



Toftwood Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120987
Local Authority NORFOLK
Inspection number 291939
Inspection dates 10–11 October 2006
Reporting inspector Godfrey Bancroft

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	38 Westfield Road
School category	Community		Dereham
Age range of pupils	7–11		Norfolk NR19 1JB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01362 694919
Number on roll (school)	383	Fax number	01362 694919
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Jim Hyland
		Headteacher	Miss Alex Gelling
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of three Additional Inspectors over two days.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized junior school. The socio-economic circumstances of the community are broadly average. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language are lower than usually found. The percentage of pupils who have additional learning needs or disabilities is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Toftwood Junior is a good school in which pupils enjoy their learning. Pupils and adults feel valued and able to succeed. The response of parents and carers to the inspection questionnaire shows that they feel the school provides their children with a very good education. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds, including those who have additional learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well. There has been a marked improvement in standards in the last year, to the extent that by the end of Year 6 standards are above average. This improvement is based on the strong and effective leadership of the headteacher. Shortly after starting at the school she identified areas of weakness in teaching and learning and promptly introduced a series of measures that have brought about significant improvements. Teaching and learning are now good. Work in lessons is usually matched well to the full range of abilities in each class. Pupils say they find lessons exciting and challenging, consequently they behave well and work hard. Teachers assess pupils' progress thoroughly and accurately. Even so, some teachers do not do enough to involve pupils in evaluating how well they are progressing or enable pupils to identify for themselves what they need to do to improve further. The school does a good job of equipping pupils with the basic skills of literacy and numeracy that will serve them well in later life. It also makes effective provision for their personal development and well-being. Pupils are fully aware of how to keep themselves safe. The headteacher and governors have ensured that arrangements for pupils' care, guidance and support are good and that all necessary measures are in place to ensure that pupils are safe. Pupils also understand the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. The curriculum provides pupils with a satisfactory range of learning opportunities. However, arrangements to link common strands of pupils' learning across different subjects are underdeveloped and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning is not used to its fullest extent. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and the areas for improvement identified at that time have been addressed. Under the leadership of the current headteacher, who is supported well by the school's senior management team, the school's capacity for continued improvement is good. The governing body do a good job. They are supportive of and knowledgeable about the school. Governors manage the available resources to support learning well. Consequently, the school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Involve pupils fully in evaluating how well they are making progress and in identifying for themselves what they need to do to improve further.
- Make full use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in all subjects.
- Ensure that, where it is practical to do so, pupils' attention is drawn to ways in which their learning in different subjects is linked so as to aid their understanding.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' attainment on entry to school is average. Pupils make good progress. Consequently, by the time they leave standards in English and mathematics are typically above average. In the three years leading up to 2004 standards were above average and pupils were clearly achieving well. In 2004 and 2005, standards were broadly average and pupils were clearly not achieving as well as they might. The school recognised this situation and introduced measures that have proved to be effective in raising standards. An analysis of the 2006 national test results show that standards in English were average and standards in mathematics and science were above average. This means that given their starting point, pupils in Year 6 during 2006 made good progress. The picture for 2007 indicates continued improvement, with pupils clearly on track to attain above average standards. Over the last year standards in English have improved significantly because of the attention given to improving the quality of pupils' writing. The school sets realistic and challenging targets for pupils' attainment which it is usually successful in reaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils clearly enjoy their learning and have very positive attitudes to school. The school council receives and acts on pupils' views. A request by pupils for a better range of play equipment has been met. Pupils pursue healthy lifestyles because physical activity is promoted successfully and healthy options dominate the lunch menu. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. They show a strong capacity for thoughtful reflection, especially in assemblies. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory and the school acknowledges the need to enhance pupils' awareness of cultures that are different from their own. Pupils are good at adopting safe practices. Bullying or bad behaviour are rare and staff act effectively to resolve any problems. A number of Year 6 pupils are trained as peer mediators. They undertake their duties well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers work effectively to ensure that lessons are interesting. All pupils are taught in ability groups for mathematics and those in Year 6 for English. This organisation helps pupils of all abilities to make good progress. In other subjects work is also planned for different ability groups but occasionally this does not extend to the most able pupils. Teachers use assessments effectively to plan future learning and regularly check their pupils' understanding as activities progress. Marking across classes is inconsistent. The school has issued new guidance for marking pupils' work but this is not yet fully

implemented. A group of able classroom assistants provide effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and for the development of basic ICT skills. The recently installed interactive white boards are used well to increase pupils' enjoyment and understanding in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Individual subjects are taught, but there are few opportunities for pupils to explore the links between subjects to quicken their understanding of new ideas. Similarly, although the basic skills of ICT are taught well there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use these skills to enhance their learning in all subjects. Pupils' capacity to stay safe and healthy is supported by a strong programme of personal, social and health education and by a minimum of two hours physical education, each week. The curriculum is further enriched by an impressive array of well attended clubs, and a programme of visitors and visits, including a residential trip for Year 6. Provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a caring and supportive environment in which all pupils feel happy and safe. Procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety are good. The school's work with outside agencies and with parents and carers to support pupils who may be at risk is effective. Lunchtime supervisors show a high level of commitment to pupils' welfare. All staff ensure that vulnerable pupils are well supported to overcome the challenges they face. The setting of individual targets for pupils' to reach has only recently been introduced. Pupils say that they know what they have to do to improve in literacy. However, they are less sure in other subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a clear vision for the future development of the school. This vision is focussed on raising standards and ensuring that pupils are able to do their best. The headteacher provides very good leadership which has already resulted in significant improvements. These improvements are based on a thorough analysis of the school's performance and are laid out very clearly in the school's excellent development plan. The headteacher also sets the tone for the school's caring and supportive learning environment. Adults in the school describe her leadership as 'inspirational.' Against this background senior teachers and those with additional responsibilities are involved fully in making significant contributions to the development of the school. There is access to good training opportunities for all staff. These opportunities are helping them to review and improve their performance. There are also very thorough procedures which enable the headteacher and staff to track pupils' progress over time and respond effectively to their learning needs. The governing

body fulfils its duties well. They are very supportive of the work of the school and are knowledgeable about its strengths and what it needs to do to improve further.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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?	2
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?	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	2
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

12 October 2006 Dear Pupils Toftwood Junior School, 38 Westfield Road, Dereham, Norfolk. NR19 1JB We enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you for being so helpful and for telling us all about the school. We think your school is good. We know that you and your parents and carers think so too. Your behaviour is good. We very much like the ways in which you care for and help each other. Your teachers are good at providing you with work that you find interesting and enjoyable. This enables you to do the best you can and to make good progress. Everyone deserves particular credit for the ways in which your writing has improved during the last year. Your school is also good at caring for you and making sure that you feel safe. Well done to those of you who are part of the school council. You do a good job and are thoughtful and skilful at making sure that pupils' opinions about the school are listened to by the adults. Your headteacher, staff and governors have done a great deal to improve the school and are eager to make it even more successful in the future. They are very good at making sure that you have everything you need to help you learn and at using your school's money wisely. As a result of the inspection and to help your school to continue its improvement, we are asking your headteacher, staff and governors to - Involve you as much as possible in thinking about how well you are making progress and in knowing about what you need to do to improve further.

- Make full use of information and communication technology to help you to learn in all subjects.
- Ensure that you understand how what you do in different subjects is linked. Well done to you all. Keep up the good work. Yours sincerely Godfrey Bancroft Lead inspector