

Toner Avenue School

Johnston Avenue, Hebburn, Tyne and Wear, NE31 2LJ

Inspection dates 20–21 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although pupils' progress has significantly improved, this improvement has not been sustained long enough to enable all pupils in Years 5 and 6 to achieve well and too few pupils exceed the expected levels of progress.
- There remains too much teaching that requires improvement. Teachers do not always identify enough opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills and mathematical thinking in other subjects.
- The teaching of reading and writing is not yet as strong as it should be. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 2 where teachers are trying to overcome gaps in pupils' knowledge.

The school has the following strengths

- There have been rapid and significant improvements made since the school's previous inspection. As a result, the school has been removed from special measures ahead of the expected timescale.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher drive improvement very well. Together with the new middle leaders they have rapidly improved teaching and learning.
- Although standards overall are not yet high enough, the school has closed the gap between the standards reached by those pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding and others.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is at least good and at times it is outstanding.
- There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are very confident that adults in the school help them to learn and keep them safe.
- The interim executive board (IEB) is rigorous in holding the school's leaders to account and shares their vision for securing the best possible outcomes for pupils.
- Senior leaders, the IEB and the local authority are clear about what has to be done to improve the school further.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by 10 teachers, four of which were observed jointly with senior and middle leaders, and made a number of short visits to other lessons and assemblies.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, subject leaders for literacy and numeracy, the teacher responsible for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the special educational needs coordinator. They also had discussions with the Chair and two other members of the IEB and with two senior advisers from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including the school's view of its own performance, local authority reviews of performance and standards, monitoring records, information about pupils' attainment and progress, improvement planning, pupils' books, minutes of meetings of the IEB, records of behaviour and attendance, the school website, and records relating to safeguarding.
- Discussions were held with two groups of pupils about their experiences of school and the standards of behaviour. Inspectors spoke with other pupils and their parents at social times and at the beginning of school.
- Inspectors took note of the school's most recent survey of parent views. There were too few responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to consider.

Inspection team

David Brown, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Evans

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- Toner Avenue is an average-size primary school.
- The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The number of pupils joining and leaving the school partway through their education is lower than the national average.
- All pupils are educated at the school and none access alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school had its last section 5 inspection in November 2012 and was judged to require special measures. The school received two monitoring visits prior to this inspection. At the last monitoring inspection in June 2013, the school was judged to be making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching and learning are consistently good or better by:
 - sharing best practice within the school to ensure all teachers plan and deliver lessons that challenge pupils of all abilities and are closely matched to their needs and prior attainment
 - providing additional opportunities for pupils to practise their numeracy and literacy skills and to take every opportunity to write at length in other subjects
 - teaching a daily phonics lesson in every class which is fully matched to pupils' abilities
 - giving all pupils opportunities to regularly practise their reading and spelling.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children start in the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are below those typical for their age. The newly developed outdoor learning areas are used well to enhance children's enjoyment of learning and physical activity and they make good progress so by the time they enter Year 1, their knowledge and skills are closer to those expected for their age.
- Pupils' progress during Key Stage 1 is improving. More pupils are learning well and on track to reach higher standards. However, their achievement is not yet good, partly because some pupils are still catching up and learning key skills which should have been taught when they were younger. Reading, writing and mathematics are not yet taught consistently well in all classes.
- Last year's assessments of Year 1 pupils in phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) showed a significant improvement from the previous year so the proportion of pupils meeting the national expectations was above average. However, this improvement was based on substantial catch-up work. Further improvements to the teaching of reading throughout the school are still required so that the teaching of early reading skills is done well.
- The proportion of pupils making expected progress was above average in reading and in mathematics but below average in writing in the Key Stage 2 national tests in 2013. Current information on the achievement of all groups of pupils in Years 5 and 6 indicates that a higher proportion is on target to make or exceed expected progress in all areas this year. In particular, progress in mathematics for Year 6 pupils is accelerating rapidly. However, pupils' writing is less developed, a result of the weaker teaching they experienced when younger and shows how much ground these pupils need to make up.
- The school has been highly successful in removing the gap between the attainment of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, and that of other pupils. Additional support provided by teaching assistants helps individuals and small groups of pupils to catch up with other pupils in the school. Pupils with special educational needs make at least expected progress and some have made good progress because provision is tailored very well to their needs. The school is fully committed to ensuring every child has equality of opportunity.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Substantial efforts to improve teaching, through effective support and rigorous monitoring and performance management, have been successful in securing a higher proportion of good and at times outstanding teaching. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated and the quality of teaching across the school is now more consistent although too much still requires improvement.
- Teachers' assessment of how well pupils are doing continues to improve and is now more accurate. Marking is regular, gives effective guidance on how pupils can improve their work, and teachers provide opportunities at the start of lessons for pupils to reflect on previous learning and respond to marking and feedback. Pupils throughout the school now know their targets and what they have to do to make their work better.
- The best lessons are characterised by high expectations, effective questioning and the use of regular assessment of pupils' learning to adjust work and identify where pupils need additional help or more challenge. Where teaching requires improvement, at both key stages, teachers do not match work well enough to the needs of every pupil or use the best methods to challenge and help them learn well, including when teaching basic reading, writing and mathematics skills. At times, teachers leave too little time for productive learning in lessons. A review of writing books indicates that pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length, particularly in subjects such as history, geography and religious education.
- Teaching assistants are used well in lessons to support learning, particularly for lower-ability pupils and for those who have special educational needs. They are actively involved in planning

