

Townlands Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120191
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	339628
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Carol Worthington

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Adcock
Headteacher	Mrs Dawn White
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 14 lessons and all seven class teachers were seen. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, two governors, and two groups of pupils. Many pupils and some parents were informally spoken to. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at records of assessments of pupils' attainment, tracking of their progress and samples of their work in books. All safeguarding documents were scrutinised. Questionnaire returns from 54 parents and carers were analysed, as were those from 14 staff and 118 Key Stage 2 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether progress is consistent throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, after the many recent changes, and is now good enough to raise all pupils' attainment significantly by the end of Key Stage 2
- what impact the new curriculum is having on attainment and progress and how equal access is being achieved in Year 4, which is split between 3 classes
- how successful the new leadership team is being, in raising expectations and ambition for improvement, throughout the school.

Information about the school

This is an average sized primary school. Virtually all pupils are of White British origin, with very few from minority ethnic backgrounds. Nearly all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that of most schools, but there is a high concentration in upper Key Stage 2. A broadly average proportion of pupils have statements of special educational needs. Most have moderate learning, behavioural or speech and language difficulties. A few have physical disabilities or a degree of autism. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is about average. The headteacher has had four terms in post. The senior leadership team has been formed during the current academic year.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Since her appointment four terms ago, the headteacher has successfully communicated her vision for improvement to the whole staff, governors, pupils and parents. Senior leaders fully share in this ambition. Through effective self-evaluation, school leaders have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and work together as a highly committed and motivated team. Many beneficial changes have been implemented, for example, school leaders identified a weakness in writing, which has been tackled decisively by radical changes to the curriculum. This has motivated children to write about exciting topics and the impact can be seen in every classroom, where a wide variety of good quality written work appears in the curriculum project books. The robust progress tracking system has only been in existence for one year, but has already enabled support and guidance to be accurately aimed at underachieving groups, so attainment is rising rapidly in Key Stages 1 and 2.

Challenging targets have been exceeded in the current Year 6, and attainment is average, indicating good achievement from low starting points for pupils in this year group. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 have all made good progress from their starting points, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have all either met or exceeded challenging targets. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have made satisfactory progress. Differences in progress occur because of differences in teaching between Key Stages 1 and 2 and the early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 to 6, because teachers effectively make use of the school's good assessment systems to pitch work at an appropriate level to challenge all pupils, whatever their ability. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, achievement is only satisfactory because assessment is less well used in this way. There are also fewer practical opportunities both inside and outdoors to develop early writing skills.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average because of the school's persistent efforts to maintain it. Their behaviour is good, underpinned by a well established system of rewards and sanctions, which they themselves have helped to formulate. Incidents of bullying are rare and swiftly dealt with. Pastoral care is excellent, and pupils feel very secure, certain that there is always an adult they can talk to if they are worried. Pupils make a strong contribution to the life of the school through the school council and other areas of responsibility. They also make a good contribution to their own learning through voting for particular topics to study. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with spirituality being especially well fostered by the school's strong Christian ethos. They are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

Because of the rapid improvements in attainment and progress due to the good use of

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assessment, the engagement of children in curriculum choice and behaviour management, the school is in a good position to make further sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage:
 - develop the use of assessment, so that the next steps for learning are more precisely identified in children's 'Learning Journeys'
 - use assessment information to plan activities that better match the needs of individual children
 - extend the range of exciting and imaginative activities to develop children's curiosity and eagerness to learn, both inside and outside the classroom
 - provide a greater number of practical activities indoors and outside for children to develop their early writing skills.

■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils achieve well because of the prompt and thorough attention to underachievement as soon as it is identified. The motivating effect of the new creative curriculum also contributes to rising standards as it enables pupils to learn in ways that suit them best. In an excellent Year 6 lesson, pupils were able to express the powerful emotions they felt by watching an animated film of a short story, with flashbacks, using equally powerful vocabulary. Pupils of all abilities in Year 2 made good progress in using reference books to write a report about insects, because of the good guidance given by teachers and teaching assistants to different groups, including higher attainers and those with special educational needs and/or abilities. Writing develops particularly well in Key Stages 1 and 2, because of the many opportunities for pupils to write in the wider curriculum.

Pupils are happy in school. They enjoy their learning and are very pleased with the opportunities they get to influence their learning. They work well together in class. Their expressed opinions on the behaviour to be expected in classrooms led to the current and effective policy practised by all teachers. Pupils have good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, at an appropriate level for their age. They know what they must do to lead a healthy lifestyle; there is a good take up of sporting clubs and activities and they choose healthy food at break times.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The majority of teaching seen was good, with some excellent in Years 5 and 6. In the excellent lessons, teachers use assessment particularly well to plan work which challenges pupils of all abilities with tasks tailored to their particular needs, as in a Year 5 mathematics lesson on two-dimensional shapes. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, often being given a guided preview, by well-briefed teaching assistants, of work to be done in class. They are then able to make a good contribution to the class discussion, as seen in a lesson on persuasive writing. Many lessons are enhanced by the effective use of interactive whiteboards to illustrate a theme such as advertising. Teachers' marking is good. Pupils are given individual targets for improvement and 'steps to success' are glued into their books at the start of every piece of work. They are increasingly being encouraged to use these to guide and assess aspects of their own learning.

