



# Talbot Combined School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 113700  
**Local Authority** Poole  
**Inspection number** 289696  
**Inspection dates** 6–7 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** David Curtis

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed primary	<b>School address</b>	Talbot Drive
<b>School category</b>	Community		Wallisdown
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–12		Poole BH12 5ED
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01202 513981
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	513	<b>Fax number</b>	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Gordon Barber
		<b>Headteacher</b>	James Elliott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 April 2001		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a much larger than average combined first and middle school. Although pupils normally transfer to secondary education at the end of Year 7, a high proportion transfer to grammar and secondary schools in the adjacent Borough of Bournemouth at the end of Year 6. The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is high. Currently, 32% of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) and this is well above average. Most pupils are of White British origin. A small proportion come from minority ethnic groups. No pupils are at the early stages of learning English. Attainment on entry into Reception is below the levels expected.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is an improving school. It is a satisfactory school, with a number of good features. Good leadership and management have had a significant impact on much-improved standards and achievement in Years 3 to 7. In 2006, the school achieved its best ever results in the National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6. Linked to these successful results is much-improved tracking of pupils' progress. As a result, underachievement is identified and acted on much sooner than was previously the case. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory. There has been a significant fall in the number of pupils excluded. A major feature of the success in school improvement has been the very effective way the school has worked with the local authority, including the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP), and partner institutions. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

Achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 7, standards meet expectations for 12-year-olds. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in their learning because provision and teaching are good. Significant improvements have been made in the last two years. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2 as a result of good teaching. Two years ago, achievement in Years 3 to 7 was inadequate in English, mathematics and science. It is now good in English and satisfactory in mathematics and science. The teaching and learning are now satisfactory, with an increasing number of good features. Inconsistencies remain in teachers' planning, particularly in not meeting the learning needs of all pupils in lessons. Marking does not regularly tell pupils how they can improve their work. Pupils are not always given explicit guidance as to what they should achieve in lessons.

Good care, guidance and support have a strong impact on pupils' good personal development and well-being. The school is very effective in supporting vulnerable pupils, including those with LDD, through its very strong links with outside agencies and partner schools. Most pupils enjoy school. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Relationships are good. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of keeping fit. Pupils take on important responsibilities in the school, including being peer mediators in Year 7. Their understanding of life in multi-cultural Britain is not as good as it should be. Pupils' preparation for transfer to secondary education and their future life in society is good.

The curriculum is satisfactory. There are strengths in extra-curricular provision, including sports and music. Pupils from the school do particularly well in sports. The school's brass band gave a very good performance in an assembly during the inspection.

The majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire support the school. In discussion, pupils in Year 7 said that they think very highly of their friends and teachers. As one said, 'I really enjoy one-to-one discussions with teachers, so I can really talk about my work'. Pupils across the school value the help and guidance offered by the pastoral care worker.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teachers' planning to ensure that the learning needs of all pupils are met so that they achieve as well as they should, especially in Year 3 to Year 7.
- Improve the consistency of teachers' marking in giving pupils very clear guidance as to what they should achieve in individual lessons.
- Improve pupils' awareness of life in multi-cultural Britain.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

In the Foundation Stage, children's progress has improved over the last two years and is now good. By the time they start in Year 1, standards are in line with those expected, except in communication, language and literacy skills, where they are slightly below.

Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good. Pupils reach broadly average standards in reading and writing, and above-average standards in mathematics. Achievement in Years 3 to 7 is now satisfactory, having been inadequate two years ago. It is good in English and this is reflected in pupils achieving above-average standards at the end of Year 7. In mathematics and science, achievement is now satisfactory and standards are broadly average. The school recognises that it still has work to do in order to ensure that pupils in Years 3 to 7 make expected levels of progress based on their achievement in Year 2. Much-improved tracking of pupils' progress means the school is well placed to achieve this.

Progress of pupils with LDD is good in Reception and in Year 1 and Year 2. It is satisfactory in Years 3 to 7.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. In their cultural development, they have insufficient understanding of life in a multi-cultural society. Through assemblies and lessons, pupils reflect sensitively on issues affecting themselves and each other. Pupils work together successfully in lessons, for example, in Year 6 when carrying out a science investigation on filtration. In this lesson, and in one in Year 7, both in the laboratory, pupils paid great attention to health and safety issues.

Pupils enjoy being physically active. In addition to weekly swimming and ample physical education lessons, they are very active at breaktimes with running, skipping and ball games. Many participate in sports clubs, often achieving well in inter-school competitions. However, whilst pupils understand healthy lifestyles, they do not always put their knowledge into practice.

