursive script. Attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 6, while below that in English, shows improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5.

Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have too few chances to work independently and so when they are given such opportunities they do not respond as well as they might. Pupils are not enabled to make good use of ICT, for example for research or to present work. School leaders are aware of this and an action plan to rectify this is already being developed.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those allocated to the speech and language provision, make satisfactory progress. One such pupil in Year 2 wrote the sentence, 'You will have bad teeth if you eat chocolate', with limited help. Pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable also make progress in line with their peers. The great majority of parents and carers are satisfied with their children's progress; inspection evidence confirms that, overall, all groups of pupils make equally satisfactory progress from when they enter the school to when they leave.

Quality of teaching

In most lessons teachers provide challenging tasks. For example, Year 4 pupils were asked to build a complex sentence starting with 'The giraffe ate ...'. The teacher asked the pupils to use elements such as adverbial clauses, showing them how higher levels could be attained in assessments. Teachers routinely assess pupils' progress to plan work and to identify where extra help is needed. Pupils are taught to assess their own and each other's work. Targets, which pupils know well, are used effectively. Most work is marked constructively, showing pupils how it could be improved. Some lessons contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example through discussion of the work of philanthropists and humanitarian workers, for example Albert Schweitzer and Mother Theresa.

In a minority of lessons, mainly in Years 3 to 5, pupils lose interest because the teacher talks for too long or they are not stimulated by the task. When this is the case, behaviour deteriorates and other pupils' learning slows. Opportunities to develop independence are sometimes missed, often because adults intervene too quickly with help. In other respects, however, support is effective, especially in the questioning of individual pupils or small groups. This is especially the case for those pupils with speech and language difficulties and others with disabilities or special educational needs.

Teachers develop pupils' literacy skills well and teach letters and sounds effectively. In almost all cases, sounds are linked to their respective letters with the necessary precision, leading to good progress in reading. Lack of up-to-date equipment hampers teachers' opportunities to develop pupils' skills in information and communication technology and, although pupils have plenty of opportunities to use basic numeracy skills such as addition and subtraction, there are fewer opportunities for them to develop more sophisticated skills such as estimation. The great majority of parents and carers are rightly satisfied with the quality of the teaching.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Overall behaviour is satisfactory and pupils are kept safe. In their responses to the inspectors' questionnaires, a significant minority of parents and carers, and of pupils in Years 3 to 6, expressed concern that learning in lessons was sometimes disrupted by poor behaviour. Inspection evidence showed that there is some justification for

these concerns, with problems caused by a small number of pupils in a few lessons. In part, this is because a minority of staff have insufficiently high expectations of what is acceptable behaviour, and because staff do not always apply the school's policies on behaviour consistently to all pupils. There is evidence that current standards of behaviour are negatively affected by the absence through ill health of some staff, and that over time behaviour is better than that observed during the inspection. Parents, carers and pupils are confident that everyone is kept safe.

A minority of parents and carers also expressed concerns about bullying. Pupils, however, expressed less concern and said that little occurs, and that when it does it is dealt with effectively by staff. These comments are supported by evidence from the school's records, suggesting that this is the usual position. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying, for example cyber-bullying and name calling, and of how to avoid it. In the playground, younger pupils occasionally find the vigorous play of older pupils intimidating. Senior staff are tackling this issue and are planning how the move to new premises will help to resolve it. All pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are developing a satisfactory understanding of personal safety. The good-quality breakfast club has positive strategies that contribute well to improving pupils' behaviour.

Pupils' attendance has improved recently following a period of decline, and is in line with the national average. Staff and external agencies have been effective in improving the attendance of the small number of pupils who have been persistently absent.

Leadership and management

School leaders and managers, including the governing body, have ambitious plans for the school and the recently formed partnership for when provision is consolidated on the new site. At the heart of these are plans to raise the quality of teaching and hence pupils' achievement. A satisfactory start has been made, most notably to challenging weak teaching through effective management of staff performance and the provision of well-targeted professional development for staff. This is demonstrated by pupils' improving achievement, notably in English. Middle leadership is a strength, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and the Early Years Foundation Stage. Monitoring and evaluation are satisfactory but in some areas, for example pupils' behaviour, lack the precision necessary to quickly identify problems and hence to put in place measures to resolve them.

The governing body challenges school leaders to improve the school and supports them in doing so, but at this early stage of the partnership's existence its plans in some areas lack detail. However, the increased range of expertise within the partnership workforce is increasingly used to support all four schools, contributing to the school's satisfactory capacity for further improvement. The similar achievement of all pupils, including those in the local authority's speech and language resource, and the lack of discrimination are evidence of the school's satisfactory promotion of equality of opportunity. The governing body meets its requirements to safeguard pupils, for instance all staff are well trained in the procedures and practice of child

protection, and safeguarding has been given a high priority in plans for the new school building.

The curriculum is satisfactory as it provides a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of literacy, and their sporting or creative prowess. There is a good range of additional activities including residential experiences. These contribute well to pupils' satisfactory spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils do, however, have relatively few opportunities to encounter those of other faiths or cultural backgrounds.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



5 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tor Bridge Primary School, Plymouth PL6 8UJ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently, and thank you to those who completed our questionnaire. We especially enjoyed talking with you, seeing your work and hearing your views. This letter is to tell you what we found during our inspection.

- Tor Bridge Primary is a satisfactory school. Your achievement is satisfactory and your literacy, especially, is improving. You are learning to read well and you write some interesting pieces, although some of your handwriting should be improved.
- Those of you in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 get good teaching and make good progress. In Key Stage 2 teaching is satisfactory, although it is better in Year 6. Your work is marked well and you know your targets, so you know how to improve your work.
- Most of you behave well but overall behaviour is satisfactory. Some of you and your parents and carers are concerned about your learning being affected by poor behaviour in lessons. This does sometimes happen so we have asked the staff to improve things. Although some of your parents and carers are concerned about bullying, you told us that not much occurs and other evidence tells us that this is the case.
- Senior staff and the governing body lead the school in a satisfactory way and are working hard to improve the school. They have good plans for your new school building which we are sure will make the school better. Staff keep you safe.

As well as improving your behaviour, we have asked staff to make Tor Bridge Primary into a good school by:

- giving you more activities that help you to learn on your own and with other pupils, and more chances to use ICT in your work
- improving the ways in which problems are spotted and put right.

You can help by always behaving well and by politely telling a member of staff if you think something could be improved.

Yours sincerely
Paul Sadler
Lead inspector

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