The curriculum has been reviewed in the last year and is now well planned, with imaginative themes that cross traditional subject boundaries. There are many good opportunities for pupils to use and develop literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). The progression of subject knowledge is carefully checked, so pupils, including those in Year 4 in three different classes, achieve well in science, religious education and humanities. Relevant visits are a strong and a popular feature of the curriculum themes. There are many clubs and activities, particularly in sport, arts and music, which are well supported.

Pastoral care is excellent, with particular strengths in the care for children and families in vulnerable circumstances. There is very good provision for children with special

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educational needs and/or disabilities, who are able to access the full curriculum and all make good progress because of closely targeted support and guidance. Pupils are given very good guidance when they start school and to help prepare them for secondary education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher made a highly accurate evaluation of the school on taking up the post and immediately introduced new strategies for improvement. The progress tracking system, new behaviour policy, the creative curriculum and the overhaul of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have been highly effective in improving attainment and achievement for all pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. Changes to improve progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage are planned for the new academic year. Very capable senior and middle leaders are constantly looking for the next step forward, and having significant impact on standards in English and mathematics which are improving rapidly.

The governing body is highly committed to the school, has good knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses and is very supportive of the changes initiated by the headteacher. Governors are rigorous in ensuring that all procedures for safeguarding pupils and staff are up to date and take into account developing technologies such as the internet.

School leaders are vigilant in monitoring the deployment of staff and resources to make sure all pupils get equal opportunity to access the curriculum and take part in all school activities. A good example of this is teaching assistants often being deployed to give further challenge to higher ability pupils, and not only to support those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils in vulnerable circumstances get very well-targeted support to help them overcome barriers to learning.

The school is a cohesive community where everyone is valued. The unifying influence of the Christian ethos is apparent in all aspects of school life and in its strong links with local churches and other institutions. It has productive partnerships with local schools which enhance the curriculum, particularly for sport. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures in religious education, and community responsibility from visiting magistrates. The school has established a productive link with a Muslim school which pupils reported they enjoyed visiting.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Attainment on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year and children sometimes begin school with low levels of skill and knowledge. However, children currently in Reception began with skills and knowledge that were generally in line with their ages. By the time they enter Year 1, the proportion of children attaining the early learning goals varies considerably year on year, but the majority make satisfactory progress from their starting points. This reflects the satisfactory quality of teaching and learning in lessons.

Children make satisfactory progress in reading because of the successful 'letters and sounds' programme and individually reading to adults from an early age. Early writing skills develop more slowly because there are not enough opportunities for children to practise early writing in independent play activities. There are warm relationships between adults and children, so children are confident and happy in this secure and welcoming environment. They settle happily on the carpet and listen carefully to their teacher as she reads them a story. They thoroughly enjoy listening and making comments. Children behave well, their social skills are good and they work and play well together, readily engaging in the activities prepared for them, for example, painting symmetrical 'butterflies' on paper or on the interactive whiteboard

There is an adequately equipped learning environment both indoors and outdoors with free and flexible use of both areas by children. Children enjoy adult-led activities such as learning about capacity with jugs and beakers in the water tray, but opportunities for independent learning through play are limited. There are too few activities, both inside

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and out, which excite their imagination and curiosity. The learning objectives for independent activities are often unclear.

Satisfactory leadership ensures sound planning and there is some effective use of assessment to ensure that activities are matched well to the different abilities of the children. This does not always apply, however, because the next steps in learning to raise the attainment of individual children are not always identified on their 'Learning Journeys'. The safety and care of all children has a very high profile. Good relationships with parents and carers extend children's learning into their homes.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who returned completed questionnaires were very positive about the school. All those who responded to the questionnaire said they were happy with their child's school experience. All thought their children enjoy school, are kept safe and helped to have a healthy lifestyle. They were pleased with the quality of teaching, but one or two felt they could have more information about their child's progress. Inspectors agree with the positive comments. They found the school does as much as most schools to inform parents about progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Townlands Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 199 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	61	21	39	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	72	15	28	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	41	26	48	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	43	28	52	3	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	56	22	41	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	54	23	43	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	54	25	46	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	20	37	31	57	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	35	32	59	3	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	50	24	44	2	4	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	43	29	54	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	39	72	12	22	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	65	19	35	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Townlands Church of England Primary School, Leicester, LE9 7FF

Thank you very much for being so helpful to my colleagues and me during our visit. We agree with you that yours is a good school.

Your headteacher does a good job. She and other leaders have worked very hard to improve your attainment and progress in the past year. We know you particularly like the new curriculum because you can vote to study topics that really interest you. You have also made your voice heard on how you would like bad behaviour to be dealt with. Most of you behave well, and come to school wanting to learn, and this helps you make the most of your school days. All the adults take very good care of you and you can always talk to someone if you are worried. You know how to keep yourselves healthy and safe, and many of you do useful jobs in school.

In Key Stages 1 and 2 you make good progress in learning, because teachers check your work well, so they can give you clear next steps in learning. You are also learning to assess your own progress and help set your own targets.

Younger children in Reception make satisfactory progress. They enjoy their learning, but are not always guided towards the next steps they need to take to make progress. They also don't have a wide enough range of activities, inside and out, to help them practise their early writing.

All the adults in your school want it to be even better. To make this happen I have asked them to do the following things in Reception:

- use assessment better to improve children's progress
- provide a greater range of practical activities which help children to learn and help them to practise their writing both inside and out.

You can help by encouraging your younger brothers, sisters and friends to write at home.

Yours sincerely

Carol Worthington

Lead inspector

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