

Totley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107024
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	319325
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2008
Reporting inspector	James Kilner HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Martin Farmer
Headteacher	Mrs A Lant
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2007
School address	Sunnyvale Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S17 4FB
Telephone number	0114 236 4482
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

When Totley Primary School was inspected in May 2007, it was judged to require special measures. The school serves an area of above-average social and economic circumstances on the outskirts of the city of Sheffield. It is a smaller than average size school although pupil numbers are now increasing. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. Pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly higher than the national figure. The number of pupils for whom English is an additional language and pupils from minority ethnic communities are low when compared to national figures. The school has attained accreditation in several national awards: Activemark, Basic Skills Quality Mark (1 and 2) and Investors in People.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Totley Primary is a good school. A concerted effort on the part of governors and staff has brought about rapid improvements to the areas identified as weaknesses in the previous inspection. Key appointments at leadership level, particularly that of deputy headteacher, have led to the formation of a highly effective leadership team. This team, resolutely led by a determined headteacher, has been instrumental in securing improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. A programme of support and coaching for weaker teachers has ensured that the quality of teaching is much improved; it is consistently good and in some cases is outstanding. This improvement is linked successfully to rigorous tracking and assessment procedures, which mean that rates of pupils' progress are now much improved.

Achievement is good and standards are now above average throughout the school. From just above average starting points when they enter school pupils achieve well. Good progress continues so that pupils attain above average standards. Following a dip in 2007, school assessments now indicate that standards have returned to above average and that more pupils will, in Key Stage 1, attain the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics. Over a number of years, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have been average with few attaining the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science. This represented underachievement. Evidence from the scrutiny of work, tracking of pupils' progress and lesson observations clearly point to a much-improved situation with significantly more pupils on target to meet their challenging targets.

Highly effective tracking systems record the rates of progress pupils are making each term. This information is discussed by the leadership team and subject leaders for English, mathematics and science. Skills ladders displayed in all classrooms assist pupils in gauging what they have to do to improve in order to reach the next levels in their work. Formal discussions take place between the leadership team and class teachers on rates of progress. Through termly progress meetings, pupils understand how well they are doing in each of their subjects.

Governance is now good. The progress committee, formed following the last inspection, is confident in its ability to interpret national statistics on pupils' performance. Governors have the right information they need to challenge the work of the school. Because of regular visits to school, they speak knowledgeably about achievement, standards, and progress since the inspection. Judgements made following their monitoring visits are well documented in good quality reports with accompanying action points for improvement. Whilst the leadership team is held to good account by governors, they equally support the work of the school, recognising in their reports where progress has been made and celebrating the determined work of the staff. The leadership team and governors have worked tirelessly to tackle deep-seated staffing difficulties. These have all been successfully resolved with the cooperation and assistance of the local authority.

In the early days of special measures, the school willingly accepted good quality support from the local authority. Over time, the school has become increasingly independent in its ability to monitor and evaluate strengths and weaknesses and to put things right using its own resources and staff. The local authority has produced an exit plan to ensure that assistance is at hand should it be required during the coming months.

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Pupils' behaviour both in lessons and around school is consistently good. Attendance is good and pupils enjoy coming to school and participate in a range of sporting activities. Whilst pupils have a good understanding of the different world faiths, they are less sure in their understanding of cultures and faiths closer to home and therefore have a more limited understanding of the diversity within British society.

A good, interesting curriculum captures the interest and enthusiasm of pupils. For example, the more able pupils in Year 5 who have already been assessed as attaining the highest level in mathematics are presented with a challenge to unravel problems using logic. The school recognises the need to present the most able pupils in all classes with a higher degree of challenge and are about to implement a revised, skills-based curriculum from September 2008.

