

Towngate Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108196
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	377713
Inspection dates	23–24 April 2012
Lead inspector	Declan McCarthy

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Kimbley
Headteacher	Naoimh Sampson
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2008
School address	Whitley Spring Road Ossett WF5 0QA
Telephone number	01924 302865
Fax number	01924 302866
Email address	headteacher@towngate.wakefield.sch.uk



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Introduction

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy
Pauline Pitman

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Parts of 12 lessons were observed taught by eight teachers. Meetings were held with a group of parents and carers, a group of pupils, two representatives of the governing body, staff and a local authority representative. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation relating to safeguarding, self-evaluation and monitoring, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's analysis of pupils' progress and pupils' work. Questionnaires returned by pupils, staff and 57 parents and carers were scrutinised.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school serving the local community. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards expected by the government. Onsite childcare provision, managed by a private provider consists of a breakfast and after-school club. This provision is subject to a separate inspection and a report about its quality can be found on the Ofsted website.

Since the last inspection, a new deputy headteacher has been appointed internally, the leadership team has been re-organised and a new Chair of the Governing Body is in post. The school has recently achieved a number of new awards, including the Open Futures Quality Mark for incorporating the basic skills of life into the curriculum, the Eco Bronze Award and the International Schools Award.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because teaching does not yet ensure outstanding learning and achievement.
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress in their learning. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. This good progress continues and by the end of Year 6, attainment in reading writing and mathematics is above average.
- Teaching is good overall although occasionally it is satisfactory. Teachers usually ensure their planning provides pupils with interesting and stimulating learning opportunities. On a few occasions, there are missed opportunities to promote the basic skills of literacy and numeracy within different subjects. Teaching and support for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs is good.
- Pupils receive clear explanations and good verbal feedback in lessons, so they know what they are expected to achieve. Pupils also receive positive comments when their books are marked but they are not always informed about how to improve their work.
- Behaviour and safety are good, which is supported by the views of parents and carers. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning; they are polite and courteous and maintain good relationships with others. Most pupils attend well, although a few pupils are persistently absent, which affects their progress.
- The school is led and managed well. The headteacher, senior and middle leaders provide clear direction to its work. The governing body ensures statutory requirements are met. However, members are continuing to develop their monitoring role because currently they do not have enough first-hand evidence to hold the school robustly to account. Self-evaluation is accurate and the performance management of teaching has led to sustained improvements in the use of assessment to match work to pupils' different abilities. The school demonstrates good capacity for improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on pupils' good achievement by:
 - ensuring that all teaching is at least good
 - consistently informing pupils of their next steps for learning, when teachers mark their work
 - ensuring consistency in developing pupil's skills of literacy and numeracy in different subjects
 - reducing the rate of unauthorised absence by 50% within one year for the few pupils who are persistently absent.
- Strengthen the contribution of the governing body in holding the school to account for its work by extending its monitoring role.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement throughout the school is good. Children's skills on entry to the nursery vary slightly from year to year from below expectations to broadly expected levels. They do well from their starting points and are currently reaching above average standards in communication, language and literacy, numeracy and aspects of their personal, social and emotional development, by the end of the Reception Year. Pupils continue to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2. Girls and boys do equally well. Parents and carers rightly believe that their children are making good progress.

In 2011, most pupils made good progress from starting points which were below national expectations when they joined the school. School data, pupils' work and lesson observations show that pupils are currently making good progress and that the attainment of the oldest pupils is above expectation. Throughout the school, pupils are doing particularly well in reading, where attainment is above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is as a result of the school's sharp focus on developing the teaching of reading and the effectiveness of its phonics (the sounds that letters make) programme. There are no significant differences in the progress of different groups of pupils across the curriculum. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress because work is closely matched to their learning needs and teaching assistants use well-chosen practical tasks to consolidate their learning.

Progress in lessons is usually good with only a few lessons seen where it was satisfactory. In the Nursery and Reception classes, children make good progress because the balance of well-chosen indoor and outdoor learning activities stimulates their curiosity and imagination. In a good mathematics lesson in Year 6, all pupils made good progress in understanding rotational symmetry and in identifying co-ordinates. A small group of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs made equally good progress because the teaching assistant provided a clear explanation of the mathematical language while practically demonstrating the concept. As a result, these pupils made good gains in understanding and were able to accurately identify the co-ordinates of a given point. In lessons, pupils make good progress because teachers consistently made connections between prior learning and new learning. In a few lessons, where pupils' made satisfactory progress, the pace of learning was too

slow or there were missed opportunities to develop the skills of literacy or numeracy within the subject.

Quality of teaching

Inspection findings support the views of parents and carers that teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and good planning ensures that learning tasks are matched to the different needs of pupils, with a variety of activities to stimulate interest and enjoyment. Good classroom management, care and support enabled children in the nursery to work cooperatively in developing their communication, literacy and numeracy skills. This extended to the Reception class where well-planned learning experiences within the theme of pirates and princesses, ensured all children were fully engaged in learning and applying their phonic skills in writing simple sentences. In a carefully planned Year 4 science lesson, all pupils were challenged in using their senses to assess temperature and then they were encouraged to think of more scientific ways of measuring and recording temperature before carrying out their investigations with a thermometer. Numeracy and literacy were promoted well as pupils recorded their results in standard measures and used scientific writing to record what they had done. Skilled use of questioning enables all pupils to extend their thinking. Good teaching support is provided for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs. Tasks are carefully broken down into smaller achievable steps and technical vocabulary is carefully explained, making firm links between the pupils' language and the technical language, while modelling the new concept with a practical demonstration.

