

Town End Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112639
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	310959
Inspection date	9 October 2008
Reporting inspector	George Derby

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Julie Bradder
Headteacher	Mr Jonathan Dey
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2004
School address	Alfreton Road Tibshelf Alfreton Derbyshire DE55 5PB
Telephone number	01773 872306
Fax number	01773 872306

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how the pupils progress through the school and the improvements made in their writing; the provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs who are working at an early stage of development; and the impact of leaders' monitoring and evaluation.

Evidence was also gathered from the pupils' work, observations of teaching and school life, analysis of parental questionnaires, and discussions with staff and pupils.

Other aspects were not investigated in as much detail, but no evidence was found to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Town End Junior School is a smaller than average school. Pupil numbers have dropped recently due to population changes in the Tibshelf area. Most pupils are of White British origin. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is average as is the proportion with a learning difficulty or disability. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is higher than the average. Pupils enter the school with skills, knowledge and understanding which is generally above average. At times it is just average, as for the Year 6 pupils who left the school this summer.

The school has just achieved an ECO Green Flag award as a result of its recent re-assessment, has a Basic Skills Quality Mark and an ActiveMark Award. It has a charter mark for its financial management and is in the final stages of its work towards a Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Town End Junior School is a good school. The excellent atmosphere created does a great deal for pupils' personal development, which is outstanding as a consequence. All this is a result of the determination and dedication of the headteacher and staff team who make every effort to do their very best for the school and its pupils. The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Pupils are kept safe and their personal needs carefully focused upon.

The school celebrates pupils' individual skills and talents and makes them feel part of a big family. The excellent displays of their work in the corridors and classrooms say it all - this is a school that puts its pupils first and strives hard to make it better all the time. The school helps pupils develop great confidence and their self-esteem goes through the roof. As well-rounded individuals, they are really well prepared for their next school. Not only do they develop good basic skills, through their enterprise activities, running the Tuitty Fruity cafe, their financial management of the school council budget, and their ambassadorial duties presenting Town End's activities to other schools, they develop other skills which stand them in really good stead for later life. Pupils are taught to care for others. They take great pride in supporting younger pupils, approach their office reception duties confidently, and take very seriously their charity work, helping a nursery school in Gambia. They have an excellent understanding of how to care for themselves, keeping healthy and safe, and also for their environment.

This is a harmonious community where staff go that extra mile for the pupils and their families. It is based on strong values of care for the individual, looking after the earth and respect for others, and reaches out particularly well to the local and wider world communities. As a result, pupils develop a very strong sense of their place in the world, their understanding of global issues and, by what they do, how they can influence what happens in the future.

Parents are extremely positive about how effective the school is and about the myriad of interesting activities that enrich the curriculum and pupils' intellectual, physical and emotional health. Their many effusive comments, mirror pupils' own views. One parent wrote that this is, 'a great school' and another about her children, 'both are enthusiastic about attending which is a reflection on the adults and the security they feel'. Pupils enjoy school immensely and their views about the school are extremely positive.

The school is well led and managed. Strong leadership is provided by an insightful headteacher. Working with a whole range of partners to enhance provision, including a strong senior management team and knowledgeable chair of governors, he has done much to improve the school since his arrival. The work of subject leaders has developed well since the last inspection four years ago and they now have a better understanding of the progress made by pupils in their subjects. Through their monitoring arrangements, they have a good knowledge of the developments needed, and of what needs to be planned for the future.

A key focus by the headteacher has been to ensure a smooth transition for pupils moving into the school and also onto secondary school, features which have been particularly successful and praised by parents. Collaborating with the infant school, staff have worked together on assessing and moderating the end of Year 2 assessments, a good move. The headteacher has formed a cohesive team of staff, has good ways of checking the school's performance and a clear view of strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, the school is now well placed to improve further.

