

# Town Lane Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105010
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	308739
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Colin Smith

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	275
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Martin Stacey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Y Body
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2003
<b>School address</b>	Town Lane Bebington Wirral Merseyside CH63 8LD
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 6081918
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 6091130

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<b>Age group</b>	3–7
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is larger than average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average, although the school serves a typically mixed community. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, although increasing as more pupils travel in from outside the immediate locality. The vast majority of pupils are White British. A very small number are from Asian, Chinese or mixed backgrounds. Only a very few of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English. An independently organised childcare club operates on the site and a Children's Centre is currently being built adjacent to the school. Over the last two years there has been a high turnover of staff.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Town Lane Infants is an outstanding school in terms of the quality of education and value for money it provides. At the core of the school's success is the exceptionally high level of care, support and guidance extended to every pupil. Each pupil is valued as an individual and made to feel important. Pupils follow these principles by respecting and caring for others in their own relationships. This paves the way towards their excellent personal development. The way they behave, take responsibility, face challenges and recognise the importance of leading safe and healthy lifestyles is exemplary for their age. Parents are highly satisfied and very aware of the school's strengths in safeguarding their children and helping them to achieve as well as they can. Comments such as, 'my child loves school' and 'children are safe and well cared for' are typical of parents' views.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. They enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills typical for their age but by the end of Year 2 the standards they reach are very high overall. Standards in writing are exceptionally high. Pupils' reading skills and their ability to understand what they read are also of a high order. Standards in mathematics are well above average and increasing as pupils become more adept in problem-solving.

Pupils' exceptional achievement is attributable to outstanding teaching and the provision of a highly effective curriculum. Lessons are exciting, challenging and extremely well managed. All pupils, irrespective of their different learning needs, are able to learn successfully. Many additional activities are provided, which enhance pupils' skills and talents and foster their lifelong interest in learning.

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The headteacher sets high standards and is very successful in recruiting and training capable members of staff. Senior staff work together tirelessly in the school's best interests. It is notable that, while extensive building work commenced and several members of staff changed, the school has continued to operate smoothly and pupils' learning has not suffered. The quality of self-evaluation is good and the school has made accurate judgements of its work. Pupils' attainment and the progress individuals make are kept under constant review. This helps the school to identify areas requiring attention. However, the school's use of data to measure, compare and improve the progress of different groups of pupils is not sufficiently rigorous. The school was judged to be very good at the time of the previous inspection. Since then, standards have continued to rise and some of the previous improvement issues have now become strengths, illustrating the school's excellent capacity for improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Children make excellent progress in the Nursery and consistently good progress in Reception. By the end of the Foundation Stage almost two thirds of the children have progressed beyond the nationally set learning goals for five-year-olds. Excellent leadership is provided through teamwork, in which staff plan activities together and agree on how they will measure children's progress. Teaching in the Nursery is outstanding. The highly stimulating activities provided are very precisely adapted to match children's different stages of development. For example, when children became builders for the day, counting plastic blocks and constructing walls, they acquired key mathematics skills at just the right level. Teaching in Reception is consistently

good and the teaching of reading and writing skills especially so. The intensive reading sessions, where children learn to blend letters into words and predict events in a story, are highly effective. Children's learning is very carefully assessed and the information is used purposefully to plan the next round of activities. Teachers know exactly when to stand back and let children explore and when to intervene to extend their spoken language.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Use data fully to check and improve the progress of different groups of pupils.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

