

Twerton Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109007
Local Authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	324878
Inspection dates	4–5 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Lorna Brackstone HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	174
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	81
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Leakey
Headteacher	Paul Mattausch Burrows
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Poolemead Road Twerton Bath BA2 1QR
Telephone number	01225 423526
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector.

Description of the school

This school serves the immediate area which is to the south of Bath and consists mainly of local authority housing. Most pupils are White British and almost half are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average but a significant number have speech, language and communication problems. An average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A significant minority of pupils are in the care of the local authority. The Early Years Foundation Stage consist of the nursery, where children attend on a on a part-time basis, and two reception classes, where attendance is full time. Most of the children spend one year in the nursery before transferring to one of the reception classes.

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 has much to be proud of. It enables all of its pupils to achieve well because it ensures that every individual is fully included in every aspect of school life. Parents agree with this and their views are summed up in the following comment: 'I am so ecstatic with my child being at this school. It is a super school.'

There are a number of outstanding aspects to this school. The care, support and guidance provided by all adults involved in the school are second to none, and this enables the pupils to make exceptional progress in their personal and social development. Consequently, they blossom into confident youngsters who have an excellent understanding of how to maintain their own well-being. Their achievement in writing is exceptional and when these skills are applied across their extremely inspiring curriculum it enables them to attain standards that are above age-related expectations. The Early Years Foundation Stage is outstandingly effective, and provides the youngest children with the best possible start to school. At the heart of this school are the specific needs of the local community, and these have been exceptionally well incorporated into its life. Preparing the pupils with life skills and enabling their parents and carers to develop their own basic and creative skills are successfully achieved through exceptionally strong partnerships with the primary care trust, local further education colleges and other outside agencies. This is reflected in the school's success in gaining the Investors in People award, and is wholeheartedly confirmed by parents. One commented that the school 'is so embracing of families' whilst another explained that 'there is a very positive view of the school from within its immediate community'.

Parents correctly identify that an exceptional feature of the good quality teaching is the way in which all teaching staff are 'friendly, helpful and supportive'. Lessons are planned so that the learning makes links to pupils' everyday life and this captivates their interest. For example, pupils plant their own vegetables, look after them and watch how they grow. They then pick them when ready and use them to provide a delicious meal to enjoy, thus promoting lifelong learning.

The headteacher takes an exceptionally strong lead in sustaining excellent pastoral care and the extremely beneficial partnerships with parents, outside agencies and the community. His commitment to advancing the pupils' inter-personal skills, alongside their awareness and understanding of environmental issues and healthy living, is outstanding. By working closely and effectively as a team, senior managers identify suitable areas for improvement. However, the impact of initiatives and staff development is not tracked or monitored to evaluate their success. Governors give good support and encourage the school's exceptional promotion of community cohesion, but are not sufficiently well informed about the quality of provision within the school. Overall, the school has made good improvement since the last inspection, especially by raising pupils' academic achievement. Standards continue to rise and the school has a good capacity to improve into the future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The words of one parent summed up the quality of education in the Early Years Foundation Stage: 'I would highly recommend it. My children both loved it.'

Children enter the nursery with standards that are well below age-related expectations. Their communication, language and literacy and personal and social skills are particularly weak. They get off to an excellent start and make outstanding progress in all areas of learning because exceptional leadership and management have ensured that children's progress is constantly monitored and assessed in order to ensure that teaching caters exceptionally well for all children's needs, regardless of their abilities or vulnerabilities. Extremely good links with parents and carers and clear routines are very effective features of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Occasions such as Mothers' Day are celebrated with special breakfast events. Children are encouraged to work independently and lessons often make excellent use of children's imaginations in order to capture their interest and add to their enjoyment of learning. Children visiting the local weekly market made smoothie drinks using the fruit they had purchased on their outing. Not only did this support local businesses, but it also provided the children with a realistic experience.