Another important goal has been in the improvement in the pupils' writing skills. Pupils, especially the boys, have not made the progress in these, that they have they have in other subjects in the past. This is mainly why improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall, rather than good. However, the school's hard work is now paying off. Initiatives have been well led by the English coordinator who has a very good understanding of the subject and of how to improve provision and achievement. Standards have now risen and the underachievement in boy's writing has been halted. Attainment in writing for the Year 6 pupils in 2008 was broadly average as was English performance overall, a good improvement on previous years. Mathematics and science standards were above average and particularly for the pupils attaining the higher level (Level 5). Standards overall were above average and pupils achieved well. They made good progress from their average starting points at the beginning of Year 3.

The school's good curriculum, with its exceptional array of additional activities, has been modified over the past year. This is to provide pupils with wider, more integrated opportunities, especially to have a purpose to write. It is also to help them understand the relevance of the tasks they undertake. Their enthusiasm for writing has increased as a result, and they see purpose in what they do. Their knowledge of their personal targets and of how to improve over time is impressive. The school has planned more work to raise pupils' writing achievement even further. The current Year 6 are on their way to reaching high standards in mathematics and science and slightly above average standards in English. This represents good achievement.

All this has taken hard work and a clear determination to eradicate any weakness and improve provision. Teaching and learning are good. The headteacher, through his rigorous monitoring, recognised that there has been some slowing of progress in the lower part of the school. Through support and coaching of staff, the transition through Key Stage 2 is now more even, although the acceleration in the upper part is undoubtedly due to the high calibre of teaching seen there. In English, a key to the positive nature of pupils' learning is the precise focus on what they are learning and to them knowing the success criteria in lessons. This, and the way pupils self- and peer- assess, have done much to raise standards. Pupils understand these terms well and what they must do when they are used. Staff make the criteria clear to pupils and the different groups know which they are working to. This is in an order of difficulty and pupils are always urged to reach the greatest possible level, thus creating a high degree of challenge. In other subjects, this is not as pronounced. Although pupils are given different work to do, what they are to precisely achieve is not always clearly set out in the same way.

The school works hard to include all its pupils in lessons, especially those with a learning difficulty or disability. The vast majority of these pupils make good progress because what is planned for them is carefully thought out in terms of the provision and support they need. However, the school has encountered a considerable challenge in the past 12 months, in that it is now admitting a very small number of pupils whose statement indicates they are working at a particularly early stage of development. These, too, are included in the majority of lessons. However, although training is planned, staff do not yet have a full understanding of their performance levels ('p' levels), the way work can be modified or of how to keep a track of their progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in boy's writing further.
- Improve staff's knowledge of the levels that pupils with the greatest learning needs are working at, how work can be modified for them and how their progress can be tracked.

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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?	2
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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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?	2

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?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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**

10 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Town End Junior School, Tibshelf, DE55 5PB

What a good school you have! It clearly prepares you in 'Learning for Life', your motto. It is due to the hard work of the headteacher, Mr Dey, and all the staff working together that you have such a good environment in which to learn.

Thanks for spending the time to talk with me about all your activities and for showing me your work. It was a joy to explore your ideas about the school - you had so much to tell me! I was impressed about how knowledgeable you are about your targets. You display great maturity and can reflect your ideas about a whole range of issues. Your ECO work gives you a great perspective on local and world issues and you are clearly very knowledgeable. I was particularly impressed with the high quality of your learning logs in which you record your homework, your enthusiasm for finding things out and the way you work at being ambassadors for the school. I know you are proud of your school and rightly so.

I really enjoyed looking at the displays, which show some of the amazing work you do in the school and community. I could also see how you have improved with your writing, especially the boys. Mr Dey clearly knows what needs to be done.

In order to improve things further I have asked the school to do the following:

- to improve the boys' writing even further
- that staff who work with pupils who need the greatest help with learning have a better knowledge of the levels they are working at and of how to plan work for their particular needs.

George Derby

Lead inspector