



# Toft Hill Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 114107  
**LEA** Durham  
**Inspection number** 279315  
**Inspection dates** 13 July 2006 to 14 July 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Andrew Scott

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

|                                    |                    |                           |                         |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>              | Primary            | <b>School address</b>     | Toft Hill               |
| <b>School category</b>             | Community          |                           | Bishop Auckland         |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>         | 4 to 11            |                           | County Durham, DL14 0JA |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>            | Mixed              | <b>Telephone number</b>   | 01388 832393            |
| <b>Number on roll</b>              | 167                | <b>Fax number</b>         | 01388 835200            |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>       | The governing body | <b>Chair of governors</b> | Mrs Alison Barron       |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b> | 1 September 2000   | <b>Headteacher</b>        | Mr R W Whitfield        |

|                             |   |                                    |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Age group</b><br>4 to 11 | <b>Inspection dates</b><br>13 July 2006 -<br>14 July 2006 | <b>Inspection number</b><br>279315 |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average school serves children from villages just outside Bishop Auckland. Socio-economic conditions are average, although the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than average. All pupils are from White British families, and pupil mobility is similar to the national picture. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has a strong focus on sport and has gained the Activemark award and the Football Association Charter Standard Development status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school and its parents that Toft Hill Primary is a good school that gives good value for money. It is a happy and purposeful place, where pupils feel at ease, enjoy their work and achieve well because teachers are encouraging and have high expectations. It is no surprise, therefore, that standards are usually higher than those attained in most schools. However, standards in science are not quite as high as in other subjects. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage (Reception class) because of effective teaching.

The pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Their behaviour is exemplary and they are very respectful towards one another and all adults. They develop well as individuals and adopt a healthy lifestyle, especially through participating in sport. The good level of care ensures that pupils feel safe and valued. The curriculum is good, although the limited resources for information and communication technology (ICT) restrict pupils' experiences and the development of their ICT skills.

The school is led well. The calm and effective leadership of the headteacher ensures that staff work together well to maintain a positive ethos and a strong focus on attaining high standards. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. Most areas for development are identified but not recorded in a way that makes it easy to keep a check on the implementation of the priorities for development. Also, action plans are not always carried out swiftly enough. Nevertheless, the school has made good progress since the last inspection and has good capacity to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve resources in ICT to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in the subject.
- Raise standards in science by strengthening pupils' skills in investigation.
- Ensure that all levels of management are more rigorous and dynamic in developing the school.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well. Children enter the Reception class with below average skills and abilities, but this varies from year to year. This year, for example, attainment on entry was just above average overall, but lower in personal and social development. Children in the Foundation Stage have made good progress this year and attainment is better than expected for children of this age. Virtually all are likely to reach their expected goals and many will exceed them.

By the end of Year 2, standards have been rising recently. Usually average, they were slightly above average last year and are higher again this year in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, standards have been significantly above average

in the past two years. This year, standards are not as high except in English. These overall standards represent good progress over time as this year group started school with below average skills. The school continues to set challenging targets and it is clear that standards are set to rise next year.

Standards in science, by the end of Years 2 and 6, are about the same as those found nationally and not as high as those in English and mathematics. This is because pupils are not confident enough in carrying out investigations.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils develop well into confident and mature young people. They are clearly happy at school and this is certainly reinforced by their consistently good attendance. The school successfully fosters a strong sense of respect and self-esteem, and adults and older pupils are very good role models. As a result, pupils' behaviour is outstanding. The culture of achievement and mutual care means that pupils enjoy their work and delight in each other's successes.

Children settle quickly into the Reception class, which is much appreciated by parents. The good emphasis placed on personal and social development in the Foundation Stage helps children to become familiar with school routines and to develop their basic skills well.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Older pupils take on duties responsibly and willingly, for example through work on the school council. All pupils show care and consideration for one another. Their cultural development is satisfactory but there is scope to broaden their understanding of the cultural diversity of Britain.

Pupils are adopting healthy lifestyles, especially through eager participation in sport. They also develop sensible attitudes in their choice of food, helped by the school's efforts to achieve the Healthy School Award.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils learn well throughout the school. Teachers assess pupils' progress well in order to set challenging work that caters for all abilities. Their expectations are high. For example, pupils in Year 6 are already exploring the intricacies of geometry. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities succeed because of skilful support from teachers and teaching assistants.

In every classroom, there is a healthy buzz of activity as pupils happily tackle the work that teachers set. Their concentration and resultant pace of work are good because teachers explain new concepts clearly and use questions adeptly to double check pupils' understanding. Teachers' confidence in their subjects rubs off on the pupils.

In the Reception class, learning is especially effective in independent activities because it is tightly linked to the main topic.

