



Townlands Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 120191
Local Authority Leicestershire
Inspection number 291663
Inspection dates 10–11 January 2007
Reporting inspector Helen Barter

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Meadow Court Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Earl Shilton
Age range of pupils	4–11		Leicester LE9 7FF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01455 843859
Number on roll (school)	222	Fax number	01455 840126
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Jennifer Orton
		Headteacher	Linda Dawson
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2002		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 10–11 January 2007	Inspection number 291663
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in a large village near Hinckley. Most pupils are of White British heritage. There are a few individual pupils from other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is average although some years have more than expected numbers. The number of pupils with statements of special educational need is above average. Children's attainment on entry to Reception is below average.

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. The quality of education it currently provides is satisfactory but a number of good features in its work are having a positive impact in raising standards. The school monitors its performance well and knows what it needs to do if pupils' achievement is to improve even further. The impact of good leadership and management and a stable staff team mean that the school is now in a good position to bring this about. Strategies have been successful in raising standards in key areas and in sustaining improvement. These strategies are now being more widely applied to good effect.

Good provision in Reception helps children to make a good start to school. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6 and reach broadly average standards by the time they leave. Pupils' reading and writing skills are improving well. Those with learning difficulties make particularly good progress in this respect. Although standards in mathematics are rising, staff do not yet have high enough expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving in the subject and pupils of all abilities do not always meet their targets as a result.

The provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is good, particularly with regard to pupils' safety and personal development. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving well as a result of careful monitoring and better understanding of how well pupils are making progress. Teachers have a clear picture of each pupil's day-to-day progress, and support and guidance for individuals, particularly for those with learning difficulties and disabilities, is good. Teachers plan their lessons meticulously to meet the needs of all pupils in the mixed-age classes. However, they do not always ensure that pupils, particularly the more capable, learn at a sufficient pace which would help them to make even faster progress.

Pupils' personal development is good and they leave the school as sensible young people who are well prepared for the next steps in their education. Pupils attend school regularly and most do their best, enjoying the many interesting activities that teachers provide. A good curriculum, with a wide variety of additional activities, fosters in pupils a keenness to learn. Pupils trust their teachers and feel happy and secure at school. Nearly all behave well and those who find this more difficult receive good individual care and support. Relationships throughout are very good and pupils are kind and caring towards others by helping around the school. Opportunities, such as being members of the school council, successfully encourage pupils to voice their views, take decisions and help others in school and the community.

The large proportion of parents who returned the questionnaire showed overwhelming support for the school and only a few criticisms about some pupils' behaviour were made. Parents describe the school as, 'Great, with lovely staff' and as, 'Having a good sense of community with a lovely atmosphere.' They praised the staff's 'dedication, effort and enthusiasm.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise expectations across the school of what pupils can achieve in mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching by increasing the pace of learning for all pupils, and especially the more able.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children start in Reception with skills and abilities that are lower than expected for their age. They make good progress and most reach the goals expected of them by the time they enter Year 1. However, a significant minority continues to need additional support for their emotional and social needs and help to improve their language and literacy skills.

Pupils make satisfactory progress from Years 1 to 6 and reach standards that are broadly average by the time they leave. Standards in English and science at the end of Years 2 and 6 were better in 2006 than in the previous year and this improvement has been sustained amongst current pupils. There have been significant improvements in reading and writing and in enquiry skills in science. Strategies which proved to be effective in raising standards in these subjects are now being applied to mathematics and standards are beginning to rise there too. In all years, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities develop their literacy skills well because their needs are well met. More capable pupils achieve satisfactorily but have the potential to be stretched further so that they reach higher standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have good moral values. They show good understanding of others' needs and are fair and caring. Pupils behave well and expect others to do so. They say that they feel very safe and free from bullying. They recognise that some pupils need help to improve their behaviour and are very understanding when, as they say, 'They go a bit too far.' Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. The school has worked hard to improve attendance and it is now above average.

Pupils know that it is important to eat healthily and many enjoy their school dinners. Members of the School Council are making good plans to reward others for bringing healthy food in their lunchboxes. Pupils enjoy helping and are keen to point out ways that they help in school and in the village. They raise money for another pupil and for worldwide charities and have good links with the local Age Concern group. Pupils are developing into mature and sensible young people, and with their improving academic skills are well equipped for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers are successfully introducing ways to improve the quality of pupils' learning and increase their achievement. Checking of the effectiveness of teaching and learning by senior managers and subject leaders has contributed well to these improvements. Teachers are becoming increasingly skilled at using regular assessments of pupils' work to track their progress and set targets for their future learning. Pupils respond well to having specific targets and having work marked in a way that tells them how they can improve. They are becoming confident and skilled at knowing how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve.