lessons and skilfully support pupils' learning by helping them to develop and use their literacy and numeracy skills and to contribute fully in class.

- Teaching makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly in supporting them in reflecting, working well together and listening attentively to others.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is consistently good and at times outstanding. Punctuality to school and to lessons is good and this, along with their good attendance, reflects well on pupils' enjoyment of school and their positive attitudes towards their learning. When a group of pupils was asked what the best thing about the school was, they said 'lessons' followed by 'the teachers'. Pupils behave well around the school, are respectful to adults and help and support each other.
- Pupils are very clear about the improvements that have occurred since the school was last inspected. They provided good examples to support their views that lessons are now more interesting and that behaviour has improved, and recognise that reasons for this include improvements in leadership and teaching. Pupils understand the school's high expectations and the sanctions that are fairly applied on the few occasions when individual pupils do not behave well. There is a calm and positive atmosphere throughout the school and relationships between all staff and pupils are strong. Pupils treat each other with respect and care. The newly formed school council is active in decision making and pupils have worked hard to support local and national charities.
- Pupils feel safe in school and every parent who completed the school's survey agreed that the school keeps their child safe. Pupils report that incidents of bullying and name-calling are infrequent and are confident that when bullying does occur it is dealt with well by staff. However, although pupils understood some of the risks associated with the use of the internet and mobile technologies they were less sure about other steps they could take to help keep themselves safe, for example, when using social networking sites.
- Effective procedures exist to monitor and follow up any attendance or punctuality issues and attendance continues to be at least in line with the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- Determined leadership by the headteacher, ably supported by a talented deputy headteacher, has led to rapid improvements in teaching, achievement and behaviour throughout the school. High expectations for pupils' attainment are now shared by all staff and there is a strong commitment to raising standards in the school further.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders and members of the IEB have robust information on which to both support and challenge the school. Clear progress is being made against the priorities detailed in the school's development plan.
- The new group of middle leaders has a very clear understanding of its roles, and those responsible for numeracy, literacy and the Early Years Foundation Stage are driving improvements in pupils' progress, although this is not yet rapid enough to overcome some historical gaps in pupils' learning.
- The school is systematically tracking the progress of all groups of pupils across the school. This is enabling leaders to more accurately identify when pupils are falling behind and to question the performance of individual pupils and groups and to provide timely and appropriate support.
- The school's curriculum provides a well-balanced range of subjects, topics, enrichment and after-school activities that pupils enjoy and makes a positive contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The newly introduced Primary School Sports funding from the government is being used to develop a partnership with a secondary school in the area in order to provide professional

development for staff and to offer opportunities for pupils to be involved in activities as varied as cheerleading and clog dancing as well as more conventional sports.

- Support from the local authority has been highly effective in removing the school from special measures. The local authority has monitored the progress of the school closely and has brokered support from partner schools. The authority has an accurate view of the strengths of the school and the work required to improve the school further.
- All statutory policies relating to the safeguarding of pupils are in place and are effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The IEB is highly supportive of the school and is effective in holding the school's leaders to account. Members are proud of the improvements that have taken place in the past year, although they are very aware that there is still more to be done. The IEB monitors the spending and impact of the pupil premium and is fully aware of staff performance, salaries and progression. It has listened and responded to the views of parents and the local community.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	108704
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	427729

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	257
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Mike Conlon
Headteacher	Kevin Burns
Date of previous school inspection	13 November 2012
Telephone number	0191 4202588
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