Sometimes teaching is satisfactory, especially when work does not have a clear enough focus. For example, in a discussion pupils did not have specific guidelines to help them improve their questioning skills appreciably. Teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunity to work independently, particularly in science. As a result, pupils do not have enough confidence to explore and develop their own ideas.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is well devised to meet the varying needs of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is a good emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills, with useful links between subjects to make learning more interesting. Teachers have evaluated that these links between subjects could be stronger, especially in promoting skills in ICT. As a result, the school plans to improve its resources for ICT.

Personal, social and health education is a strong feature, underpinning pupils' development as individuals. A good range of local visits and visitors supports this and enriches the curriculum. The school is very good at encouraging success in sport, through specialist coaching and inter-school competitions. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to participate in other activities, but few of these involve the youngest pupils. The school has identified this is an area for development, as is the development of a self-contained outside play area for Reception children.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

These are good. The school takes a pride in its care for pupils. Children new to the school are helped to learn the routines quickly. Formal procedures for safeguarding pupils are good. Adults get to know pupils very well, gain their trust and respond readily to any concerns. As a result, pupils say they feel safe and that someone is always on hand to help them if the need should arise.

Good communication between staff, outside agencies and parents ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. The school keeps a close eye on the academic progress of all pupils in order to give the right kind of support and challenge at the right time. However, whilst pupils have good targets to improve their work, they are not all clear about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The good leadership of the headteacher ensures that the school has a positive ethos in and out of the classroom. He appoints staff wisely, making sure that they have a

lot to offer and have a natural rapport with pupils. The school's priorities are mostly good and the steady focus on pupils' achievement has produced very good standards in recent years. In this, the headteacher has been well supported by the deputy headteacher and senior teachers.

The management of the school, including its self-evaluation, is satisfactory. All aspects of the school are regularly reviewed to identify areas for development, although these do not all appear in the plans for improvement. The governors, headteacher and subject leaders could do more to ensure that the pace of change is consistently swift enough, such as the improvement in the provision for ICT.

Governors are very supportive and know about the school through frequent visits, although these are not linked enough to current priorities. The school's good partnerships with other schools, sports groups and outside agencies benefit pupils' learning. Parents appreciate the school, especially the quality of teaching, the approachability of staff and the excellent behaviour of pupils.

The school has made good progress over recent years, maintained good standards and has improved; for example, the level of attendance and the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2. The staff are knowledgeable, amenable to change and, indeed, eager to do better. The school is, therefore, well placed to improve further.

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## Inspection judgements

|  |                       |              |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | <b>School Overall</b> | <b>16-19</b> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| <b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b> | 2   | NA |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?  | 2   | NA |
| The quality and standards in foundation stage  | 2   | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 3   | NA |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | Yes | NA |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection   | Yes | NA |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |    |
|--|---|----|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 2 | NA |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 2 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress                              | 2 | NA |

### Personal development and well-being

|   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 2 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 2 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners   | 1 | NA |
| The attendance of learners  | 2 | NA |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community                                    | 2 | NA |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 | NA |

### The quality of provision

|   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>          | 2 | NA |
| <b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b> | 2 | NA |
| <b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>   | 2 | NA |

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

|  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 2   | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2   | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review      | 3   | NA |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 2   | NA |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money  | 2   | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 3   | NA |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected  | Yes | NA |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>  |     |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily  | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise  | Yes |
| Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse   | Yes |
| Learners are educated about sexual health   | Yes |
| <b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>   |     |
| Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements                                   | Yes |
| Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place  | Yes |
| Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism                                | Yes |
| Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them   | Yes |
| <b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>  |     |
| Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships   | Yes |
| Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them                   | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community | Yes |
| <b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>                           |     |
| There is provision to promote learners' basic skills  | Yes |
| Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams                                  | Yes |
| Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form          | NA  |
| Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy               | NA  |

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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To the pupils of:

Toft Hill Primary School

Toft Hill

Bishop Auckland

County Durham

DL14 0JA

14 July 2006

Dear pupils

Mrs Dodd and I thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your school, and meeting you and your teachers. Thank you for all your comments and help around the school.

Like you, we believe that your school is a good school. Your good attendance shows how much you like coming to it. Although standards are not quite so high as usual this year, you do well in your work year after year, especially in your literacy and numeracy. Your teachers are very clear about what you have to learn in lessons and they make learning fun. As a result, you are keen to learn new things and eager to succeed, and you work hard. We particularly liked the way you get on with one another and all the adults. We thought your behaviour was outstanding.

The school takes good care of you and we know you feel safe and relaxed. All the sports and other activities help you to keep fit, and to develop your skills and teamwork. You have a good headteacher who makes sure that all your teachers and teaching assistants work well together to make a great atmosphere in the school and keep standards high.

We have asked the school to provide more resources for ICT, especially more computers, to help you improve your ICT skills. Your work in science would also benefit if you were given more chances to carry out more investigations for yourselves. We have also asked the school to think of different ways to make the school even better.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Lead Inspector