

Tonacliffe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119271
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313237
Inspection date	23 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Dave Byrne

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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Nielsen
Headteacher	Mr Kevin Quinn
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2005
School address	Tonacliffe Road Whitworth Rochdale Lancashire OL12 8SS
Telephone number	01706 344609
Fax number	01706 642713

Age group	3-11
Inspection date	23 April 2008
Inspection number	313237

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

This was a reduced tariff inspection carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the level of pupils' skills on entry to school and the progress in the Foundation Stage
- the achievement of pupils across the school
- the provision for the able, gifted and talented pupils
- the pupils' ability to take responsibility for their own learning and their own actions.

Evidence was gathered from the school's performance data and other school documentation, observations of teaching and learning, the work produced by pupils (including how pupils interact with each other and their response to what is provided for them), parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, staff and one governor. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail. The inspector found that almost all of the school's self-evaluations were justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The percentage eligible for free school meals is below average as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All pupils have English as their first language. Before and after school care is provided on the school site. The headteacher is retiring at the end of April when a new headteacher takes over.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which enjoys a good reputation amongst parents and within the local community. Strong leadership by the headteacher, supported by an effective governing body, provides a safe and very caring place for pupils. Throughout the school, the individual matters: each pupil is treated with respect and dignity. Consequently, pupils say they feel secure which contributes to their good personal and academic development. Parents and carers overwhelmingly support the school. They recognise its good provision for personal development and the staff's vigilant care for pupils' safety and well-being. They also welcome the positive and welcoming atmosphere for learning. This is illustrated during lessons where pupils work diligently and demonstrate a determination to do as well as they can.

Children start school with skills and knowledge which are typical for their age. After making a good start in the Foundation Stage, the good progress is sustained in Key Stage 1 and accelerates in Key Stage 2 so that overall achievement is good and standards are above average. Pupils leave Year 6 with standards that are above the national average. Given their starting points this represents good achievement. There is a particular strength in standards in mathematics which have been significantly above average in each of the last four years. In English, standards have risen sharply since the last inspection. In 2007, they were significantly above average for the second successive year. In the same year, the proportion of pupils gaining the higher than average Level 5 in English, mathematics and science was significantly above average. The school is rightly proud of its results but is not complacent. It identifies the need to raise the profile of English and in particular writing, across the school. Whilst pupils write well, this is mainly in English lessons and pupils are not consistently expected to write to the same standard in other subjects.

'Everyone is friends with each other', is a quote provided by one Year 4 pupil. It typifies the supportive, family atmosphere within school. Pupils love learning; this is a key factor in their good attendance and punctuality. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good which underpins the pupils' outstanding behaviour. As a result, everyone has an equal chance to learn well. Incidents of aggressive behaviour are rare, and pupils are adamant that if this occurs, teachers deal with it effectively. A good understanding of the choices required to live safe and healthy lives contributes to pupils' personal well-being. By taking on responsibilities, for example as school councillors and playground leaders, pupils become mature and responsible young citizens. The pupils' good academic standards and levels of personal development prepare them well for their next stage of education.

Teaching and learning are good and result in pupils learning effectively for most of the time. Occasionally, expectations are not high enough and pupils consolidate rather than extend their existing knowledge and understanding. The best teaching sets out clear and understandable aims for each lesson. This enables pupils to keep an eye on what they are learning. Marking is frequent in all classes. Its use in guiding pupils to improve their work is better in some classes than others. Where marking links to pupils' targets, for example, in English and mathematics, pupils make better progress because they have a goal to aim for. This motivates them to evaluate and monitor their own progress. The assessment and tracking of progress from year to year is detailed enough to identify pupils who have not learnt things well enough. This enables timely interventions for pupils so that they can do as well as they can. Good support is provided for pupils who find learning hard and this helps them to make good progress.

The good curriculum captures the interests of most pupils and advances their learning. It provides well for the needs of able, gifted and talented pupils, although strategies for extending the learning of these pupils are not formalised. Whilst a good emphasis is given to developing the basic skills of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), English planning is not as inventive as it might be. This reduces the quality of imaginative writing amongst pupils. Standard lessons are successfully enhanced by additional subjects such as French in Key Stage 2, and personal, social, health and citizenship education across the school. In addition, a wide range of extra-curricular activities enables pupils to explore a good variety of experiences and develop their talents in subjects such as sport, music and drama. The school's success in gaining the Activemark reflects strengths in physical education and provision is also good in music with many older pupils participating in the school choir.

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. He has succeeded in creating a school which sets high academic standards and levels of personal development whilst meeting the requirements for safeguarding pupils' health and safety. Management is equitably shared amongst senior staff. Together, staff hold an accurate view of the school's strengths and its main areas for its development. Strong management and governance have successfully eased the school through challenging times caused by budget difficulties and unavoidable staff changes. Since the last inspection, standards have risen and many aspects of the school building have been upgraded and improved. The school gets good value from its budget and given the current educational direction is capable of continuing to improve in future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. When children start in the Nursery, their skills and knowledge are typical for their age. Good teaching and management successfully develop the children's learning. By the end of Reception, most reach the standards expected for their age with many doing well in early reading, writing and mathematics. Children are well looked after, within a safe and secure environment and develop good levels of personal, social and emotional development. Children become mature and independent because they are rightly expected to take responsibility for organising themselves from an early age. Parents' involvement in their children's education is valued and encouraged by the school. A skilled, dedicated teaching team is led by a talented and experienced Reception teacher.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standard of writing even further by increasing opportunities for pupils to apply their basic skills to a wider variety of subjects across the curriculum.
- Ensure that marking is linked to academic targets more consistently so that all pupils are involved in improving their own work.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	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

24 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tonacliffe Primary School, Lancashire, OL12 8SS

At the recent inspection of your school I developed a very positive picture about you and the quality of your school. Some of you told me that you thought the school was good and that your teachers made lessons interesting. I agree with you. Your school is good because it helps you to make good progress and to reach standards that are above the national average by the end of Year 6.

Your behaviour is excellent. At all times, I was impressed by your politeness to others and how willing you are to help. In lessons you work hard and quite clearly enjoy coming to school. It was lovely to see how many of you smile! Your teachers and teaching assistants work hard to give you a good range of clubs. This gives you many opportunities to experience a wide variety of musical and sporting events and develop your talents.

Whilst you do well in English, mathematics and science, I have asked the school to give you more chances to develop your skills of imaginative writing in all subjects, not just English. It was good to see how independent you are and how well you take responsibilities in and around school. I have asked the school, however, to make better use of the way your work is marked so that all of you know how well you are doing, and how you can do even better.

Your headteacher is very caring. He knows each of you well and very successfully manages the school so that you all have a good chance to do well. The school is a safe and secure place and, as you told me, is a place where you feel cared for and looked after. It gives you a good preparation for your move to secondary school.

Thank you for your welcome and friendship during my visit. Please thank your parents and carers for returning their questionnaires which show that the large majority think the school is doing a good job.

I send you all my best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Dave Byrne

Lead inspector