

Talbot First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124093
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380799
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Clive Lewis

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	44
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Reeves
Headteacher	Teresa Walters (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector who observed five lessons taught by two teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including a sample of pupils' books, teachers' planning documents, and tracking and assessment data. Questionnaires from 30 parents and carers, 14 pupils and four staff were analysed.

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

- Are the quality of provision and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage good enough?
- What impact are subject leaders for English and mathematics having on teaching and learning?
- What is the quality and rigour of the school's tracking and assessment systems?

Information about the school

Talbot First School is a very small school of its type. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes – a Reception and Year 1/2 class and a Year 2/3/4 class. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average and there are no pupils of minority ethnic heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is currently broadly average, although this varies considerably from year to year due to the very small year groups. Since the last inspection, the school has been through a period of prolonged turbulence in staffing and is now being led by a recently appointed acting headteacher. The school has gained the National Healthy Schools award, the Eco-Schools award and has Dyslexia Friendly status.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The acting headteacher, with the active support of the governing body and the strong support of the local authority, has rapidly gained a very clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Clear priorities have been set for improvement and teaching staff and the governing body are keen to work together to improve pupils' attainment and progress. Under the acting headteacher's skilled leadership, prompt action has been taken to strengthen the quality of teaching and electronic systems have been introduced for the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress. Staff are responding positively to the support and guidance they are receiving. However, subject coordinators have not developed a good overview of their subjects because they have not had the opportunity to observe the quality of teaching in their subject or analyse data in order to identify areas requiring improvement.

Although a majority expressed understandable concerns about the recent prolonged turbulence in staffing and uncertainties over leadership, parents and carers are supportive of most other aspects of the school. They particularly like the positive family atmosphere. One parent commented: 'We have two children who are extremely happy and enjoying their learning at Talbot First School.' Staff clearly want the best for each child and strive hard to achieve this goal through working closely with families and external agencies.

Pupils make satisfactory progress. Data on children's progress and attainment show that most children join the Reception class with levels of attainment that are above those typically found for their age. They get off to a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Although there are appropriate opportunities within the classroom for children to select activities for themselves, there is insufficient equipment or adult support to allow children to freely explore things with purpose and challenge in the outdoor area. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school, with the result that attainment, by the end of Year 2 is above average. By the end of Year 4, when pupils leave the school, attainment remains above what is usual for this age group. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and they understand the need for healthy lifestyles. Parents and carers say their children really enjoy coming to school and pupils agree enthusiastically. This is confirmed by their consistently high levels of attendance. A strong moral code is implicit within the school's ethos and reflected in pupils' good behaviour. Their behaviour, in turn, has a positive effect on

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the progress pupils make in lessons. In most instances, they work hard and conscientiously, both independently and cooperatively, without the need for constant adult intervention. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and the school is working hard to improve opportunities for pupils to further extend their cultural awareness.

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Although there are several examples of good teaching, in some lessons the pace slows and the most-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. The curriculum ensures that pupils receive a satisfactory variety of interesting activities and experiences through visits and visitors. The school is aware that the curriculum is not coordinated well enough for pupils to practise literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects. Pupils particularly enjoy the after-school activities and clubs, including sporting opportunities. The school has good arrangements for the care of all pupils, which contribute to their well-being and supports their learning effectively. Data from the school's assessment and tracking system of pupils' progress are beginning to be used proactively to ensure that any pupil falling behind is identified quickly and support promptly provided. The school's track record of outcomes and educational provision and its satisfactory understanding of how well it is doing and what needs to be done next indicate satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and progress across the school by:
 - improving the consistency and quality of teaching to the level of the best by planning lessons which are well paced and provide appropriate challenge for the range of age and ability groups within each class
 - ensuring that the tracking system to evaluate each pupil's progress based on their prior attainment is used rigorously in the planning of work
 - developing the work of subject coordinators by ensuring that they are supported in their areas of responsibility to take a more active role in improving pupils' attainment and progress
 - improving planning of activities, resources and regular child-centred access to the outdoor curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage in order to enhance children's independent learning skills
 - improving the curriculum by ensuring more opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills across the full range of subjects to reinforce their competence in using these skills.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Progress is occasionally good. For example, in a numeracy lesson designed to

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introduce the concept of data handling, the teacher encouraged very high levels of motivation by her energy and enthusiasm. She closely matched questions and tasks to pupils' abilities and made good use of information and communication technology to focus pupils' attention and ensure that all made good progress.

Pupils say they enjoy coming to school. They have a good understanding of what constitutes an unsafe situation and are confident that issues or concerns they raise will be dealt with promptly by the school. They behave considerately towards each other and respond quickly to any additional guidance from staff about how to conduct themselves. Pupils are interested in the school's health-promotion strategies and understand the main threats to their health and how these can be avoided. They value their school community and enthusiastically take on responsibility and, through the school council, are beginning to play a constructive role in the life of the school. Pupils' development of workplace skills is good, because their inter-personal skills are good and their competence in using literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills is above that of most pupils at this age. However, their high rates of attendance are not fully matched by more rapid progress in the development of academic competencies to help them at the next stage of education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

There are some strong features in the teaching provided, and a number of good lessons were observed. Nonetheless, teaching is not consistently effective enough to raise attainment. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. They ensure

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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classroom routines are made clear and regularly reinforced so that learning takes place in a well-structured environment in which all pupils can contribute to lessons. Learning intentions are made clear at the beginning of each lesson and, as a result, in most instances, pupils know precisely what it is that they are expected to do. Teachers are developing a better understanding of the progress the pupils in their care are making due to regular pupil-progress meetings where assessment and tracking data are analysed. Despite this, in a few lessons, work is not always sufficiently challenging for the more-able pupils. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is up to date and encouraging and, in the best cases, points out what steps pupils should take to improve further.