Teachers generally promote communication, literacy and numeracy skills well in different subjects, such as the science, art and writing (SAW) project, although, in the few lessons where teaching is satisfactory, there are occasionally missed opportunities for doing so. The teaching of phonics and reading is good across the school because teachers have benefited from thorough training in phonics and guided reading. This has led to above average attainment and good achievement in reading across the school. Assessment information is used effectively to identify and plan one-to-one support programmes for those pupils falling behind in their learning so that they quickly catch up. Teachers always provided feedback in lessons on how well pupils are doing and encouraged pupils to assess their own learning. Regular homework is provided for all pupils to consolidate their learning. Pupils' books are regularly marked with encouraging comments and usually guidance on how to improve their learning. However, there are sometimes missed opportunities to inform pupils of the next steps for learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are enhanced through the very good relationship teachers maintain with pupils, good opportunities for group and paired work in lessons and good opportunities to reflect on world issues, such as Fair Trade.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour and safety are good throughout the school. Nearly all parents and carers believe rightly that behaviour is typically good, that the school keeps their children safe and there is no bullying. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils throughout the school behaved well and adopted safe practices in lessons and around school during the inspection. Pupils respond positively to teachers' high expectations for behaviour and show positive attitudes to learning. Minor disruption to learning rarely occurs and is managed effectively by teachers. Pupils are aware of different types of prejudice-based bullying and how to avoid risks. They agree that behaviour is good and say that bullying is rare. The school implements its anti-bullying policy effectively with any reported incidents recorded

and dealt with quickly. Pupils say they feel safe and can go to any member of staff if they need help. Pupils show respect for others and help one another. Most pupils attend regularly, although a few pupils are persistently absent, despite the best efforts of the school to promote good attendance, which affects their achievement. As a result, attendance is broadly average.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, with very good support from the deputy headteacher, has ensured strong team work among staff and the governing body in driving improvements. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in developing stronger assessment systems, which are highly accurate, detailed and used effectively in planning and developing well chosen whole-school priorities for improvement. The school rightly enjoys a strong reputation within the local authority as a model of good practice in assessment. Senior leaders' evaluation of teaching is accurate and outcomes are used to set clear performance management targets to raise achievement by developing further aspects of teaching and learning. As a result, performance management is used well to sustain good teaching in the school and eliminate any weaknesses. Where any weakness is identified, the school closely monitors this and supports improvement by providing relevant training and mentoring and setting clear targets for improvement. This has led to good improvement over time, for example, in the implementation of the newly revised curriculum and in the accuracy of teacher assessment and its use in matching tasks to the different learning needs of pupils. All groups of pupils receive equal opportunities. Gaps are narrowing between the attainment of different groups of pupils as a result of careful assessment tracking, the monitoring of pupils' progress and intensive support programmes for those requiring additional support.

Members of the governing body ensure that statutory requirements are met, particularly for safeguarding. All visitors and staff are thoroughly vetted and safeguarding training is up-to-date. High levels of supervision throughout the day ensure pupils' safety. Members of the governing body receive reports from the school and hold the school to account for these. Although they visit the school, to support its work, there are no records in minutes of the governing body meetings to show that they are reporting back to the governing body on their findings after these visits.

The newly revised skills-based curriculum meets the needs of its pupils well and provides a wide range of enrichment activities, particularly through well-established links with local schools, trips and residential visits, and themed weeks held in school. There is a strong emphasis on promoting reading, writing, mathematics and information and communication technology. The 'forensic Fridays' activities provide good opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in a range of activities, particularly in mathematics and science which enthuse their learning. 'Open Futures' is adding a vibrant dimension to the curriculum in building skills for life, for example, through the 'Philosophy for Children' and social and emotional literacy strands. The curriculum provides good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as pupils take an active part in their local community, with many good opportunities to develop their social skills, in lessons, through the school council and as playground leaders.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	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 2010 to 31 August 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.
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.
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.



25 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Towngate Primary School, Ossett, WF5 0QA

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed watching you in assembly, joining you for lunch and seeing you in your lessons and at play. You told us how much you enjoyed your lessons and school activities and we agree with you, your parents and carers that yours is a good school.

These are some of the best things we found out about your school.

- You make good progress in your learning and you are achieving well, particularly in reading.
- Most teaching is good and your teachers provide you with interesting tasks to do.
- Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and you stay safe.
- You are helpful and kind toward others and you show respect for adults and each other.
- Your school is led and managed well and all the staff want to make the school even better for you.

I have asked the school to make sure that all teaching is at least good and that teachers always help you to develop your literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. I have also asked your teachers to always show you how to improve your work when your books are marked and to improve the attendance of the few pupils who are regularly absent from school. You can help by asking your teachers to show you how to do even better and by encouraging each other to attend school regularly. I have asked members of the governing body to check for themselves on how well you are doing.

Thank you again, for telling me about your school and good luck with the future.

Yours sincerely

Declan McCarthy
Lead Inspector

