

Trent Vale Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122541
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	380488
Inspection dates	27–28 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Marion Thompson

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Darrell Todd
Headteacher	Jackie Moss
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors saw 21 lessons and parts of lessons, observing the work of seven teachers. Informal meetings were held with a sample of parents and carers who accompanied their children to school. Meetings were held with four members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, went on a learning walk that focused on the curriculum, listened to pupils read and looked at documentation. This included the school improvement plan, assessment information, self-evaluation procedures, safeguarding documentation, curriculum planning and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed the results of the 44 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and took account of the views expressed in staff and pupil questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors examined the progress made in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in the development of language and communication skills.
- They explored the impact of teaching and the curriculum on the achievement of higher-attaining pupils, especially girls, in mathematics.
- They examined how effectively the school dealt with persistent absenteeism.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average-size school, where the vast majority of pupils are of White British origin. A number of other minority ethnic groups are represented by small numbers of pupils. Few pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. The percentage of boys in Key Stage 1 is above average, while the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with complex and higher needs is broadly average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has gained Gold National Healthy Schools and Green Flag Eco School status.

A breakfast and after-school club on the site, run by a private provider, is inspected separately.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides a good education for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach broadly average standards, representing good progress and achievement from their below expected skills on entry. The number of pupils who reach or slightly exceed the national average is growing. Pupils achieve well in reading, where standards have risen quickly over the recent past as a result of the well-considered actions taken by the school.

The headteacher, supported well by the senior team, provides a clear sense of direction, focused on accelerating the progress of all pupils. She has won the strong support of parents and carers, many of whom view themselves as working in partnership with the school. Planning is prioritised well and is based on an accurate analysis of the work of the school. Close monitoring of progress, good teaching and a lively curriculum engage pupils well in their learning. This has resulted in higher attainment and more rapid progress than in previous years and, coupled with effective self-evaluation, demonstrates that the school has good capacity to continue to improve.

Parents and carers speak warmly of the sensitive care, support and guidance provided by the school. This results in an inclusive approach which enables pupils to settle well and enjoy learning. Persistent absenteeism has declined and attendance has risen to broadly average. Most aspects of pupils' personal development are good. Despite their age, they take an interest in the world around them through the eco committee. They enjoy the opportunities provided for gardening.

There remain areas for further improvement. In the small minority of satisfactory lessons, progress is similarly satisfactory, especially for the most-able pupils in writing and for the most-able girls in mathematics. These lessons are characterised by some of the following features: a slower pace, with fewer opportunities for active involvement, activities which occasionally lack challenge, especially for the most able and questioning which is not always well matched to pupils' different needs. On rare occasions, teachers do not encourage quieter girls, who are sometimes reluctant to speak in groups where they are in a small minority, to take a full part in class or group discussion. Opportunities are occasionally missed to develop pupils' thinking and communication skills, through involving them in challenging discussion, especially when they are engaged in structured play.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By September 2012, improve the small minority of satisfactory teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - the pace of learning is brisk
 - there are plenty of opportunities for active involvement
 - work is consistently well planned to provide pupils, especially the more able in writing and mathematics, with a good level of challenge
 - questioning is well-matched to pupils' needs
 - girls are consistently encouraged to express their views
 - good use is made of opportunities to develop thinking and communication skills, through challenging discussion, especially during structured play.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy lessons where they are actively engaged in solving difficult problems. For example, a small group of more-able pupils in Year 1 and 2 tackled a problem involving 3-digit numbers with confidence and enthusiasm, explaining their thinking as they went along. Boys are keen to express their ideas in lessons, but occasionally find it difficult to listen to others. Girls, while making good progress, are occasionally more reluctant to volunteer their views.

Reading has improved significantly over the recent past, especially for boys. Pupils now make good progress, achieve well and read with enjoyment. The development of listening and speaking skills, while good overall, is more varied. In most sessions skilful questioning enables pupils to make good progress. In a small number of instances, especially during structured play, thinking and communication skills are not as well developed. Progress in mathematics and writing is good, especially at the expected level. Pupils' skills in number work develop well, but some pupils still find calculation difficult. From time to time the progress of the most-able pupils, especially girls in mathematics and boys and girls in writing, is slower.

Pupils with special educational needs, especially those with complex needs, make good progress, because provision is well matched to their individual needs. The behaviour of those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties is managed well and rarely impedes progress. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language, make the same progress as their peers.

Pupils attend school regularly. Their parents and carers rightly say that children feel safe and behave well. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are mutually respectful and know right from wrong. They reflect on what they hear in assembly. They develop good leadership skills and social confidence. Cultural development is not quite as strong as other areas in relation to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the diverse faiths and cultures of the UK. While improving due

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to recently formed links with another school, it is at the early stages.

Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and exercise and take part in a wide range of physical activities. They respond well to the school’s health promotion strategies, for example, healthy eating. Pupils are eager to take on responsibilities, such as assisting pupils new to the school or managing all aspects of a leavers’ production for the school community. Knowledge and understanding about different ways of life within the UK and in other countries is more limited. Good social skills prepare them well for later life. However, preparation for future economic well-being is satisfactory, since attendance and skills in reading, writing and number are average.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Warm relationships between teaching staff and pupils and skilful management of pupils’ behaviour ensure that pupils are eager to learn. Most lesson planning is based on a close knowledge of pupils’ previous learning. For example, in a skilfully taught Year 2 phonics group these more-able pupils made extremely rapid progress because demanding, open questioning provided a high but achievable level of challenge. Difficulties in learning for individuals were rapidly identified and addressed through more detailed questioning. The rapid pace of learning and active involvement ensured all pupils were fully engaged. In this lesson, girls were persistently encouraged to answer questions and express their ideas. Learning was embedded well. Without prompting, pupils applied what they had learnt to their writing later in

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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the day. Such features, and especially the level of pace and challenge, particularly for the most able, are not consistently present in the small minority of satisfactory sessions.