Teachers plan work that is matched carefully to the needs of pupils of different abilities. They plan extension activities to further challenge the more able pupils but do not always ensure there is enough time for the activities to be introduced. All pupils are expected to work at the same pace when many could often work more quickly or spend less time at tasks that they have mastered. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes not high enough and this is particularly the case in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of the two age groups in each class. Good links made between subjects make learning interesting and enjoyable for pupils. Pupils' learning is extended well through good use of information and communication technology (ICT) in many subjects. Provision for literacy is good and improving due to strong subject leadership. Past weaknesses in provision for numeracy, which have contributed to pupils' underachievement, are being rectified through better planning, and standards are beginning to rise. Informative mathematical displays help to raise the status of the subject in pupils' eyes.

Children experience a good curriculum in the Foundation Stage through a wide range of interesting activities which encourage them to learn and explore for themselves. Strong features of provision for Years 1 to 6 are the use of educational visits, including residential experiences, and a full programme of lunchtime and after school activities. These successfully extend pupils' academic learning, sporting and artistic skills and their personal and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

A high standard of pastoral care is evident throughout the school and procedures for ensuring pupils' safety and well-being are rigorous. The care and commitment shown to pupils by all adults, including administrators and those responsible for the good

quality Breakfast Club, are reflected in the way that pupils themselves care for one another's welfare.

The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. Knowledgeable teaching assistants have very good relationships with pupils. This helps pupils, particularly those with emotional or behavioural difficulties, to make good progress in their personal and academic development. The school works closely with outside agencies to make sure children and their families get the right type of support. Educational guidance is thorough and effective, although more so in literacy than in mathematics. All pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work, thanks to constructive marking and clear targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and her deputy are a strong and effective team who are very well supported by staff, pupils and parents. All staff with leadership roles play a good role in monitoring the school's performance and are dedicated to its improvement. Teaching is monitored well by senior managers and subject leaders. This is helping staff to improve their knowledge of how well children are learning, and this in turn is resulting in improving practice. Through good self-evaluation procedures, the school has introduced effective strategies which are beginning to raise standards. This has been particularly the case in literacy where strong leadership has resulted in pupils' much improved reading and writing skills. Strategies to raise standards in mathematics are producing improvement but at a slower rate because there has not yet been enough time to see the full impact of the new leadership in mathematics in helping pupils to meet their targets. Procedures to track pupils' progress have been improved to ensure that those who need additional help are identified early, although they are not yet quite as effective in making sure that more capable pupils always reach their potential.

Governance is good. Through regular monitoring, visits and review of pupils' performance through subject leaders' reports, governors are actively involved in the life of the school. Money is spent wisely to provide additional staff to help small groups of pupils and valuable resources such as those for ICT to improve teaching and learning.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2
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 for making Mr Lee and myself welcome when we came to visit your school. You were very polite and friendly and we enjoyed talking with you all about your work. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education and, because it is already doing lots of good things, we are confident that it will not be long before your school is really good. These are some of the things we found out:

- All of you make just the right amount of progress that you should from the time that you start school to when you leave at the end of Year 6.
- You are growing up to be sensible and mature young people. You enjoy coming to school and know how to behave well. Your attendance is much better than it used to be, so well done!
- Teaching is satisfactory. You are taught all of the right things and teachers work hard to make learning interesting for you. You told us that teachers really help you as much as they can to improve your work through giving you targets and helping you to understand what would make your work better.
- Your school is a very caring place and you are confident that teachers will always help you to sort out your worries. You look after each other well too and it was good to hear you say that, 'Everyone is kind to each other and not selfish'.
- Leaders and managers do their jobs well and are working hard to help you. They have done lots of checking on how well you are learning and know exactly what needs to be done next.

To help your school even more, we have asked them to do these two things:

- Help you to do even better in mathematics by expecting you all to do work that makes you have to think really hard.
- Help all of you, especially those of you who find work quite easy, to be more speedy learners so that you reach even higher levels than you do now.

You can help your teachers by working as hard as you can and carrying on using your 'traffic lights' to let them know how easy or difficult you have found the work.