

Talbot First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124093
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328049
Inspection date	24 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Ted Wheatley

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	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	48
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	David Reeves
Headteacher	Susan Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Lane Kingstone Uttoxeter ST14 8QJ
Telephone number	01889 500273
Fax number	01889 500273

Age group	4–9
Inspection date	24 June 2009
Inspection number	328049

© Crown copyright 2009

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

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- whether the headteacher's absence is having a detrimental impact on the school's effectiveness
- how well the school is working to raise standards in writing and to improve the achievement of boys
- how well provision in the Reception class is improving and the impact of this on children's progress, especially their personal, social and emotional development.

Evidence was gathered from data on current standards and achievement, examination of pupils' work and school documents, observation of lessons, and discussions with the headteacher, governors, staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments of these areas, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a very small school. The teaching of most pupils takes place in mixed-age classes. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is in a Reception class. All pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is smaller than average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is larger than average.

The headteacher is absent due to ill health and the school is receiving support from the headteacher of a local school. There have been recent changes in school staffing and in the governing body, and there is a new chair of governors.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It is improving and parents are generally pleased with how well it serves their children. However, they express concern about how the absence of the headteacher will affect the education of their children. The governors and local authority have reacted rapidly to the situation and appointed a local headteacher to support the school. This is working well. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Sound procedures for evaluating current performance mean that all staff have a clear view of how well the school is doing and what it should do to improve further. Recent changes in staffing and responsibilities have led to some slowing in development, but staff are rapidly bringing themselves up to date in the areas they have taken on. The school has improved at a satisfactory pace since it was last inspected, and with staff fully committed to ensuring future success, shows a sound capacity for sustaining improvement in the future. The school's approach to promoting community cohesion is satisfactory. A clear view is in place of what the school needs to do to give pupils a good understanding of the values of other cultures. The governing body has worked very effectively to keep the school on track in recent times. It has high expectations for the future and sets challenging targets.

Overall standards are average, but they vary from year to year because year groups are small and attainment on entry varies. Achievement is broadly satisfactory due to sound teaching and there is no significant difference in the progress made by boys and girls. There has been some underachievement in recent years. The school has been successful in addressing this with teachers using assessment information with increasing accuracy so that most work matches closely pupils' learning needs. However, occasionally, the most able pupils do not do as well as they could because the work set is not sufficiently challenging. For example, when teachers question pupils they do not always ensure that the more able pupils give detailed enough answers or explanations. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress overall and some make good progress. Pupils achieve average standards in English, but their writing skills are weaker than their reading skills. In particular, they do not show a confident approach to completing writing tasks independently and not enough opportunities are provided for them to expand their writing skills in other subjects. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly average and improving due to recently acquired new resources and increasing competence of teachers in the subject.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school, their attendance is good and they behave well. Pupils have a good understanding of eating healthily and most take part in at least one physical activity. They feel safe and say no bullying takes place. Pupils feel confident that they could go to any adult if they needed help. Pupils know how to stay safe around the school site and behave sensibly moving around in classrooms and the narrow corridors. Pupils make a good level of contribution to the immediate and wider community. They all serve on the school council at some point while they are at the school. The council has aided school development through suggestions made for playground equipment, designs it has made for the wildlife area and decisions made about what to grow in the vegetable patch. Links with the local church and charities are good and pupils join in many village activities. Pupils get on well together, consider each other's feelings and are polite to adults. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. However, pupils' awareness and understanding about how people from other cultural backgrounds lead their lives in Britain is limited. Recent efforts by staff to address this area are starting to have a positive effect. Pupils' social skills are good,

and given their broadly average skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, their preparation for future life is satisfactory.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall with good enrichment, some of which is helping contribute to improving pupils' cultural awareness. For example, visits to a mosque and a synagogue, and the areas surrounding them are starting to help pupils understand other communities more effectively. Pupils enjoy taking part in the good range of extra-curricular activities including sports, music, drama, yoga and chess. However, the curriculum does not have enough planned opportunities in all subjects for pupils to develop and reinforce their writing skills, or enough demanding work to extend the most able pupils.

Care, support and guidance are satisfactory overall. Pastoral care is good and promotes pupils' good personal development. Relationships are good and contribute effectively to pupils' enjoyment of lessons and usually good behaviour. The school has good links with the parents, many of whom support school activities and raise funds, for example for computers. Effective links with external agencies help vulnerable pupils and provide support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Safeguarding requirements are fully met and rigorously carried out. Systems to ensure parents are fully informed about accidents have recently been updated, partially in response to parental concern. The academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory and improving as assessment procedures become more accurate. However, pupils are not always aware of how well they are doing, what their targets are or how they can improve their work.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The attainment of children starting school in the Early Years Foundation Stage varies from year to year. However, the current cohort attained at slightly below the levels expected for their age when they started the year. Children make broadly satisfactory progress and at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage attain average standards in all areas of learning except in their personal development, where they reach above average levels. Achievement is improving and new initiatives are accelerating children's progress. For example, the introduction of more systematic approaches to teaching children how sounds match to letters is developing children's reading and writing skills more quickly. Teaching is satisfactory overall and many interesting and well-planned activities take place in the classroom. However, some of the ongoing activities, particularly in the outdoor area, do not link clearly enough to expanding children's skills, knowledge and understanding in specific areas of learning, which is slowing children's progress. High-quality care, good induction procedures and good partnership with parents help children to settle in well. The relationships between children and staff are good and staff create a caring and supportive environment. As a result, children feel secure and happy and enjoy learning. Recent organisational changes mean that children are taught separately from Years 1 and 2 for all of the week and this is successfully accelerating their progress, as staff are able to focus more precisely on catering for the needs of all individuals. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory, areas for improvement have been accurately identified and provision is improving.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by ensuring work is always challenging, especially for the most able pupils.
- Improve standards in writing by making sure enough opportunities are available for pupils to expand their skills to write fluently, confidently and independently in all subjects.

- Make sure pupils know how well they are performing, what their targets are, and how to reach them.
- Improve children's progress in learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage by making sure that all activities planned show precisely how children will develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in specific areas of learning.

A small proportion of the 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.

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?	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	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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	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	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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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	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**

25 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Talbot First School, Kingstone, ST14 8QJ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. You told us a lot about what you think about your school and why you like it. What you said helped us make our judgements.

These are the main things we found out about your school.

- You are at a satisfactory school which is improving.
- You make satisfactory progress and this is improving because teachers are making sure work is more challenging for you than it has been.
- The acting headteacher is working closely with all the staff and governors to make sure things continue to improve for you.
- You behave well, your attendance is good and most of the time you work hard.
- You are considerate towards each other and it is good to see you taking an active part in the school council.
- You have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles; you eat sensibly and take part in physical exercise.
- The school is very safe and you are looked after very well.

To improve things, we have asked the school to do the following:

- help you do better by making sure work is always challenging enough, especially for the most able of you
- improve your writing by making sure you have opportunities in all subjects to write independently and expand your skills
- make sure you know what standards you reach, what your targets are and what you need to do to do even better
- make sure that work planned for those of you in the Early Years Foundation Stage always focuses clearly on different areas of learning.

You can help. For example, if you think work is not hard enough, tell the teacher and make sure you know how to improve your work.

Yours faithfully

Ted Wheatley

Lead inspector