Levels of care, guidance and support for pupils are good. All practices in school meet current government requirements in respect of child protection and safeguarding. Pupils recently arrived in the country and new to learning English are soon assessed and settle well into the life of the school. Support for these pupils, together with those identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is good. The coordinator for special educational needs works in close partnership with the inclusion coordinator to ensure equality of opportunity for all in school. Progress of pupils with additional needs is monitored effectively so that support both in the classroom and in separate groups is well matched at all times to their needs.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage provides children with a good start to their learning. The majority of pupils start in the Reception Class (Foundation Stage 2) with a level of skills slightly above those expected for their age. Through a programme of good teaching, accurate assessments and provision well matched to individual needs, pupils achieve well. At the end of the Reception year, the majority reach, and a significant number exceed, the goals expected. Social and communication skills are particularly well developed. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. The classrooms and outdoor areas are well structured and carefully organised. Currently, however, opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding and skills in the physical area of learning are restricted by the lack of sufficient space to use wheeled toys or large climbing equipment. This restricts pupils' opportunities to put into practice in an outdoor environment the very effective learning gained whilst inside.

Pupils learn together harmoniously, collaborating for example when working in the outside area to construct shelters for the three little pigs. One very able pupil was able to write a letter from one of the pigs using two full sentences and following some of the conventions of letter writing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure pupils are given opportunities to develop a fuller understanding of the diverse nature of British society.
- Improve provision for outdoor learning in Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Pupils enter school with skills slightly above those expected for their age. They make good progress so that the majority reach, and

some exceed, the expected levels at the end of Reception year. Good rates of progress continue through Key Stage 1 where standards have been consistently above average for a number of years. However, in the end of Key Stage assessments in 2007 fewer pupils than the national average reached the higher Level 3 in reading and writing. This year indications are that standards are improved and that more pupils will attain the higher levels.

In the 2007 end of Key Stage 2 tests, standards were merely satisfactory and pupils' achievement was low. Indications from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and data on pupils' achievement are that this year standards are above average and achievement is good. Almost all pupils in Year 6 are predicted to attain the expected Level 4, with almost twice as many as last year expected to reach the higher Level 5. This represents a great improvement since the last inspection. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language make the same rates of progress as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are enthusiastic as they talk about school. They say, 'It's a friendly place. We like it!' Pupils enjoy the daily challenges they now face and agree that lessons are increasingly interesting and fun. They behave well and the school is a calm and happy place in which to learn. Pupils get on well together both in lessons and in the playground. They understand the simple school rules and the consequences when they choose to act in an unacceptable fashion. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall is good. Pupils enjoy strongly supportive relationships with all the adults and with each other and this helps to develop their self-confidence.

Older pupils make the most of any opportunities to take on responsibility for different aspects of school life. For example, school councillors are effective ambassadors for their peers in improving school equipment; playground leaders learn to mediate and then help to improve the quality of play and lunchtimes. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures across the world but their awareness of diversity within British society and the local community is not well developed. Strongly established links with other schools and organisations help pupils to understand the importance of regular exercise, healthy eating and how to stay safe. Attendance is good and almost all parents are diligent about bringing their children to school every day.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now consistently good. An increasingly significant proportion of the teaching is outstanding which is a key requirement for continued improvement. The school has raised the bar in terms of what adults now expect from pupils. The very best lessons provoke interest and a desire to do well among the pupils. Teachers plan and resource stimulating activities to draw the best from each individual. Skilful learning support assistants provide just the right levels of challenge and assistance for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff also pay close attention to the needs of pupils who have been identified with particular gifts and talents. As a result, all groups of pupils are making good progress. Clear learning objectives help pupils to understand what they are learning and to assess how well they are doing. Teachers' marking is regular and often supportive, with many teachers offering points for improvement.

