



Tonwell St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117388
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280062
Inspection dates 30 January 2006 to 31 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. David Manuel LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ware Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		SG12 0HN
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01920462894
Number on roll	56	Fax number	01920462894
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Robert Boulton
Date of previous inspection	20 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Jean Newman

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 30 January 2006 - 31 January 2006	Inspection number 280062
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Tonwell St Mary's is a very small Church of England school serving the village of Tonwell and the surrounding area. The area is a mix of privately owned, rented and local authority housing. Most pupils are of White British origin. An above average proportion of pupils have special learning difficulties and disabilities and a higher than average proportion of pupils have statements of special educational needs. Attainment on entry to the school is variable but broadly average overall. In September 2005, the school admitted children of nursery age for the first time. In the past two years the school, on its very small site, has experienced a period of significant disruption because of alterations to accommodation. Considerable staffing changes have also taken place in the past year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school judges itself to be satisfactory, mainly because of the instability of recent years. Inspection judgments confirm this but also identify some good features. The school provides satisfactory value for money. However, it is evident that with the improved accommodation, the newly established staff and the good leadership of the headteacher, the school has good capacity for improvement. Governors have provided good support during the period of instability. Most of the issues identified at the time of the previous inspection have been resolved. Improvements are still needed in the management structure for the new staff and the use of assessment to set clear targets. Children in the Foundation Stage receive a good start to their education and most are likely to achieve the standards expected for their age by the end of reception. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6 is good but teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Pupils' personal development and wellbeing are good. Pupils display positive attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons and around the school. Relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils themselves are good and reflect the good quality of care, support and guidance provided by the school. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of additional activities which contributes to pupils' enjoyment and achievement. Attendance rates have fluctuated over recent years but are broadly average overall. Parents are very supportive and have high regard for the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Consolidate the new management systems to support and monitor improvements, particularly in Years 1 and 2. - Build on the new assessment procedures and target setting to fully extend the achievement of all pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Overall standards and achievement are satisfactory. Within the small numbers of pupils in each year group, standards on entry vary considerably. Prior to this academic year, children started in reception at the age of four. They can now start in the nursery when they are three. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well, especially those with particular learning needs. Most children are likely to achieve the levels expected by the end of reception. The school's performance in the 2005 national tests for seven-year-olds was below the national average. This was mainly due to the fact that few pupils gained the higher Level 3. In the tests for eleven-year-olds the results were above the national average and their rate of progress from Year 2 was at the expected level. Last term, the school introduced new procedures to improve identified weaknesses in mathematics and these are proving successful. A high proportion of pupils in the current Year 6 have learning difficulties. Detailed records show that most are achieving as well as they should, a few better than this, but standards are likely to be below expected levels by the end of Year 6. Records show that pupils in all year groups

consistently achieve the expected rate of progress during their time in the school. They generally meet the targets set for them and there is no significant underachievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils clearly enjoy school. They form good relationships with adults and each other. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about what they are learning and enjoy the after school activities provided for them. Pupils know the school rules and are keen to gain certificates for good effort or attainment. Pupils work and play together well and incidents of bullying or anti-social behaviour are very rare. They are confident and know that adults will help them if necessary. Pupils have a good sense of community spirit, demonstrated in their contributions around the school, including a sculpture which they created at the front of the school. They confidently express their views in school council meetings. Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles through awareness of the need for a healthy diet, staying safe and participation in a range of sporting activities. Pupils are keen to help others less fortunate than themselves through fund raising activities for charities, such as Christian Aid. They are also involved in local community events and church festivals. Pupils appreciate the different cultures in society and develop a good understanding of different faiths. As a result of these successes, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6 is good, while in Years 1 and 2 teaching is satisfactory. Following a period of staff changes, the new teachers have formed a good team and work together well. The best teaching is lively and challenging and motivates pupils. In these lessons, pupils learn well because tasks are matched to the full range of needs. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and this helps to meet the wide range of different capabilities. Where teaching is less successful, there are weaknesses in planning and there is insufficient challenge for the full range of pupils' capabilities. New assessment procedures were introduced in September 2005. They are detailed and provide teachers with useful information about how to plan the next stage in learning, particularly in English and mathematics. To support these procedures further, teachers involve pupils in discussions about their learning and the setting of new targets to be achieved. Pupils are also involved more in their own self-assessment. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils and as a result, pupils respond well in the improved learning environment. There is now a need to build on the new assessment procedures to ensure that pupils of all capabilities are fully extended.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum which is suitably broad and balanced and meets the needs of all pupils. Provision ensures that pupils develop important basic skills, together with healthy lifestyles and aspects of personal safety. This prepares them well for the next stage of education and for adult life. Recent changes in provision for mathematics have increased the opportunities for mental calculation, resulting in improved responses by pupils. New strategies have also improved the links between information and communication technology and other subjects and interactive whiteboards are to be introduced soon. A good range of after school activities is offered and successfully develops pupils' interests and skills. A local artist and a local sculptor have worked with pupils to enrich their learning experiences. Pupils also visit places of interest to increase their knowledge and understanding of subjects such as history. Links with local industry, the church and other schools also supplement the curriculum well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. Teachers and teaching assistants work hard to provide effective support for pupils of all capabilities and backgrounds. Pupils agree that their teachers help them a lot. Child protection arrangements are well established and known by all adults. Provision for the significant number of pupils with special learning difficulties and disabilities is well organised. Pupils are given clear guidance for their personal and social development through well planned sessions when they share ideas together on a range of topics. The school building has been much improved in recent years, resulting in a safer and more attractive learning environment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by the governing body. Together they have worked tirelessly since the previous inspection to bring about the required improvements in the Foundation Stage, in teaching and provision and in the unsatisfactory accommodation in particular. As a result of these improvements, stability and enjoyment have been brought to the daily life of the school. Good team work is developing a positive learning environment which encourages pupils to improve their academic and personal skills. However, the school now needs to consolidate the new management systems with the recently appointed staff to support and monitor improvements throughout the school, but particularly in Years 1 and 2. The headteacher and governors have maintained the very good relationships that exist between parents and the school and actively seek the views of the parents. Parents provide very good support for the school in many ways. The school has effective procedures for checking

its own performance and is working successfully towards increasing the amount of good teaching and learning. Governors are experienced, supportive and challenging and have made significant contributions to the recent developments within the school. With a more settled staff, improved provision and accommodation, the school's capacity to improve further is good.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Following my visit to your school, I would like to thank you for helping me. I enjoyed being in your school very much and was pleased to speak to you and learn about what you thought of your school. I believe that you go to a very caring school, where your headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants look after you well. The lessons I saw were interesting and you obviously enjoy them a lot. You are all trying hard to improve in all subjects. You helped each other in lessons and played well together at playtimes. I think your school council has some very good ideas to help everyone enjoy their time at the school. I wish you success with your new idea for a Healthy Tuck Shop. You are benefiting from improvements in the building with more classrooms, more space and a new library area. I hope you will enjoy these improvements. To become better still your school should help the teachers newly in charge of subjects to do their job as well as they can. Your teachers also need to tell you more clearly how well you are doing and how to improve so you do better work. I hope you continue to enjoy your lessons and playing together. I wish you well and feel that your school will continue to improve.