

William Torbitt Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102820
Local Authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	308128
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Mary Summers

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	670
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	133
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Patrick Hawthorne
Headteacher	Mrs Patricia Hinds
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Eastern Avenue Newbury Park Ilford IG2 7SS
Telephone number	020 8599 1209
Fax number	020 8599 6227

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

About four fifths of pupils are from Indian, Sri Lankan and Bangladeshi families. Many other ethnicities are represented in smaller numbers. Just under two thirds of pupils speak English as an additional language.

There are two Nursery and three Reception classes catering for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Nursery children attend part-time, mornings or afternoons. There is one intake into Reception each year, in September. This is a new development that is in its first year of implementation.

The school has won a number of awards including Investors in People, Healthy Schools and Silver Artsmark.

A new headteacher started in September 2008. There have been significant changes in staff over the last year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

William Torbitt Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. There are clear signs that some aspects are beginning to improve because of initiatives taken over the last few months. The new headteacher has established a clear vision for the school's immediate future and has quickly gained the support and respect of staff, pupils and parents. One parent wrote, 'The school has a new lease of life,' and another, 'We can see the changes already!'

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. At the end of Year 6, standards are close to average, although the more able pupils underachieve in writing. The work in lessons does not always challenge these pupils and help them move on as quickly as they should. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers manage behaviour carefully so that pupils can concentrate on their work with minimal interruption. Teachers set individual targets for pupils to help them improve in reading, writing and mathematics. However, pupils are not always sure about what these targets mean and how these will help them to move on in their learning.

There are secure systems in place to keep pupils safe. The curriculum is good and encourages pupils' personal development very well. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good. Cultural development is especially strong. Pupils gain an excellent appreciation of art and music and develop a thorough understanding of one another's cultural backgrounds. Pupils are well behaved in class and around the school. They enjoy their lessons, responding eagerly to questions and settling quickly to work. School councillors and junior road safety officers take their roles seriously and contribute a great deal to the school community. Pupils know how to keep safe on the busy roads surrounding the school. They maintain healthy lifestyles by adopting a sensible diet and taking regular exercise in physical education lessons and after-school sports. Pupils' very high levels of confidence, along with their excellent manners and positive attitudes to learning mean they are well prepared for the future.

Some new systems have been introduced recently to check the performance of teachers and pupils and these are beginning to identify the correct areas for improvement. However, many of the improvements introduced have not been in place long enough to really make an impact upon pupils' standards and progress. Staff morale is good and teachers welcome the advice and support from the new headteacher. However, year group and subject leaders are not yet involved in monitoring new initiatives to check how well they are working. They are excited about developing their roles, however, and are keen to support the headteacher. Overall, the school shows a satisfactory capacity to improve in the future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter the Nursery with attainment below that expected for three-year-olds, with most at the early stages of learning English. They settle readily into Nursery routines, quickly developing their independence and confidence. Children's progress is satisfactory although only a minority reach nationally expected levels by the end of their Reception year.

Satisfactory procedures are in place to ensure that they are safe and their welfare needs are met. Children are happy and well-motivated learners and their behaviour is good. They show consideration and concern for one another. There is a satisfactory mixture of adult and child-led activities, especially in the indoor area. In one Reception class for example, the teacher successfully extended children's vocabulary by encouraging them to describe the different

countries they had visited. This also developed their confidence and self-esteem. They used computers confidently to practise writing their letters, requiring little assistance or supervision. The school is aware of the limitations of the outdoor area, which is not well planned or resourced. Senior staff are currently working with local authority advisers to develop the premises so that it will provide children with better access to the outdoor environment.

The EYFS has undergone an unsettled period due to staffing difficulties. School leaders acknowledge that there is room for improvement in teaching and the curriculum, which are both only satisfactory. There has been a successful emphasis on developing early communication and number skills but other areas of children's learning have not received enough attention. Consequently, pupils' creative and physical skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world are below those nationally expected when they transfer to Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the role of middle managers to ensure they have more impact on raising standards and increasing pupils' progress.
- Ensure that more able pupils receive enough challenge in lessons to enable them to reach higher levels, especially in writing.
- Improve the outdoor environment for children in the EYFS and ensure that they receive a full range of activities that cover all the areas of learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils start in Year 1 at levels that are somewhat below those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress as they move through Key Stages 1 and 2. They reach standards that are close to average in the national tests and assessments at the end of Year 2. Standards are also close to average in the national tests and assessments at the end of Year 6. However, standards are higher in reading than in writing: fewer pupils than in most schools reach the higher levels in writing. This is because teachers do not always demand enough of the more able pupils in terms of work and effort. The school is trying to raise standards in writing this year by providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in other subjects and by strengthening individual target setting procedures.

