

Toner Avenue Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108704
Local Authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	309772
Inspection dates	1–2 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Mary Sewell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	322
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Malcolm Carr
Headteacher	Mr Kieran Quigley
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2004
School address	Johnston Avenue Hebburn Tyne and Wear NE31 2LJ
Telephone number	0191 4202588
Fax number	0191 4203524

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. There is a smaller than average number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who have a statement of special educational need. The headteacher took up post in September 2007. The school is a member of Bede Excellence in Cities Action Zone and a local Sports Development project. It has school Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Pupils receive a satisfactory education. This is a rapidly improving school, which is much appreciated by parents, one of whom wrote, 'The school benefits from a community-minded and open-thinking head.' The headteacher and governors have a clear vision of the school as pivotal to the educational and cultural development of the community. Partnerships with families and other agencies are particularly strong and many families are benefiting from sharing learning with their children.

Since September the leadership team has been restructured and retrained. Staff are implementing rigorous and robust systems of monitoring. This is starting to have an impact and the capacity for improvement is good. The school's priorities for improvement are the right ones and the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. The school benefits from particularly strong governance and offers satisfactory value for money.

Subject coordinators are beginning to collect more detailed assessment information but this is not yet used to plan lessons that focus on individual needs. Pupils are not able to discuss what they need to do to improve their work because they are not always set specific learning targets.

Children's starting points on entry to the Foundation Stage are below those typical for their age. By the end of Year 6 standards reach levels that are in line with national averages. This represents satisfactory progress overall because rates of progress vary at different points throughout the school. This is due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils make more rapid progress in Year 6 and Key Stage 1 than in Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 5.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The quality of lessons varies from satisfactory to good. There is insufficient consistently good teaching to ensure good progress throughout the school, and irregular monitoring of lessons does not lead to improvement. A systematic approach to managing behaviour produces a calm and friendly environment which promotes learning. Excellent classroom displays help to provide a positive learning ethos and celebrate the work of the pupils.

Pupils attend regularly and really enjoy school. They are able to talk about how to stay healthy and safe. Their behaviour is good. The school works well with the community and is developing much closer links with parents. Pupils show good powers of concentration and confidence which prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. Children enter with levels of development below those typical for their age. They make good progress in personal, creative and physical development, but by the end of Reception their skills in literacy and numeracy remain below those expected for their age. Children enjoy their learning and work well together because of well established routines, satisfactory teaching and stimulating activities both inside the classroom and outdoors. Staff work well as a team, planning their work as a single unit to ensure good use of resources. The location of classrooms occasionally limits the benefits of staff-child ratios but all children have access to an attractive environment that is well organised and encourages independent learning. Assessment is systematic and accurate. There is a good balance between activities chosen by the children and those led by an adult, although

