

Townley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110630
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	325185
Inspection dates	27–28 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Ian Jones

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	73
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Garlick
Headteacher	Mr Robert Glozier
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Crown Drove Christchurch Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE14 9NA
Telephone number	01354 638229
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

This small rural school of three classes serves its local village community and the surrounding area. The school's provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a shared class of Reception, Year 1 and some Year 2 pupils. Attainment on entry varies from year to year due to the small numbers involved but is generally below average. Most pupils are of White British background. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, with high levels in some years. The main needs are moderate learning difficulties. The school has gained several awards including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Investors in People, the Activemark for sport and the Healthy Schools award. A separately run playgroup operates from the school site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for its pupils. It combines good quality care and support of pupils with an increasingly effective drive to ensure they make good progress in their learning. Parents are confident in the school and recognise it as a caring community. Pupils' personal development is good. Behaviour and relationships around the school are good. Pupils enjoy school, most attend regularly and attendance has improved this year to average levels. Pupils know how to keep safe and remain healthy and have an excellent understanding of how to live a healthy life.

Overall standards are broadly average, but all groups of pupils, including those with moderate and specific learning difficulties, achieve well from their different starting points. In 2008, overall standards were below average in Year 2 especially in writing, where no pupils reached the higher levels. In Year 6, overall standards were below average. The school recognised previous underachievement in writing and introduced a range of measures such as writing for specific purposes and improving opportunities to write in different subjects. As a result, the rate of progress has quickened across the school and is now good. Currently, standards at Year 6 are a little below average in English and above average in mathematics and science. This represents good progress from below average starting points.

The school is well led and managed. The continued improvement made since the last inspection shows that it is well placed to improve further. The headteacher's vision for improvement lies behind its success. He leads the school well. He benefits from good support by staff and an effective governing body. School evaluation procedures provide an accurate picture of the school's strengths and where it needs to improve. Teaching is good. Strengths are in the positive relationships between teachers and pupils, the enthusiasm and commitment to learning which these promote, and the effective development of pupils' writing skills. The quality of marking is good in English, where detailed suggestions as to how to improve are regular features. However, marking in mathematics does not give pupils sufficient information to tell them what they need to do next. The limited use of personal targets means that pupils are not as involved in assessing their own progress as they could be. An improvement since the last inspection has been the more effective use of assessment information. The school now uses assessment data well to monitor progress. Effective support is provided for those who may not be making the expected progress. The regular meetings between staff and the headteacher provide a clear picture of the progress that pupils are making.

The good curriculum promotes pupils' personal development well and contributes effectively to their enjoyment of learning, for example through the very good range and variety of lunchtime and after-school clubs on offer. Although the curriculum is planned appropriately, links between subjects are not sufficiently well identified for the skills that are common to most subjects to be developed across the curriculum. The school enjoys close links with the church and through the curriculum plays an active part in the life of the village. The school plays an important role in helping to integrate the different communities represented in the area. Pupils have a good appreciation of lifestyles and cultures of Britain. The school contributes well to community cohesion through a highly inclusive school ethos, and very effective and well established links with the local community. The school has developed links with schools in other parts of the world and has plans to develop this work further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle quickly and happily into school because the Early Years Foundation Stage provides a secure environment. Teaching is good and clearly planned around what children know and need to learn next. All the staff look after children with high levels of care and attention so that children feel safe. Children's personal development is good. Achievement is good, particularly in mathematical development and learning letter sounds. Children enjoy using the sounds they know to help them write. They are provided with good opportunities to explore and discover for themselves. A strength of the provision is that children are encouraged to develop independent learning skills and they demonstrate confident attitudes to their tasks. They gain much from working alongside the older pupils in the class. As a result their social skills, ability to work as part of a team and willingness to help one another are well developed. Strong links are maintained with parents through regular newsletters and regular informal discussions. Most children attend the local pre-school setting prior to starting school and effective liaison is maintained with Nursery staff.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. High expectations for what children can achieve together with good teaching have had a considerable impact on increasing children's rate of progress. Early skills are developing at a good rate. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader recognises the need to develop the curriculum through a more thematic approach. Currently, children's skills are below those expected for their age when they start in Reception. By the end of Reception, there is no consistent picture of attainment as the number of children in the small Reception group varies considerably. Consequently, attainment ranges from below expectations for the year group to above.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop curriculum planning to link together different subjects more closely and to clearly identify the key skills needed to support learning.