The school's good practice to ensure equal opportunity helps all pupils to make similarly satisfactory progress, regardless of background. Pupils who speak English as an additional language often make good progress in learning the language because of their enthusiasm and willingness to learn. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties make satisfactory progress. Occasionally they do not receive enough well-focused support to ensure they develop their learning at a good rate.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and attendance is above average. They have good relationships with one another and with staff and this strongly underpins the positive working ethos in lessons. They are keen and interested although are only just beginning to accept responsibility for their own

learning. Behaviour is good and girls and boys from different ethnic backgrounds work and play happily together. They know what to do if bullying occurs although they say this is rare. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy, talking knowledgeably about the importance of hygiene and a balanced diet. They are clear about school rules and sanctions, and appreciate the many opportunities for them to participate in community events, such as singing at the Royal Albert Hall. Monitors deliver registers to classrooms each morning, coming into school early to carry out their duties. Pupils manage their own budgets when organising class and school events, such as the Plant Fair and the Healthy Day in Year 4. They develop into confident, respectful young people, well prepared for the next phase of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers' good relationships with pupils result in positive attitudes to learning. Pupils confidently contribute their ideas and opinions and this in turn stimulates interest and enjoyment. Teachers are starting to provide opportunities for pupils to be more involved in their learning and to judge for themselves how well they are progressing. In a Year 6 English lesson, for example, the teacher explained clearly what pupils were going to learn and what they had to do to achieve success. This meant that the pupils focused well on the work, put in maximum effort and made rapid progress. They could judge themselves whether or not they had achieved the goals set by the teacher. In too many cases, however, the work set by teachers is not matched well enough to individual pupils' needs to enable them to take the next steps in their learning. This is often the case for the more able pupils, who find the work too easy and do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils benefit greatly from a wide variety of exciting and interesting activities. Year 3 pupils visited Hall Place, for example, to find out about life in Tudor times. Pupils thoroughly enjoy all the sporting activities outside school such as football, netball and athletics, at which they often excel at local level. They use computers well to help them conduct research into different subjects and to present their work. Planning for art draws very well upon pupils' cultural diversity. They study artists from Europe, Asia and Africa. Music has a high profile. School choirs and the large recorder club regularly participate in local music events. These provide good opportunities for pupils to display their musical skills and to develop their confidence and self-esteem. The curriculum has been reviewed recently to make it more relevant to pupils' needs and interests and to provide better opportunities for them to develop literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects. These initiatives have yet to make an impact on pupils' standards of achievement.

The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development well, particularly in the way it enables them to collaborate and co-operate in lessons. Transition to secondary school is well organised so that pupils transfer confidently at the end of Year 6.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides good pastoral care for pupils and this strongly underpins their enthusiasm for school. Despite the large size of the school, adults know the pupils and their needs well.

The deputy headteacher plays a vital role in this, ensuring that information is shared between staff so that pupils with particular problems or concerns are given the attention they need. Parents value this, one writing, 'The school has been very supportive to my children during a difficult period recently.' Safeguarding systems are secure. The school is well maintained, although senior staff and governors are aware of parental concerns about the cleanliness of the toilets for the younger children and are working hard to address this. Attendance has improved because of the robust procedures introduced over the last year. Procedures to identify and support pupils with learning difficulties are satisfactory.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Individual targets are helping pupils to understand what they have to do to succeed. However, teachers' marking in books is not always successful in providing useful advice to help pupils move on in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Staff report that, since the recent appointment of the headteacher, they are becoming much clearer about their roles and responsibilities. Middle managers, for example, have begun to meet regularly with their teams to review pupils' progress against their targets. They are not yet monitoring teaching and learning well enough, however, to ensure that initiatives are working. Nonetheless, there is a real buzz of enthusiasm amongst school staff, who are eager to improve their effectiveness. Monitoring procedures are developing, with senior leaders checking the quality of teaching regularly. However, there is not enough emphasis on checking pupils' learning during lessons, which leads to an inflated view of the quality of teaching generally. The targets set for end of year attainment are only moderately challenging, especially for the more able pupils.

The school has a good understanding of its community. It helps pupils to take an active role in local musical and sporting events as well as promoting an excellent understanding of one another's values and beliefs.

Many governors are new and are still developing their monitoring role. They are presently strengthening systems to share information more effectively so that they all have a clear view of the school's performance.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Achievement and standards

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

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

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	2
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?	3
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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

03 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of William Torbitt Primary School, Ilford, IG2 7SS

Thank you all very much for welcoming me and the other inspectors to your school recently. We really enjoyed watching you working in lessons and chatting with you in the dining hall and around the school. You gave us a great deal of information that was extremely useful in helping us to reach our conclusions.

You go to a satisfactory school, which is improving every day. Some things are good, such as the range of opportunities that teachers organise for you to make school interesting. It is good that you know how to keep healthy by choosing a sensible diet and taking enough exercise. We could see that you enjoy school because most of you attend regularly and punctually. This means you don't miss out on important parts of your education. Many of you carry out important jobs around the school, such as being school councillors and junior road safety officers. You also play an active role in the wider community, performing concerts and raising funds for charity.

The last thing I want to mention is the most important and that is YOU! We were really impressed with the way that you behave well and work hard in lessons. You show respect for each other's values and backgrounds. Well done!

We have asked the teachers to improve a few things to help you do even better. We think the work could be a bit harder for some of you, especially in writing. More of you should be reaching higher levels in writing. We have also asked the school to improve the outdoor facilities for the children in Nursery and Reception. The teachers need to make sure that they organise enough activities to help these children make progress in all the different areas of their learning. We also think that some of the teachers with special responsibilities should be more involved in checking what is going on in classrooms and sharing some of their special skills and knowledge.

I know you will want to help the teachers with these tasks and the best way you can do that is to keep working hard and behaving well. My best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mary Summers

Lead Inspector