The curriculum provides pupils with a broad range of experiences and is enriched well, for example by visits to Twycross Zoo. Curriculum changes, like the provision of a good range of non-fiction books, have accelerated progress in reading, especially for boys. There is a good balance between teacher-led activities and structured play in whole morning literacy and numeracy lessons in Year 1-2 classes. This supports the transition from the early years well. However, from time to time opportunities to engage pupils of all abilities in challenging dialogue, which develops their thinking and communication skills, are missed. The curriculum is enhanced by partnerships with other agencies, for example the use of a shared technician in information and communications technology.

Parents and carers value the effective measures the school has in place for transition into school and on to junior school. These enable children to settle quickly and happily. Pupils who are in potentially vulnerable situations and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well through effective links with outside agencies. Procedures to ensure pupils are safe operate effectively. The school has worked closely with parents and carers to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent and this has now improved to broadly average.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school’s leadership raises expectations by setting challenging targets for all pupils and reviewing their progress towards them on a regular basis. Self-evaluation is accurate and is based on close monitoring of pupils’ progress. This has led to better achievement, for instance in reading. Effective staff development has improved teaching, for example by improving the teaching of reading. The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations and provides good support to the school. It holds the staff to account well when changes, for instance to staffing structure, are proposed. Monitoring is not as well developed but this is improving. Governors ensure that systems and policies to keep children safe operate well. Child protection systems operate well and good support is provided for pupils in potentially vulnerable situations to keep them safe and to help them overcome barriers to learning. For example links with other agencies are close and productive and the school works

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closely with families. Advice on how to keep safe is integrated well into the curriculum.

Parents and carers are highly supportive of all aspects of the school’s work. They are consulted regularly and influence some decisions, for example the timing of report evenings, but are not routinely involved in decision making. The school works well with other partners to promote pupils welfare and enhance the curriculum.

The promotion of equal opportunities is good. Discrimination is tackled strongly on the few occasions when it occurs. Despite some small variations, all groups of pupils make good progress so the promotion of equal opportunities is good. The needs of parents, carers and families are met well through, for example, the use of the school site for before- and after-school child-care by a private provider. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. The school is beginning to develop pupils’ understanding of different religions and an appreciation of diversity, but this is at the early stages, as are international links. As a result, pupils have a fairly limited understanding of communities across the country and in other areas of the world. For these reasons the promotion of community cohesion is no better than satisfactory overall.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Skills on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage are below those expected for children’s ages, especially in communication and language. Children of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress, narrowing the gap with the national average on entry to Key Stage 1, especially in reading, conversational and social skills and the

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understanding of phonics. Good progress is promoted well by an exciting curriculum, based on a careful assessment of children’s needs. The learning environment is welcoming and stimulating indoors and out and children enjoy role play, such as imitating the caretaker in sweeping up leaves. There is a good balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities, often beginning from the children themselves. For example, they bring boxes of objects from home to talk about. Despite some inconsistency, teaching is good overall and promotes children’s independence well. Occasionally opportunities are missed to engage children in conversation during free choice activities. Staff provide sensitive care for children, which helps them to feel secure and develop well. Partnerships with parents and carers are close and beneficial. Health and safety are promoted well, for example children enjoy healthy snacks. Those in Foundation Stage 1 have already learnt how to respect personal space when moving their ‘vehicles’ energetically and to share and take turns. Leadership and management are good and the close-knit team plan well for improvement.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A well below average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. They were extremely supportive of all aspects of the work of the school, especially in relation to their views on their overall satisfaction with the experience their child has at school, their children’s enjoyment of school and the quality of teaching at the school. The inspection team agrees with these opinions. No negative views were expressed about the work of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Trent Vale Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 178 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	91	4	9	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	77	9	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	34	77	9	20	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	70	11	25	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	86	5	11	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	36	82	8	18	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	84	6	14	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	29	66	13	30	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	32	73	10	23	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	73	11	25	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	61	17	39	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	35	80	9	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	41	93	3	7	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



29 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Trent Vale Infant School, Nottingham, NG9 1LP

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. Your views and those of your parents and carers helped us to make our judgements. Your school provides you with a good education and you make good progress. You get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teaching and the curriculum are good and staff take good care of you, helping you to settle well.

Across the school we were impressed with:

- the good progress you make, especially the recent improvements in reading
- your good behaviour, knowledge of how to stay safe and keep healthy, your enjoyment of learning, your willingness to take on responsibilities
- your good social skills, the way you show that you know right from wrong and your good attention in assemblies when you reflect on things
- the good teaching and lively curriculum the school provides for you, based on how well teachers know how you are doing
- the good care the school provides to make sure you are happy and ready to learn.

The headteacher, governing body and staff are working hard to make sure that the school continues to improve. You can help too, by continuing to practice your reading at home – it really is making a difference. We have asked the staff to make sure that you always make fast progress in writing and mathematics, especially those of you who find learning easier. We want them to do this by making certain that work is always challenging enough for you and that learning is active and brisk. We want the questions that staff ask to make you think and work hard. We have asked staff to encourage girls to take more part in class discussion when they feel a little shy. We have also asked staff to make sure that they talk to you and ask you questions that make you think, especially when you are having free-choice activities.

Yours sincerely

Marion Thompson
Lead Inspector

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