

Tower View Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124046
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328036
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2008
Reporting inspector	John Eadie

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)	366
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	Simon Collins
Headteacher	Anne James
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Vancouver Drive Winhill Burton-on-Trent DE15 0EZ
Telephone number	01283 239123
Fax number	01283 239127

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Tower View is a larger-than-average primary school. The school offers Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in two Reception classes and there is an on-site privately managed pre-school. There is also privately run before- and after-school provision. There has been considerable disruption to management as the school has been unable to replace the previous headteacher, who left at the end of the summer term. The deputy headteacher left at the same time. The school is currently being led by an executive headteacher, who also leads a successful local school, and there are two new deputy headteachers.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Tower View Primary is providing a satisfactory education for its pupils. In the recent past, significant numbers of pupils were not achieving as well as they should have been, but this issue has been addressed and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Although standards are below average, they are improving. Much of the reason for this improvement is due to the new senior leadership team who have made great efforts, in particular, to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Staff and governors have supported them fully in this and there is a shared commitment to ensure pupils' faster progress. Many parents note the improvements made, saying such things as, 'So much has happened in such a short time.' Children have a good start to their school life in the EYFS. The area is bright and welcoming, with a good range of appealing activities to develop children's learning.

One of the major strengths of the school is the high quality of pastoral care, for which the school has long had a justified reputation. All adults know the pupils and their circumstances well and, as a parent noted, this care 'extends to the whole family'. As a result, pupils are developing well into sensible young citizens, who behave well and work hard. They willingly take on a wide range of responsibilities in the school and enjoy their work in the local community, being involved in the organisation of a local fête for instance. Academic guidance and support is satisfactory as, although there are good systems for checking on pupils' progress, the pupils do not know the small steps they need to make to improve their work. This means that they cannot check on how effectively they are learning and teachers find it difficult to give clear guidance when they are marking.

Pupils enjoy school a good deal; they spoke enthusiastically about many aspects of school life. For example, they particularly enjoy the wide range of visits and visitors and the way these add to their learning. The curriculum is designed to provide pupils with a range of practical experiences, though links between subjects are not well established. For instance, pupils have few opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

A key improvement has been in the quality of teaching and learning, which has resulted in pupils' improved progress. The school has set an ambitious target for improvements in teaching and is well on the way to meeting this target. Standards in the national tests in 2007 were below average in mathematics and particularly in English. Work has been started to raise standards in mathematics and standards rose significantly in this subject in the provisional results for 2008. They also rose well in English, though standards of reading and writing found during the inspection are not good enough. However, pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to reach standards that are a little below average in English and mathematics by the time they leave.

Good management structures are working well to improve provision and raise standards. The local authority has been active in supporting the school and ensuring that things do not slip during the search for a new headteacher. Despite this, there is a strong team in place and a corporate desire for improvement. The progress made in the recent past demonstrates that there has been no loss of momentum, due to the good management structures put in place and the very effective work of managers at all levels. The school is well placed to continue improving.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

There is good provision for children in the EYFS. They join in Reception with levels of skills and knowledge below those expected and make rapid progress because of the clear expectations of adults, good relationships between staff and parents and a happy and well managed learning environment. Children achieve well in all areas of learning and are just below average levels by the end of Reception.

Activities are carefully planned to give children a wide range of new experiences and practice of basic skills in speaking and listening and early literacy and numeracy. The children enjoy recognising letter names and sounds, ordering numbers up to 10 or 20 and attempting to write letters on the whiteboard for their friends to see. They learn to choose and cut different materials, make designs and complete tasks. The area has been carefully organised to enable children to make choices independently and purposefully.

Activities led by an adult are planned carefully so that children have interesting tasks of sufficient difficulty and have opportunities to practise different skills. Teachers use assessment information well to plan tasks and make learning fun. Some activities that children choose for themselves are not planned with a sufficiently clear objective for their learning. These do not give enough opportunities for children to discover information for themselves and to explain their thinking, so developing their speaking and listening skills further. Children are very well cared for in a safe and happy environment. They use the Snack Mat area to choose a range of drinks and fruit independently. The newly refurbished outside play area is used well for all areas of learning. Leadership and management are good. There is a clear sense of purpose and consistency of approach.