Nevertheless, this feedback does not always signpost a way forward for pupils whose work is already of a high standard and this slows their learning. Classroom monitoring has highlighted this and the leadership team is dealing with it.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school maintains strong partnerships with a number of local schools and agencies and these enrich the evolving skills-based curriculum. For example, pupils study French, German and Spanish, using the expertise of language teachers from the main feeder secondary school into which pupils transfer. Specialist sports coaches provide significant benefits for pupils and staff in terms of developing their skills through physical education lessons and a range of sports. There is a varied range of after-school activities for pupils to enjoy, although many of these are currently sports-related. Activities such as the 'Big Write' in literacy and the many new mathematics resources provide more focused support for pupils in key areas identified by the school, such as problem solving. Outside agencies regularly visit the school to provide more information on healthy and safe lifestyles. Particularly beneficial work has taken place over the last three years through the 'Creative Partnerships' initiatives. Pupils have experienced audio tours, film making and younger children now complete 'Learning Journey' books to illustrate their progress through school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents say that they are very happy with the care the school offers their children. They typically comment, 'My child got off to a brilliant start here.' There are comprehensive systems in place to help young children settle in quickly and to allay the anxiety of pupils and parents when the oldest pupils leave for secondary education. Pupils confirm that they feel safe in school and know who to turn to with any worries. Conscientious staff take very good care of pupils' emotional and physical needs. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet the current requirements. The school environment is bright, clean and welcoming. Regular pupil progress meetings provide staff with opportunities to evaluate how well each pupil in their class is performing. At the same time, staff meticulously review each element of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda as it relates to individual pupils. Class teachers discuss any emerging academic and personal concerns with the appropriate members of staff. As a result, staff ensure that all pupils access the support systems best suited to their needs in order to achieve well. Pupils are clear about their learning targets and are increasingly involved in making decisions to set them. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported to make the most of their time here through close guidance from support assistants in lessons. Attendance is carefully monitored and promoted among parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good, representing significant improvement since the last inspection when they were judged unsatisfactory. Under the astute guidance of the headteacher, an effective leadership team and the governing body now regularly assess the work of the school. There is a tangible sense of teamwork amongst all staff and governors who work closely to improve provision and outcome for pupils. Through an accurate

self-evaluation process, the school has implemented a series of highly effective actions which have led to rapid improvements in all areas of weakness identified in the last inspection. Leaders for English, mathematics and science monitor all aspects of their subject. Each term subject leaders take a specific focus for classroom observations so that all staff gain an insight into what aspects of their work are most effective. Subsequent action planning is clear and precise with appropriate markers of progress and success criteria always linked to raising attainment for all pupils. Weaknesses in teaching are quickly spotted and, because of the strength of professional relationships, problems are soon eradicated so that teaching is now never less than good throughout the school. The school now has a very clear understanding as to how to sustain above average standards and all are committed to raise them further. All staff willingly acknowledge their accountability in this strive to raise standards. Governance is good; a series of committees monitor the work of the school thoroughly, most notably the progress committee which demonstrates a tremendous knowledge of national data on pupils' performance. This knowledge is put to effective use in challenging and supporting the work of the school. The recent improvements in checking pupils' performance is enabling the school to set challenging targets and it is well placed to achieve them. For example tracking and classroom monitoring has recognised the need to provide the more able pupils with clearer guidance to reach the next levels in their work. A well crafted action plan supports this initiative. The school gives good value for money and has a good capacity to improve further.

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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?	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	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	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

Inspection of Totle Primary School, Sheffield, S17 4FB

Many thanks for your warm welcome when Mrs Hughes and I visited your school for the inspection last week. I have been visiting your school with other inspectors fairly frequently over the past year and I feel I have got to know you all quite well. The reason for my visits was because your school required special measures; it was not doing very well.

I have some very good news for you all; I do not need to come any more! The reason is that your school is now doing really well - in fact, Totle Primary School is now a good school. Here are some of the reasons why.

- You are achieving well in all your classes and the standards you are now reaching are above average.
- Your lessons are always good and some are excellent.
- Teachers know how well you are doing and involve you a lot more in helping you to improve your work.
- All the people who run the school, including the governors, have a very clear idea about how well things are going and how to improve things even more.

Mrs Hughes and I have asked your school to do two things to make your school even better:

- to provide the very youngest children in school with more facilities to learn in the area outside the classroom
- to give you more opportunities to learn about the different cultures and faiths in Britain today.

I will miss my visits to such a friendly school and I know that you will be thinking hard about how you can make things even better.