Progress in personal, social and emotional development is outstanding and this is reflected in the children's excellent behaviour. Classrooms and well-resourced outdoor areas provide stimulating learning environments for children, who feel very safe and well looked after and are happy to share and to take turns. Staff work very effectively to ensure there is always a very strong emphasis on language development because of the very low level of children's communication skills when they start school. A wide range of interesting activities, including a good balance of direct teaching by adults and play, ensure that children make outstanding progress during their first two years in school and attain average standards. This provides the basis for their good progress throughout the rest of the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that senior leaders provide the governors with enough information to enable them to effectively challenge the work of the school.
- Raise the quality of teaching by ensuring that staff training is closely linked to the school development plan, and its effectiveness carefully evaluated.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Children make an excellent start during their two years in the Early Years Foundation Stage and move into Year 1 with standards that are broadly in line with national averages. Pupils' achievement in speaking and listening and writing is exceptional and this enables them to attain above the expected level for their age group in subjects such as history, geography and design and technology. By the end of Year 2, pupils consistently attain standards that are significantly above the national average for the writing test. Standards in reading are above average. The school has recently strengthened the teaching of phonics and this has had a positive impact on raising achievement in reading. Standards in mathematics are just above the national average and there has been a recent improvement in the number of pupils attaining the higher National Curriculum levels because extra support has been targeted at groups who need help consolidating mathematical concepts. As a consequence of enriching experiences of the highest quality, standards in art, pottery and food technology are exceptionally high. Those pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are in local authority care progress as well as their peers. This is because their individual education and personal plans accurately reflect their particular needs and the support given to them meets these very well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Meaningful role play such as High School Musical themes and lots of opportunities to take responsibility ensure that nursery and reception children achieve exceptionally well in their personal and social development. The progress they make in these skills continues to develop at an excellent pace as they move through Years 1 and 2. They are independent learners who enjoy school very much. This is particularly evident in their enthusiastic discussions, their participation in activities and their high level of concentration. Pupils listen carefully to the teachers and are courteous and behave extremely well. Since the last inspection very effective systems have been implemented to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and attendance is now at a satisfactory level.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils reflect extremely well on the work of different artists, as evidenced in their high quality paintings which have been influenced by Van Gogh's original style. Topics covered in assembly, such as sharing problems with each other, enable the pupils to have a very clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They respect each other's differences and through celebrating events such as the Hindu festival of light have a developing knowledge of cultures other than their own. Pupils make a very good contribution to the school community by helping each other and carrying out special jobs sensibly. Singing proudly at Bath Abbey and exhibitions of their painting in the Mayor of London's office ensure that the pupils play a very prominent role in the community. Attaining good writing skills and celebrating the success of staff who have completed training courses enable pupils to understand the important role education plays in securing their future economic well-being.

The school is justifiably very proud of its silver award for Food for Life Partnership Scheme. Pupils have an exceptional understanding of how to keep healthy and know that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. They confidently describe how blood pumps around their bodies when they exercise and know that it is important to warm up when they participate in physical activities. Pupils are extremely clear about safe practice when using computers and confidently explain how they must evacuate the school in an orderly fashion if the fire bell rings.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In the nursery and reception classes teaching is exceptional because staff have an excellent understanding of the needs of these young children. In Years 1 and 2 pupils are taught well and consequently make good progress. In the best lessons teachers have high expectations and work at a good pace. This ensures that pupils' interest is maintained and they remain involved in their learning. Teachers create a purposeful working atmosphere where pupils understand what they are expected to achieve. Resources are well prepared to enhance learning. Interactive whiteboards are used particularly effectively to interest and engage pupils. The school's leaders are aware that the pace of learning is not fast enough in a minority of lessons, particularly for the most capable pupils, but they have a suitable plan in place to rectify this. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are looked after by the local

