

Totley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107024
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	287683
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Joy Frost HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Martin Farmer
Headteacher	Mrs A Lant
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2001
School address	Sunnyvale Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S17 4FB
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Totle Primary School is situated in an area of above-average social and economic circumstances in the suburbs of Sheffield. All the pupils have attended some form of pre-school education. The school is smaller than average and has experienced a period of falling rolls. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to a free school meal is below the national average but those who have a learning difficulty and/or disability is slightly above. The proportion of minority ethnic pupils is low, but 5.2% of pupils are learning English as an additional language.

The headteacher was promoted to the post in January 2007 and there is an acting deputy headteacher. Four of the seven class teachers are on temporary contracts, including some subject leaders. The school has gained the following national awards: Activemark, Basic Skills Quality Mark 1 and 2, and Investors in People.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with Section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Overall effectiveness, although judged by the school to be good, is inadequate. There has been too little improvement since the last inspection leading to a decline in the quality of teaching and standards. The rate of progress pupils have made as they move through the school has declined and in Key Stage 2 it has been inadequate for a number of years. Leadership and management, including governance, are inadequate because actions to tackle the weaknesses in the school's performance have not been rigorous or fast enough. A period of unsettled staffing and a falling roll has led to the appointment of four temporary members of staff during this school year. The headteacher was appointed in January and she does not have a permanent leadership team. Although self-evaluation procedures have been in place, they were not accurately identifying the weaknesses in the school. The headteacher has correctly identified the areas of weakness, but the actions taken to tackle the underachievement have not had time to become embedded or make a full impact on achievement across the school.

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Children enter the school with skills and knowledge that are above those typical for their age and, through good teaching and provision, they make good progress. By the time they leave the Reception class, most are working well above the standards expected for their age. Satisfactory and some good teaching in Key Stage 1 maintain these high standards, which represents satisfactory progress for the pupils. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 show a declining trend. In Key Stage 2 pupils' progress has been inadequate for three years and standards have fallen to broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who attain the higher levels is not good enough in English and mathematics.

Too much teaching, particularly in Years 3 to 5, is inadequate: pupils thus make insufficient progress. Teachers have not used assessment information to plan effective lessons which match the needs of all children and there has been insufficient challenge for the more able pupils. Over time, teaching has not been effective enough to ensure that all pupils in Key Stage 2 make enough progress. As a result pupils do not do as well as they should and this has been the trend for a number of years. The headteacher has introduced tracking systems to check how well pupils are performing but these are in the early stages of development and are not yet used rigorously enough to ensure that they have the required impact. Marking and assessment procedures are also not used consistently across the school. This results in pupils not knowing the next steps in their learning. The assessment data collected on individual pupils is not used well enough to determine the support they need to improve.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils' attendance is well above the national average and they enjoy coming to school. Social and moral development is good but pupils' limited knowledge of multicultural Britain does not prepare them well enough for the future. Behaviour is good, resulting in a school which is mostly calm and orderly. Pupils are confident and articulate and they speak highly of the school and think they try hard in lessons. Pupils report that bullying is dealt with well and they feel safe and well cared for.

The schools' planning for improvement is not focused enough on the main issue of raising pupils' attainment. New procedures have recently been introduced to tackle this but most are still in their infancy. The current staffing situation is not enabling the leadership team to move forward quickly enough and training will have to be repeated when the staffing situation is resolved. Consequently, the school is unable to demonstrate at this stage that it is in a position to move forward at a fast enough pace and therefore its capacity to secure improvement is inadequate and it provides inadequate value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning to raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science in Key stage 2.
- Ensure that tracking and assessment procedures are rigorously and consistently applied by all staff so that underachievement is tackled earlier.
- Improve leadership and management at all levels in order to bring about the required improvements in standards and achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Most pupils enter the school with standards that are above the national average. By the end of the Foundation Stage many achieve well beyond the goals for learning expected of children of this age, reflecting good progress. They make the least improvements in writing, where outcomes are well below expectations. During Years 1 and 2 pupils make satisfactory progress, attaining standards in reading, writing and mathematics that, by the age of seven, are consistently above average. This rate of progress is not sustained throughout Years 3 to 6. Standards by the end of Year 6 have varied considerably since the last inspection, but have been broadly average. In 2006, the proportion of pupils attaining the target Level 4 was above average in English and science and average in mathematics. These outcomes should have been even higher, particularly in mathematics, given the above average attainment of these pupils at the end of Year 2. Results do not therefore reflect the significant number of pupils who made inadequate progress, especially the more able. This has been the case for the last three years. Consequently, achievement by the end of the key stage, and overall throughout the school, is inadequate. Pupils with a learning difficulty and/or disability achieve satisfactorily overall. The school has only just put into place comprehensive procedures to gather regular information on the progress that all pupils make. Consequently, teachers have not previously been in a position to tackle weaknesses quickly enough to improve the rates of pupils' learning, as they move through the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Provision for the pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, with some strong features. In the Foundation Stage children settle quickly and good provision enables them to learn appropriate social skills. By Year 6 pupils have grown into articulate and responsible young people, with a strong sense of moral justice. They enjoy all that the school has to offer and are encouraged to make positive contributions to school life, particularly through the work of the school council. Their views are taken seriously, as seen in recent surveys about the quality of lessons and the introduction of healthy meals. This has resulted in several changes to how the school is run:

for example, the introduction of 'worry bags', the purchase of additional sports equipment for use during playtimes and improvements carried out to the infant adventure playground. Pupils say that they feel 'adults help and care for them' and that the 'few instances of bullying get sorted out quickly'. The school's recently revised approach to managing pupils' behaviour has had a noticeably calming influence on pockets of previously unsatisfactory behaviour. Through the well-structured personal, social and health education programme, assemblies, daily lessons and extra-curricular activities, pupils are developing a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and emotional well-being. Attendance is above average and the school does much to celebrate and maintain this. The vast majority of pupils are prepared adequately for their future lives through their competent literacy and numeracy skills and their increasing access to and use of information and communication technology. Opportunities for pupils to develop culturally, to gain an understanding of world religions and to develop spiritual awareness are satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The quality of teaching and learning - based on teaching seen, tracking information, pupils' work and the progress pupils make - is unsatisfactory overall. Too many teachers are on temporary contracts and this, coupled with too much teaching that has been only satisfactory and some which was unsatisfactory, has led to a decline in standards as pupils move through the school. The good teaching in the Foundation Stage enables all children to have a good start to their education. However, there is not enough teaching that is consistently good or better to ensure that this good progress continues throughout the school. Progress accelerates in Year 6 where teaching is consistently good. However, this is not enough to raise standards to their previous high levels or ensure that pupils have made as much progress as they are capable of. Where teaching is good pupils make rapid progress because lessons are well planned, pupils know what they are going to learn and teaching assistants are well deployed to give support where it is most needed. However, in some lessons teachers' expectations are not high enough and assessment information is not used well enough to plan work which challenges all pupils, especially in mathematics and science. The procedures to set learning targets for individual pupils are in their infancy and are still to become embedded across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is satisfactory overall.

There is a satisfactory amount of extra-curricular activities which enrich the curriculum, along with good partnerships with other services which allow for creative development. Teachers from the local comprehensive school teach Spanish throughout the school and many pupils play a musical instrument. Since its last inspection the school has established a computer suite, which is used weekly by the pupils to develop basic skills. There is an annual residential visit for older pupils in Years 5 and 6, which enables them to develop the skills related to team-building. An appropriate range of enrichment activities is planned regularly, including sport, dance and drama. Visits to local theatre companies and museums are planned regularly.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care for children is satisfactory and arrangements for safeguarding are comprehensive. Children talk about the positive relationships that they enjoy with adults and of a number to whom they can turn with any worries or concerns. Links between home and school are well established and parents feel well informed about their children's needs. The majority of parents were very supportive of the school in the parents' questionnaires but some expressed concern about the amount of progress their children were making. Systems to support pupils' academic progress are not developed well enough and are not leading to effective learning and achievement. Pupils are not fully involved in assessing how well they are doing and in taking responsibility for checking whether they have met their targets. Not all pupils are aware of their individual targets, nor about what precisely they need to do to improve their work. The systems to support pupils with a learning difficulty and/or disability are satisfactory. The needs of gifted and talented pupils are not met consistently across all subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The leadership and management of the school are undergoing a period of change. They have not been able to appoint key personnel due to the rapid changes in staffing this year. Since her appointment in January the new headteacher has concentrated her efforts on appointing temporary staff to fill the many gaps created by staff movement, falling rolls, maternity leave and illness. She has appointed a permanent deputy headteacher who is to take up post in September. However, two other teaching posts are still to be filled and the present staffing situation is not robust enough to tackle the long legacy of underachievement in Key Stage 2. The temporary leadership team has begun to tackle the previous poor progress in Key Stage 2 by introducing an effective system to track progress, which is enabling staff to check more often how well pupils are doing. This is in its infancy and it is too soon to measure the impact of this on achievement. The headteacher has also begun to develop the management roles of subject leaders, an issue that arose when the school was last inspected.

While the governors are very supportive of the school and have fulfilled their role as a critical friend, they have not held the school to account for the inadequate progress which has been evident for a number of years. They do not have up-to-date information on which to formulate the questions in order to challenge the school. Consequently, leadership and management overall are inadequate and there has been inadequate progress on the issues raised in the last inspection.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dr Swallow and I wish to thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We came to check on how well you and your school are doing. You were keen to tell us what is good in your school and we agree with most of what you told us. The atmosphere in your school is good and we think that you get on well together and try hard in your lessons. Unfortunately we think that your teachers could be doing more to make sure you achieve as well as you can. We think you could be doing even better than you are and so we have made your school subject to 'special measures'. This means that your school will receive extra help and inspectors will return to check on the progress that is being made.

We found that your school needs to make the following improvements.

- Make sure that you have permanent teachers in your classrooms and that Mrs Lant has more support to help her manage the school.
- Make sure that your teachers challenge you more in lessons and check up on how you are doing more regularly.
- Make sure that you make as much progress as you can as you move through the school.

We have also asked the governors to check more rigorously that the school is carrying out these changes.

You can help your school by continuing to behave as well as you do and keep up your impressive attendance record. Dr Swallow and I enjoyed talking to you all and we think that your work on the school council is really making a difference to your school. You can also help your school improve quicker by knowing your learning targets and continuing to work hard in class. I wish you all the very best for the future.