Pupils contribute well to helping their school, for example, through being buddies, prefects, school councillors and peer mediators. They make a good contribution to the

community through musical performances and charity fund raising, such as for 'Red Nose Day' and 'Operation Christmas Child'.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

In the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well organised. Teaching assistants and other adults are very well deployed to support children in group or individual activities. In Years 3 to 7, teachers have good relationships with pupils, including those with LDD. Lesson introductions are good demonstrating that teachers' subject knowledge is strong. Good explanations and demonstrations, including the use of interactive whiteboards, gain pupils' interest. Discussions are used successfully to assess pupils' prior learning. Pupils are given a clear 'learning intention' for most lessons. Marking usually tells pupils whether they have met the 'learning intention' or not. However, marking does not consistently tell pupils how to improve their work. Teachers do not regularly give pupils clear guidance as to the amount of work they should do in lessons.

Much stronger analysis of results of statutory and non-statutory tests feeds into planning for each year group. However, within individual lessons, there is inconsistent focus on planning to meet the different learning needs of all pupils, including when they are taught in ability groups. As a result, pupils do not always make the progress they should.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

In the Foundation Stage, the curriculum is well planned. Challenging activities are very practical so children are motivated to stay focused and try hard. They are well matched to the stages at which different children are working. In Years 1 to 7, all statutory requirements are met, including the teaching of a foreign language in Year 7. Pupils in Year 7 benefit from specialist teaching and specialist classrooms, including a science lab and a technology room. Although much improved, the curriculum is still not consistently meeting the needs of all pupils in Years 3 to 6.

The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities which are enjoyed by pupils. Clubs in sports and music are particularly popular. The school enriches the curriculum through a good range of educational visits and the use of visitors. Currently, it does not give sufficient emphasis to providing opportunities for pupils to develop their multi-cultural awareness.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Pastoral care and support are very good. Staff know pupils exceptionally well and work extremely hard to support those who are vulnerable, including those with LDD. Pupils and parents really value the pastoral care worker to whom pupils readily turn if they have worries or concerns. Having a 'listening ear' is a great boost to pupils, who feel there is someone in school to whom they can turn. The school complies fully with all requirements to safeguard children. Its work with other agencies and partner schools is impressive in meeting the needs of pupils, especially those who are vulnerable.

Academic guidance and support is improving. Pupils now have targets in English and mathematics which contribute to improving achievement. However, these targets are not individualised to help pupils know the levels at which they are working.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

There is a strong commitment to providing a good education for all pupils, and in particular to ensure that vulnerable and minority groups of pupils, including those with LDD, receive the support they need.

The headteacher and his deputy lead the school well. Self-evaluation is good and clearly identifies areas for improvement. Over the last two years, the school has successfully addressed major weaknesses in pupils' personal and academic development. As a result, behaviour is now good and pupils' progress is satisfactory and improving. Parents recognise this and one wrote, 'I cannot praise the headteacher enough for his enthusiastic leadership'. The school is continuing to work hard in addressing remaining areas for development, and progress in these areas is clearly evident.

Monitoring of pupils' progress is effective in helping the school to identify weaker areas and addressing them. However, more emphasis needs to be given to checking the impact on standards and achievement of subject leaders' action plans.

Governors are knowledgeable and supportive. They are effectively involved in development planning and monitoring the school's work, helped by the good information provided by the school. Their work would be enhanced by more opportunities to check on the quality of pupils' learning.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### 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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

Thank you so much for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. In particular, we need to thank the school council and those of you in Year 6 and Year 7 who gave up a significant part of your lunchtime in order to talk with us about your school. At the moment we think that your school is satisfactory, with some good features. Importantly, we can see that it is improving all the time. There were a number of things that we thought were particularly good:

- your work in English is good and the standards you reach by the time you leave are better than in many schools
- you behave well in lessons and we thought that most of you get on really well with each other; we noticed how pleased and proud the peer mediators are in their work around the school
- you like having 'learning intentions' at the start of lessons and being told when you have met them
- the number of extra-curricular activities provided for you is very good
- many of you value having the pastoral care worker as someone to whom you can talk if you have worries or problems
- those people who lead your school are working very hard to make it even better for you all.

We have suggested to your headteacher and teachers a few things which we think would help them in improving your school:

- so that you can make good progress in every lesson we think that teachers need to plan lessons more carefully so that the work you are given is not too easy or too hard
- in marking your work, teachers need to tell you how you can improve your work; they need to make sure they tell you how much work you should do in lessons
- teachers need to help you develop a better understanding of other cultures and beliefs in Britain.