What the school should do to improve further

- Put in place initiatives, particularly in reading and writing, to raise standards.
- Ensure that pupils know their next steps in learning so that teachers can use these targets when they mark pupils' work and involve pupils in checking on their own progress.
- Establish links between subjects, so that pupils have more opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Far too many pupils did not make the expected progress from their performance in Year 2 in 2004 to the provisional results in the national assessments in Year 6 in 2008. This indicates significant underachievement. However, initiatives put in place have already addressed this and most pupils are now achieving satisfactorily. Evidence shows that pupils currently in Year 6 are working at levels that are a little below average. However, standards in writing, and particularly in reading, were found to be lower than they should be through the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have clear plans made for their learning and are supported well, so they make the same progress as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are well behaved and accept responsibilities with maturity. The introduction of 'Golden Rules' and 'Golden Time' have ensured they gain recognition for their positive attitudes. Pupils are very proud of their school and enjoy their learning experiences. There is a good understanding of how to work together effectively and their consideration of others' needs means they provide good support for each other. Pupils are secure in their knowledge of how to live a healthy lifestyle and how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. They are actively involved in raising money for a variety of charities both local and international. Pupils' understanding of the different cultures within the United Kingdom today, although improving because of initiatives taken by the school, is not as well developed as their understanding of global issues. Attendance levels are average, though improving, and are not as high as they might be. Pupils are confident and polite and good ambassadors for their school. Their development of good working habits is preparing them well for their future, though their achievement in basic skills means that this aspect is satisfactory overall.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Much of the teaching seen during the inspection was good and there is evidence of recent improvements in this area. Planning is clear and caters for different abilities well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well by both teachers and teaching assistants. Teachers often ask testing questions as well as providing challenging activities to develop the thinking of the pupils, which often involves the creative use of resources. Independence and cooperation are effectively promoted and pupils benefit from the positive attitudes they are developing. However, teachers do not consistently set high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. At their most effective, targets for learning are clear and understood by every pupil because of accurate and informative marking. This is not yet consistent across the school and thus opportunities are being missed to accelerate learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has been planned to ensure that all groups of pupils are adequately catered for. There is suitable provision for personal, social and health education. The school is aware of weaknesses in its curricular provision and has made plans to address these. For instance, links between subjects and opportunities for practising literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects are not planned formally enough. Pupils therefore do not have the opportunities they need to improve their skills and subject knowledge. The school makes good provision for sports and there is a satisfactory range of out-of-school clubs. The curriculum is enhanced well by a good range of visits and visitors.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

High levels of pastoral care address pupils' physical and emotional needs very well. The school is justly proud of its reputation in this area. Processes for safeguarding pupils are securely in

place and practices show a high level of professionalism. The inclusion team are very effective in integrating new pupils into school, even when they present challenging behaviour or negative attitudes to learning. Pupils feel valued because of the care the school takes in celebrating individual achievements, whether these are in school or out of it. Adults know pupils well and are consequently trusted by them; these positive relationships are a strength of the school, enabling pupils to seek help when they need it. There are good systems for checking on pupils' progress, which are used well to identify any in danger of falling behind. However, teachers are not yet consistently informing pupils clearly enough about the next steps in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The new leadership team has rapidly established a very accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have involved staff fully in this and there is a renewed commitment from all to drive improvements. Monitoring is particularly rigorous, and carried out by a variety of managers, with very clear areas for development noted. Targets for improvement, as well as those set for pupils' progress, are challenging and very specific. Governors are supportive and challenge the school well, but are not fully involved in focused monitoring and evaluation. The school is a totally inclusive community, where all are valued. This is reflected in pupils' feelings of being involved and the very evident teamwork amongst all adults. Community cohesion is promoted well, particularly within the school and local community, with pupils also having a good awareness of global issues. Their knowledge of the British and European communities is not as strong, though developing. Good links have been established with outside agencies, other schools and parents, who are mostly very positive about the school.

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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?	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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	3
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**

27 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tower View Primary School, Burton-on-Trent, DE15 0EZ

Thank you so much for welcoming us to your school recently. We really enjoyed our time with you and listening to all you had to tell us about your school. Many of you told us about the improvements there have been recently and we agree that your school is improving. It is presently giving you a satisfactory education.

We were impressed with how well you behave and how well you are developing into responsible young people. This is because all adults look after you really well and they are helping this development. The progress you make is improving, although it is satisfactory at the moment. In many lessons, you are now making good progress because the quality of teaching is improving. The standards you reach by the time you leave are just below average, though these are improving as well. You make a good start in the Reception classes as all the adults in these classes make sure that there is a good range of exciting learning activities there. The major reason for the improvements being made is that your headteacher and all the staff have made determined efforts to make things better.

There are three things that we have suggested that the school needs to work on now to carry on these improvements:

- help you to raise the standards you are reaching, particularly in reading and writing
- help you to understand more clearly what you should learn next to make your work better. Then teachers can help you more effectively when they mark your work and you can check on how well you are doing.
- give you more opportunities to practise your literacy and numeracy skills in other lessons.

I know you will help by continuing to work hard and doing your best.

Best wishes

John D Eadie

Lead inspector