authority make as much progress as others in their learning because they are very well supported by teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum has been strengthened in recent years by an increased emphasis on learning through practical experiences where pupils work and explore together. The pupils really enjoy and benefit from lots of opportunities to work with others during these activities. Growing their own fruit and vegetables, using them to cook delicious meals and then eating them are good examples of the ways in which learning is brought alive and made relevant. Enrichment activities are exceptional, and opportunities to play football and participate in gymnastic and dance sessions help the children to live healthily. Involvement in the school choir and playing in the Samba band and drumming group not only enables them to develop a sense of rhythm but also enhances their good social skills. The curriculum includes very well planned activities for pupils to develop their literacy and ICT skills to enrich learning in other subjects. The school is fully aware that the provision for developing pupils' mathematical skills across the curriculum is a weaker aspect.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides an exceptionally safe and nurturing environment where pupils thrive both academically and socially. The excellent induction programme in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that the children are introduced to life at school with sensitivity and thoughtfulness. The outstanding pastoral care ensures that pupils feel extremely well supported, safe and happy. Parents and carers confirm that all adults in school are highly committed to ensuring that the children are very well cared for. Safeguarding arrangements are fully in place and policies and procedures are clearly understood by all staff. The school liaises exceptionally well with external agencies to provide extremely high quality support for the most vulnerable pupils. Systems for gathering and analysing performance data are robust and effectively managed. Teaching staff know their pupils extremely well and their achievements are very carefully tracked and celebrated. Support for vulnerable pupils is both effective and timely. Academic guidance is very good and pupils are appreciative of the helpful marking tips and the setting of challenging targets which most teachers provide. Parents are kept very well informed about the progress of their children.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides a strong lead in promoting and sustaining the caring and inclusive ethos of the school, which underpins the pupils' excellent behaviour and enjoyment. The governors give good support and work well with the staff to develop exceptionally strong links with parents, the community and outside agencies, thus helping to secure the pupils' welfare and regular attendance in school. However, whilst senior leaders monitor the quality of provision well, they do not provide the governors with enough information to enable them to effectively challenge its performance. Self-evaluation and improvement planning are accurate, with well-chosen actions for development such as raising standards in reading and mathematics, but arrangements for staff training are not linked to these identified areas. Community cohesion

is promoted extremely efficiently in terms of the school, local and global dimensions of the community. These include beneficial links with a local independent school, a Children's Centre in inner-city Bristol and a Ugandan school. The impact of these links is evaluated with precision. The school uses its confined space to the very best effect and this is exemplified by the terraced areas where a multitude of plants are sited and the attractive decking platforms where the pupils enjoy outdoor learning activities. Excellent use of specific grants to inject additional support into the nursery to help with the children's communication and language skills is one example of the way that incoming resources are deployed to best effect.

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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 learners' needs?	2
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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

6 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Twerton Infant School, Bath BA2 1QR

Thank you for making my team and me so welcome at your school. We enjoyed spending time with you and finding out about Twerton Infants. We would like to say a special thank you to those pupils who talked to us about your school.

We agree with your parents that your school provides you with a good education that has some outstanding features. You achieve well and we were particularly impressed with your writing standards, which are better than in many other schools. We thought the way that you think about how you learn and use your writing skills across all subjects was exceptionally good. Your teachers know you all very well and are very caring and friendly. They make sure that you are always engaged in your learning because they plan extremely interesting activities, many of which are based on themes that are meaningful for you. Your art and pottery work is of very high quality and we were impressed with your food preparation and cooking skills. We know that you found these activities particularly interesting because you found the work exciting and meaningful.

It is very clear that you take a full part in the life of the school and really enjoy coming to school. We enjoyed hearing about the activities after school you are involved in and were very interested to hear about your school trips. You feel safe because the school looks after you very well and you told us there is always someone you can talk to about a problem. You are very knowledgeable about how to keep your body fit and you know what foods are good for you to eat.

Your headteacher and the other adults involved in leading and managing your school do a good job and are keen to make sure that you receive the best possible education. They have some good plans to make things even better, and we have particularly asked them to make sure these plans are used to improve teaching. We have also asked them to give much more detailed information to the governors, so that they can also be sure that you are doing as well as possible.

Once again, thank you for your help. Keep doing your best and working with the adults in school to make sure Twerton Infants gets even better.

Yours faithfully

Lorna Brackstone Her Majesty's Inspector