opportunities for improving writing skills across the curriculum are sometimes missed. Partnership with parents is strong and parents are kept well informed of their child's progress and current educational practice. The recently appointed coordinator has ensured continuity of provision and a positive ethos during staff changes and training initiatives.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards throughout the school and improve achievement in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2.
- Monitor more closely the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in classes where progress is too slow.
- Use assessment information more effectively to set individual pupil targets.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. However, evidence from the pupils' work and school data indicates that standards are rising rapidly. When pupils enter Year 1 their skills in literacy and numeracy are below those expected for their age. Progress is strongest in Key Stage 1, and in the 2007 tests pupils reached standards which were above the national average. Progress is slower between Years 3 and 5 but accelerates rapidly in Year 6. Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2007 were in line with national averages, although fewer pupils obtained the higher levels than nationally. However, all evidence from the pupils' work and school data indicates standards are rising rapidly, including more able pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have had their particular needs reviewed and now all pupils are making satisfactory progress. Through its involvement with the local authority project to help schools set targets, the school is improving its approach to setting school targets and monitoring pupils' progress. This is already having a positive impact on standards. However, there is insufficient use of individual targets in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils love coming to school, and a typical comment from pupils was, 'it is superb'. They enjoy school because they say learning is becoming more exciting. Their visit to a mosque inspired discussion on the lifestyles of Muslims. Pupils are well behaved in and around the school and any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly by staff. Pupils attend regularly and are eager to take part in the numerous additional activities especially the school choir and musical groups. Playground buddies supervise play equipment and take charge of younger children. Pupils make good progress in their social, moral and cultural development. Their reverential involvement in assemblies testifies to their very good spiritual development. Pupils from the school council confirm that they know how to stay healthy and safe. They are proud of their involvement in raising funds for charities and their 'Beat the Boss-Style' project. They have become familiar with the secondary school which is providing support for science and sports through the Sports Development project. This, combined with satisfactory standards in literacy and numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), ensures they are equipped for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and in a number of lessons seen teaching was good. The best lessons are briskly paced, well informed and challenging. Teachers' subject expertise is good; they make lessons lively and enjoyable by introducing different activities. A positive atmosphere for learning is created quickly because teachers are enthusiastic and relationships are good. Pupils are motivated to learn by bright stimulating classrooms where their work is well displayed. Teachers make effective use of ICT to motivate pupils' learning. Although lesson objectives are shared with pupils, planning of lessons does not always make clear how work will be organised to match pupils' existing skills and knowledge. Pupils' work is marked carefully but information obtained is not as yet used to plan future work or to set personal attainment targets for pupils. Pupils are unclear about their current levels of performance and do not know what they need to do to improve their work. Where there is support in lessons for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities they make satisfactory progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, offering many and varied opportunities to meet pupils' interests and promote good personal development. The school has recently begun to focus on providing more opportunities for pupils to develop links in their learning between different subjects as in the 'Child Initiated Learning' project. All statutory requirements are met. Music is a particular strength. During the inspection, older pupils enthusiastically learned about choral singing whilst preparing for a community performance. French is well taught and enriched by a recent residential visit to France. The school has already achieved an International School Award. Personal, social and health education provides pupils with a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe. Pupils benefit from an extensive range of clubs and activities after school. ICT skills have been particularly enhanced by the sharing of facilities with the local high school. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Although the quality of care and support for pupils is good, they are not sufficiently well guided in their academic progress. Teachers are not yet making best use of performance data to set targets or monitor pupils' progress. As a result, advice to pupils on how to improve their work is insufficiently precise. Attendance in the current year is just above national average. The school liaises very closely with a range of other professionals to ensure good care and support for pupils. All adults are highly committed to the welfare of pupils. The procedures for ensuring child protection and safeguarding are all in place. The overwhelming majority of parents praise the school for its openness and support. Pupils feel well cared for, safe and secure and are confident that they are listened to. Links with the community and partnerships with other schools are good and contribute to the smooth transition pupils make into Year 7. Parents receive clear and informative reports and value the popular school newsletter.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership. He has a clear vision for improvement and has focused the staff's attention on raising achievement. He works well with the governors to establish the school at the heart of the community. Good capacity to improve is demonstrated by the new systems that are already having a positive impact on raising standards. The introduction of systems for evaluating the work of the school are robust and rigorous. However, monitoring of teaching and learning is currently too infrequent. The school is in the early stages of improving the quality of teaching and learning by sharing good practice. Governors provide strong and informed support but recognise that the school still has issues to resolve. The chair of governors has helped to introduce management strategies that are supporting school evaluation. The hard working subject coordinators have benefited from additional training and are now prioritising the monitoring of work in their subjects. Improvement since the last inspection has focused on improving the facilities for early years but has been slower embedding assessment and monitoring strategies. Inspectors and a senior teacher observed lessons together and confirmed the accuracy of school's evaluation of the strengths and areas for improvement in teaching and learning.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	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 disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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
How well 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 the learners' needs?	3
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?	3

¹ Grade 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.

Annex A

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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

3 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Toner Avenue Primary School, South Tyneside, NE31 2LJ

Thank you all so much for taking part in this inspection, especially those of you who took the time to come and talk to us about your experiences of school. You all looked really smart in your uniforms.

I thought you would like to know what we found when we visited your school. Your school provides you with a satisfactory level of education. We thought all your teachers worked very hard to help you keep safe, healthy and happy. We found some of your lessons made you really think and work hard but they were not all like this and so we have asked your school to set you some learning targets. This will mean you will be able to understand what you need to do to improve your own work and help you to make even better progress.

The headteacher and governors are enthusiastic about developing a school which will be the heart of the community. Already many of your parents are able to come to school with your baby brothers and sisters to learn with you. We have also asked the headteacher and governors to join you in your lessons so that they can watch how you learn. You can play your part in this by really working hard and aiming to achieve those targets!

We were very impressed by your good behaviour, your politeness and friendly enquiries about what we were doing in your school. I particularly enjoyed the school choir and the music clubs.

I wish you all the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Mary Sewell

Lead inspector