Improve the ability of pupils to understand and assess their progress by:

- improving the quality of written feedback in mathematics
- developing the use of personal targets to give pupils a clear understanding of the next steps in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards fluctuate at the end of Years 2 and 6 due to the very small numbers in each year group. Pupils who have moderate learning difficulties are well supported by an effective team of teaching assistants. As a result, these pupils make good progress. The 2008 assessments showed standards by the end of Year 2 to be below average overall, with few pupils attaining the higher levels. The school recognised this slowing of progress in writing and introduced whole-school measures such as writing for greater purpose. This has enthused pupils and successfully quickened the rate of progress to the current good levels. In Year 6, attainment shifts markedly from year to year due to the small numbers involved. For example, 2006 standards were average. They were above average in 2007 and below in 2008. Current Year 6 pupils are on target to reach average standards in English and above average standards in mathematics and science. This represents good progress from below average starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and are keen not to miss anything it provides. They say it is a safe and friendly place where everyone gets on well together. Pupils behave well, listen attentively and work cooperatively when required. They are positive about learning and they work hard. Pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have an excellent understanding of what is needed for a healthy life and enjoy taking part in a wide range of physical activities, including swimming lessons for all pupils at the school's own pool. Pupils are ready to accept responsibility as school councillors, recently developing 'Charlotte's Garden', an area for quiet contemplation. Older pupils respond well as Townley Official Playground Squad (TOPS) members, supporting others and promoting good behaviour around school. Pupils' good progress in literacy and numeracy, their ability to work together and their positive attitudes to work provide a good basis for their next school and later life. Attendance has improved considerably this year because of the effective measures put in place and is now average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning ensures that pupils make good progress. Teaching manages well the complex task of catering for the learning needs of pupils across several year groups and a wide ability range, although more could be done to consistently challenge more able pupils. In the best lessons, pupils work together according to their abilities rather than age. Teaching is often enthusiastic, and pupils say they enjoy learning especially when teachers make lessons fun. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to promote learning well, and lessons are often planned around clear objectives that are shared with pupils. Relationships are very good and little time is lost in gaining pupils' attention. Marking in writing is affirming and encouraging, and provides some helpful guidance as to how to improve. This good practice is less developed in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Long-term planning provides an appropriate range of experiences within mixed-age classes without repeating learning. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) contributes directly to the positive outcomes in personal development, as does the good range of after-school clubs, visitors and visits offered. Take up for the wide range of sporting and other extra-curricular activities is high. These support learning well and add to pupils' enjoyment of school life. The physical education lessons delivered by additional support help to extend the curriculum and contribute to pupils' enjoyment of school. There is a good range of additional music tuition. The school has made significant improvements to information and communication technology (ICT) provision in recent years. Learning in ICT is supported by specialist teaching and this has led to a good development of skills. Long-term planning does not clearly identify links between subjects or the key skills to be taught. The school recognises this weakness and is planning improvements.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Each pupil and their family are known well. Any signs of unhappiness are quickly dealt with. Pastoral support for pupils is very strong and parents speak highly of the care and support provided for their children. Pupils talk about the high level of trust they have in their teachers. Safeguarding and recruitment procedures meet requirements and are reviewed and updated regularly, as are those for child protection. Those who need additional help or those who find learning more difficult are supported well because the school identifies such pupils quickly and continues carefully to guide their progress. However, pupils are not as involved in understanding how to improve as they could be because learning targets are rarely referred to in lessons or in feedback. The very good PSHE programme effectively promotes pupils' personal and emotional development and consistently adds to their excellent awareness of how to keep fit and healthy.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has gained the trust and confidence of the school community. He works effectively with staff and governors and together they demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. School leaders have a good understanding of how well the school is performing and what is required to ensure further improvement. A good example is the focus on writing, which has resulted in a marked improvement in progress across the school, although the school recognises there is further work to do. Systems of self-evaluation are appropriately focused on improving standards and achievement. The tracking and assessment procedures provide useful information to monitor the overall progress of the school and identify those pupils who are falling behind. Governors know the school well and provide an appropriate level of challenge. They evaluate the work of the school and have improved monitoring systems through focused visits with subject leaders.

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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 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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	2
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	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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 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

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	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

29 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Townley Primary School, Christchurch, Wisbech, PE14 9NA

Many of you will remember my visit to your school a little while ago. Thank you for making me so welcome. I was pleased to find how keen you were to share your thoughts about your school. This letter is to tell you what I found out. Yours is a good school. Your teachers help you to make good progress. Many of you work hard to help others and to improve your school, and you carry out your tasks well. I was pleased to see how committed you all are to making improvements and helping things to run smoothly. You behave well and take pride in what you do. You told me that you enjoy school and try your best, and I can see this in the things you do. Your parents are very pleased with the school. They can see how well Mr Glozier and the other staff look after you and are working hard to make your school better. The adults take good care of you and work to provide a safe and caring place for you to come to.

To help you do even better, I have asked the school to:

- plan a good way of teaching the curriculum so that you all learn the skills you need at the right times
- help you to understand what you need to do next to improve by giving you better written guidance in mathematics and personal targets in key subjects.

You can help by carrying on working hard and enjoying school.

I hope you continue to enjoy school and work hard for the future.

Ian Jones

Lead inspector