



Talbot Community First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124093
LEA Staffordshire
Inspection number 281628
Inspection dates 20 June 2006 to 20 June 2006
Reporting inspector Anthony Dobell AI

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

Type of school	First	School address	Church Lane
School category	Community		Kingstone
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		Uttoxeter, Staffordshire ST14 8QJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01889 500273
Number on roll	34	Fax number	01889 500527
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Dr A Johnson
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs S Wilson

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 9	20 June 2006 - 20 June 2006	281628

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Talbot is a very small first school serving the village of Kingstone, although some 30% of pupils come from outside the village because their parents choose this school. Children start in Reception with levels of understanding and learning skills which cover a wide range but are broadly average. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Talbot is an effective school giving good value for money. Its costs per pupil are high, but not unusually so for a school of this size. It judges its own effectiveness generally in line with inspection findings, but in some respects too modestly. Pupils achieve well throughout the school and reach above average standards by the time that they leave. The quality of learning and standards reached in the Reception Year are good. Teaching and learning are effective and pupils benefit from good planning which uses learning activities in different subjects to develop the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. There is an excellent commitment to equality of opportunity and all pupils are valued for what they can offer. Pupils benefit from good levels of care and their personal development is good. They and their parents are rightly proud of their school.

Leadership and management are good. There is effective teamwork between the headteacher and her colleagues to realise her vision for all pupils. There is good capacity to improve further. Although pupils make good progress overall, standards in writing are not as high as in reading and mathematics. While pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good, their appreciation of life in a culturally diverse society is insufficiently developed.

What the school should do to improve further

Take steps to raise standards in pupils' writing. Increase pupils' understanding of life in a culturally diverse society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well in the Reception Year and make good progress. Most exceed the levels expected for their age by the time that they move to Year 1. Pupils go on to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and, for the last five years, overall standards in reading, writing and mathematics in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have been significantly above average. However, standards in writing have generally been lower than in reading and mathematics. The school has begun to develop strategies to improve writing that are beginning to raise standards but are not yet effective enough. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 and 4 and their attainment is above expected levels when they leave the school. The school is particularly successful in helping pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress and most reach the standards expected in the national tests at the end of Year 2.

Standards in speaking and listening are above average. Pupils listen attentively and express themselves clearly and precisely. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved well since the last inspection and are now at the expected levels. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well because they are given challenging but realistic targets so that they can build successfully on their existing levels of understanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They learn the value of prayer and reflection in thoughtful assemblies and have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They develop good social skills and a good grasp of the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT which will be valuable in their future lives. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe both in school and outside. They have an impressive appreciation of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves and often initiate fundraising activities for different charities. They have a good awareness of western culture, but their appreciation of life in a culturally diverse society is less effectively developed.

In discussion with the inspector, pupils said that they enjoyed school because 'it's great'. They feel secure and do not see bullying as a concern. Their personal development is enhanced by opportunities for responsibility, for example, on the school council, as monitors or as house captains. Older pupils accept looking after younger ones as a normal part of their school lives. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to eat healthy food and to exercise regularly.

Pupils enjoy school so much that attendance rates are well above average. Behaviour is good in and out of class and relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good. Pupils about to leave the school are mature and confident. They are looking forward to their next school but are 'very sorry to leave this one'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is good. An analysis of pupils' previous work shows that learning activities are varied and build systematically on previous levels of understanding. However, at this stage, pupils' progress is only tracked systematically in writing. In class, pupils work with good levels of interest and concentration and are happy to discuss and explain their work. For example, in a good mathematics lesson in Years 3 and 4, pupils were solving 'real life' problems expressed in words. These problems presented them with a good level of challenge so that they had to think about the question carefully. They were able to discuss different ways of tackling the problems – 'would it be better to use an add or a times sum?' This careful thinking resulted in good progress. Similarly, in a good Years 1 and 2 English lesson, effective use was being made of ICT to help pupils to clarify their ideas about different authors. This fully engaged their attention so that they contributed well and achieved well.

Pupils' work is marked regularly with suggestions to help pupils to improve their work. Pupils say that they find marking helpful and that any problems will be discussed individually with the pupil. Pupils with specific difficulties are identified early and

given highly effective support from teachers and teaching assistants that helps them to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that is well matched to the needs of all pupils. Good links between subjects increase pupils' understanding and make their learning more meaningful. Pupils enjoy a wide range of visits and visitors, such as an African drummer, which give an extra reality to learning, but overall they are insufficiently prepared for life in a culturally diverse society. They enjoy learning French and having opportunities to use computers. They have good opportunities in music and parents express appreciation for the chance to learn an instrument. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their recent performance in Lichfield Cathedral when every pupil in Years 3 and 4 played the recorder. Three pupils had the opportunity to play by themselves. They also spoke enthusiastically about their ballroom dancing which culminated in a performance for parents. There is an impressive range of activities outside class for a small school, including close links with the church. Effective social and health education helps pupils to grow in maturity and confidence. Good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities means that they have full access to all that the school offers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Many parents express appreciation for the good levels of care and support which the school provides for their children. For example, they refer to the 'family atmosphere' in this small school in which all pupils are known and valued. Arrangements for child protection, first aid and safety procedures are secure and known to all adults. Good relationships mean that pupils are confident to approach adults with any problems.

The school's systems for assessing pupils' standards and tracking their progress have been mainly informal and have worked satisfactorily because all pupils are so well known. The school has now started to make these arrangements more systematic and pupils' progress in writing is now tracked formally and regularly. Plans are in place to extend this to reading and mathematics. The school recognises that this area is not yet rigorous enough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher is a frequent and reassuring presence around the school and her ready availability is appreciated by both pupils and parents. She is committed to the progress and well-being of all pupils and the school's provision for equality of opportunity is excellent. Parents write appreciatively of the good progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities because their learning is well managed.

In this small school, teachers are an effective team and there is an obvious unity of purpose in their successful efforts to enable all pupils to make good progress. Subjects are managed effectively. The school evaluates its performance satisfactorily but often is too modest in judging how effective it is, for example, with regard to the quality of teaching and learning.

Governors, many of whom are relatively new, are a valued part of the team but are not yet fully effective. They have a sound grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development, and manage the school's finances well. They are proud of the school's involvement with parents, of the success of the Talbot School Association, and of the school's involvement with the village community. One governor summarised: 'The school and the church are the heart of the village.'

Good leadership has enabled the school to improve well since its last inspection. Good teamwork gives it a good capacity 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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	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

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	1	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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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

Thank you for welcoming me into your school, being so polite and friendly, and talking to me about your learning and your lives in the school. I think that yours is a good school in many ways.

You are well cared for by adults and you feel confident and happy. You make good progress and reach good standards in your work. Your teachers try hard to make your learning interesting so that you concentrate well. You are all treated equally and valued for what you can do. Relationships are good, you behave well, support each other well and are rarely absent. You know that it is important to eat healthy food and to exercise regularly. Your headteacher and teachers lead and manage the school well and have plans to make it even better.

All these things mean that you develop into confident young people, happy to say what you think in class and in assemblies.

I have asked your school to do two things.

To help you to write better. To help you to understand how people from different cultures live.

I enjoyed my day in your school very much and wish you well for the future.