The excellent start made by children in the Foundation Stage is built on extremely well in Years 1 and 2. This is why standards were exceptionally high in reading and writing from 2004 to 2006. Standards in mathematics have fluctuated between above and well above average for the previous six years. Even when the predicted dip occurred in 2007, standards were above average overall and still very high in writing, despite a quarter of the Year 2 pupils experiencing learning difficulties. Pupils' skills of scientific investigation are also of a high standard. Increasing the appeal of reading and writing has raised the achievement of boys. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress because they are expertly guided towards their targets. The more able pupils make rapid progress so that the proportion of pupils reaching standards higher than expected is almost double the national average.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils are highly motivated and very proud of their capacity to work independently. When faced with problems, they rise to the challenge. 'We try to find our own way of working it out,' is how they explain it. Their excitement and enjoyment in learning, particularly in writing, shine through every lesson. Their spiritual, moral and social development is particularly good, although their awareness of cultural diversity is not at the same high level. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and attendance is well above average. They make an excellent contribution to the community by eagerly accepting responsibilities and often organising their own charitable fundraising activities. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the future in having advanced literacy and numeracy skills and excellent awareness of how to keep safe and healthy.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Consistently strong teaching is a significant factor in pupils' outstanding achievement. Teachers have extremely high expectations. Pupils thrive on challenging tasks, such as doubling large numbers mentally, because teachers make learning fun and reward achievement immediately. Pupils know exactly what is expected of them and are kept fully informed of how well they are doing through discussion and constructive marking of their work. Accurate assessments are made of pupils' learning. The information is used extremely well to provide tasks that are closely matched to pupils' different learning needs. Pupils who find learning difficult benefit from high quality support. They are guided to take small steps, which ensures that literacy and numeracy skills are learned successfully. The pace of teaching is usually very brisk. However, just

occasionally, pupils' eagerness to share their written work can lead to little queues forming by the teacher's side, which wastes time.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is rich and very well planned to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the gifted and talented. It allows all pupils to achieve exceptionally well, both academically and in their personal development. Pupils are often totally absorbed by the stimulating activities provided, such as investigating sounds using electronic sensing equipment. Pupils have rich opportunities to sharpen their reading, writing, mathematical and problem-solving skills by applying them in learning through topics and themes. The school provides a very wide selection of additional activities including drama, art, sport and modern foreign languages. The personal, social and health education programme is highly effective. These elements make a vital contribution to pupils' creative talents and interests and enrich their understanding of healthy lifestyles.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Safeguarding pupils is a very high priority and clear procedures are in place to secure their well-being. From the moment children enter school, their learning and personal development are watched closely. At the first sign of any faltering progress, prompt action is taken to trace the cause. By acting quickly and involving parents, barriers to learning are often prevented. If difficulties continue, health and education professionals are consulted immediately. This is of immense benefit to the most vulnerable pupils. With such excellent support systems, pupils' confidence blossoms, despite their difficulties. The guidance pupils receive to help them to succeed is of the highest calibre. Demanding but achievable individual targets are set to move the pupils forward. Pupils can explain these from the first few weeks in the Nursery.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Highly effective leadership and management is the bedrock of pupils' excellent achievement and personal development. The strong commitment of all staff to high standards, excellent coaching of new teachers and the sharing of expertise help to ensure that pupils learn very successfully. Governors provide very good support, for example in recruiting staff, but are not rigorous in holding the school to account. Senior staff and subject leaders check teaching and pupils' work carefully and use the information very effectively to identify where improvements are required. This has led to the introduction of 'passports', a particularly effective means of assessing pupils' skills in information and communication technology. Good use is made of assessments to track the progress made by individual pupils. This has led to an increase in the use of problem-solving to improve achievement in mathematics. However, the school does not analyse its data sufficiently to find out whether groups of pupils from different backgrounds, abilities or ages are making equally good progress.

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## Annex A

## 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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<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.



## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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**

Inspection of Town Lane Infant School, Bebington, CH63 8LD

Thank you for talking to us, answering our questions and trying so hard to show what you can do. You were so friendly, helpful and polite that we greatly enjoyed our visit. You are right to be proud. Your school is excellent in every way.

Most of all, we noticed how well your headteacher, teachers and helpers look after, care for and help you. This keeps you safe and you do not have to worry about anything. We think this is why you behave so beautifully.

Your teachers make your lessons interesting but not too easy. This is because they know that you will learn more if you enjoy school. This is why you make such excellent progress and your work is of such a high standard.

Your parents and teachers trust each other and are good friends. We think this really helps you to make the most of your time at school.

There is not much we could ask your school to improve but we will try. We know that your teachers check how well each of you is learning. They give you extra help if you have any difficulties. We have asked your headteacher and teachers to also check if all of the different groups of children, such as boys, girls and pupils in different classes are making equally good progress. This will enable teachers to help you to learn even more.

Please keep on trying your best and carry on helping your teachers and each other just as you did when we visited. We wish you well for the future.