The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced, but pupils were seen to lack regular opportunities to use their literacy skills in history and geography activities. Pupils are provided with a satisfactory range of enrichment opportunities to develop new skills and interests, including French, which is taught to pupils from Years 1 to 4. There is a good range of well-attended, after-school clubs, which are much enjoyed by the pupils.

The school's good arrangements for the care of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, contribute to their development and well-being and support their learning well. When needed, a wide range of specialists and support agencies is called upon to support those pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Arrangements for pupils' transition to middle school at the end of Year 4 are good. The school's systems are particularly successful in ensuring pupils' rates of attendance are high and it works very closely with parents and carers on this issue.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher has quickly identified and is beginning to tackle areas requiring improvement. In a very short time she has introduced a number of initiatives designed to embed ambition and drive improvement. Under her leadership, provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved and the analysis and use of assessment and tracking data have been strengthened. Teachers are developing a better understanding of the levels of attainment and the progress pupils are expected to make over each half term. Subject leaders are keen to effect improvements although, as yet, they do not have a full understanding of provision as

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they have not had the opportunity to analyse data or undertake observations of teaching in their subjects.

Members of the governing body fulfil their statutory duties, are supportive and are very keen for the school to do well. Systems are secure to ensure that pupils and staff are safe. The governing body discharges its statutory duties, and is beginning to challenge the school to account for the attainment and progress of pupils. Although parents and carers have been very concerned about the recent disruption in staffing and significant changes in personnel and the effect on their children's progress, the school has a positive relationship, at a personal level, with most groups of parents and carers.

The school adopts recommended good practice for safeguarding pupils across all areas of its work. Quality assurance and risk assessment systems take due account of pupils' and parents and carers' views. The school identifies dangers, fosters a realistic understanding of risk and helps pupils to keep themselves safe. Consequently, pupils say that they feel very safe in school and the very large majority of parents and carers agree that the school keeps their children are safe.

The school has good links with the local community and organisations and is developing links with a school in Nepal. It realises that ties are underdeveloped with schools in different contexts in this country and is working to improve the situation.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision for the youngest children is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and their attainment

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when they begin in Year 1 is broadly average. They clearly enjoy school and, at the time of the inspection, had settled into the routines well. They play happily and independently together. They undertake a variety of whole-class and group activities and, in most cases, cooperate well when working with others. They delight in learning and seeing new things. Good relationships are being developed with parents and carers through daily contact before and after school. Pastoral care and welfare arrangements are effective. Consequently, children are safe, well cared for and aware of how to be healthy. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well-supported and are integrated into all activities. Although the Early Years Foundation Stage has a secure outdoor area directly accessible from the classroom, it is not currently being used to best advantage. The current arrangements do not provide children with sufficient opportunities to select activities for themselves, both indoors and outdoors. This hampers the development of their independent learning skills. The children do not get enough regular opportunities to freely explore their own interests and develop their independent learning skills across the six areas of learning. Adults have a sound knowledge of the learning, development and welfare requirements and guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage. They manage children's behaviour well. There are satisfactory systems for the long-term assessment and tracking of children's progress. Staff monitor and record children's progress on a day-to-day basis and this information is used satisfactorily to plan work to match children's needs and enhance their rates of progress.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A much higher proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire than in similar schools nationally. They universally consider the school encourages their children to adopt a healthy lifestyle, and most think their children enjoy coming to school, and that they are safe there. They consider that teaching is good, that the school takes account of their suggestions and declare themselves, overall, happy with their children's experience at the school. A small minority of parents feel that the school does not meet their children's particular needs and could do more to inform them of progress and help them to better support their children's learning. Many parents and carers expressed concerns about the negative effects of prolonged staff absences and uncertainties about leadership on their children's progress. The inspection endorses these concerns given the school's past performance. However, initiatives introduced by the current leadership with the strong support of the local authority have resolved most concerns. The school is now 'back on an even keel' and

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properly focused on improving progress and attainment.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Talbot First 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 inspector received 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 44 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	57	10	33	3	10	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	60	9	30	2	7	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	5	17	15	50	6	20	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	23	10	33	9	30	2	7
The teaching is good at this school	4	13	21	70	2	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	4	13	19	63	7	23	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	20	24	80	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)	7	23	13	43	5	17	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	20	16	53	8	27	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	10	17	57	6	20	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	13	21	70	5	17	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	1	3	4	13	14	47	10	33
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	7	23	19	63	1	3	3	10

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.



18 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Talbot First School, Uttoxeter, ST14 8QJ

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and for talking to me about what you do there. Talbot First is a satisfactory school. Those who lead your school do so satisfactorily and provide you with appropriate care and guidance. It was good to see that you know how important it is to eat healthily and take regular exercise. It is to your credit that most of you behave well and get on well with each other and with all the staff. You told me you really enjoy coming to school and you show this by your very high levels of attendance – well done for that.

However, I want your school to improve your attainment and progress by:

- making sure your teachers always make good use of their knowledge about what each of you can do when planning work to match your abilities, and in particular, make sure that work is not too easy
- ensuring opportunities for outdoor activities for Reception children are improved so that they become more confident in finding things out for themselves
- giving you more opportunities to use your writing and mathematics skills in other lessons – for example, in geography and history
- giving teachers in charge of subjects opportunities to observe others' lessons so that they can find ways of making teaching and learning even better.

You can all help by making sure you always know your targets and continue to work hard to reach them.

Once again, thank you for being so welcoming during my visit.

Yours sincerely

Clive Lewis
Lead Inspector

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