

Townhill Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116132
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	312187
Inspection dates	25-26 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Janet Sinclair

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

Type of School	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Valerie King
Headteacher	Mrs Penny J Orme
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2005
School address	Benhams Road Southampton SO18 2FG
Telephone number	02380 474835
Fax number	02380 466621

Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils join this average-sized infant school with skills and abilities that are mainly well below average, with particular weaknesses in early literacy and numeracy skills. There is a higher than average number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Entitlement to free school meals is much higher than average. There are a small proportion of pupils with English as an additional language, some of whom are at an early stage of learning English. A Sure Start Centre has recently been opened on the school site. The school has Enhanced Healthy Schools and Investors in People status, Basic Skills and Activemarks.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It is a very happy, caring community where pupils thrive both academically and personally. All staff work tirelessly to promote excellent achievement in pupils' work and their personal development. The headteacher is inspirational, carefully nurturing and developing the talents of the whole school staff to ensure the best possible learning experiences for pupils. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. As one parent said, 'My child has had an excellent start to his education because he has had excellent teaching and care and there is a very good partnership with parents'. The school rightly deserves its high standing in the community.

Children get off to an excellent start in the Foundation Stage and this is built on very successfully in Key Stage 1 so that pupils attain above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Their achievement is outstanding and is due to excellent teaching, and a stimulating curriculum, which fully engages pupils in their learning. A very good example of this is the English work that Year 2 are doing on the sinking of the Titanic. Pupils were enthralled when teachers role-played being survivors. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils. They match work extremely well to pupils' abilities ensuring that they make very good progress and enjoy their learning. Teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to the work of the school through their commitment to professional development and their very effective work with small groups and individuals. Monitoring of pupils' progress is extremely rigorous. It enables the school to provide well-focused work and set clear targets for improvement that enable all pupils to reach their full potential. This, an excellent curriculum and a very high level of pastoral care, supports pupils' outstanding personal development.

Pupils work very well together, fully enjoy all the activities and experiences on offer and are thoughtful and kind to each other. They take their responsibilities as school councillors and on occasion 'inspectors' of lessons very seriously. They have a very clear understanding of how to stay healthy, happily quoting, 'fruit, vegetables, proteins and exercise,' as part of a healthy lifestyle. Attendance, which was below average at the last inspection, is now average and the school has worked extremely hard to achieve this. However, in spite of this, some parents still do not fully recognise the importance of regular attendance.

Outstanding leadership and management at all levels underpins the schools many successes. In this school, every child matters. There is no hint of complacency as staff are constantly striving towards improving pupils' learning experiences and their own professional expertise. The recent work on, 'Talk it, Solve it' as a way of extending pupils' mathematical vocabulary and problem solving ability, is an example of this. There has been excellent improvement since the last inspection as staff have ensured that the weaknesses identified in science and information and communication technology (ICT) have been comprehensively addressed and pupils achievement significantly improved. Given the improvements since the last inspection and the excellence of the school's provision, it has an outstanding capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Excellent provision across all aspects of the Foundation Stage ensures that children make very good progress. Staff place a huge emphasis on children managing their own learning and this ensures they quickly become independent learners who are motivated and fully engaged in their learning. Staff teach children letter sounds very effectively and this helps them to make a very good start to reading and writing. Excellent relationships at all levels and very effective leadership ensure that the children get the very best start to their education. A very important component of provision is the way in which staff carefully monitor children's progress so that work is well targeted at their learning needs within an exciting and relevant curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attendance by continuing to emphasise to parents the impact that absence from school has on their child's progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards are above average. Pupils' achievement is outstanding. High quality teaching, together with a very clear focus on matching work well to their needs and involving them in their learning ensures that they attain results that are above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This has been mainly the case for several years. The school has worked hard to improve science since the last inspection and this year over half of the pupils achieved the higher Level 3. The school tracks pupils' progress rigorously. Consequently, pupils with learning difficulties are identified early and effective support given so that they make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The school also ensures that high attaining pupils have clear education plans so that they too maximise their learning potential.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy the range of opportunities provided and develop excellent personal qualities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent as shown in pupils' outstanding relationships, their ability to reflect on a wide range of issues and their considerate behaviour. Pupils feel very safe in school clearly stating that there is no bullying and that they are confident of adult support should they have any worries. They have an excellent understanding of a healthy lifestyle and particularly enjoy the wide range of physical activities, such as football and dance that are on offer. Pupils are developing an outstanding sense of being good citizens. The wide range of responsibilities is exceptional for young children, for example, pupils are part of a network of school councillors, contribute to playground rules, fund raise and participate in the Southampton Civic Award scheme. Pupils' excellent achievement in basic skills and very well developed personal skills mean that they are extremely well prepared for their future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching is outstanding because teachers carefully plan pupils' learning based on accurate assessment information. This ensures they can give excellent support and guidance and appropriately challenge pupils, enabling them to make exceptionally good progress. Relationships are excellent and teachers make lessons interesting and fun. Consequently, pupils really enjoy them and develop an enthusiasm for learning. This was seen in a Year 2 writing lesson where the whole class was engrossed in a game of, 'Who wants to be a millionaire', in order to remind themselves of the key facts in the Titanic story. Through very effective questioning and a strong focus on the development of appropriate vocabulary, teachers develop pupils' language skills very well. There are very good opportunities for pupils to work

together on practical activities and this fully engages them in their learning and supports effective group work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides a very stimulating and relevant curriculum which ensures breadth and continuity in pupils' learning. The English curriculum has been improved very well due to structured phonics teaching and a strong focus on widening pupils' reading skills. A strong emphasis on investigation and enquiry within the curriculum has enabled excellent achievement, especially in science and mathematics. Good provision for ICT ensures pupils develop their skills very effectively and exposes them to a wide range of uses. For example, they use video cameras to record pupils' skills in dance to help them improve their performance. There is very good provision for health and safety through, for example, visits from the Fire Brigade to teach fire safety. The school enriches the curriculum very well through visitors, including orchestras and a puppet theatre, visits to Bournemouth and the Oceanarium, as well as an excellent range of well-attended after school clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school's extremely caring ethos enables pupils to develop very positive attitudes. This is very clearly seen in the excellent care given to vulnerable pupils by support assistants and school counsellors, which enables them to overcome personal traumas. Robust systems for ensuring pupils' welfare are reflected in pupils' strong sense of being safe and well cared for within the school environment. Procedures for improving attendance are good and often innovative and have had a positive impact. However, there is still a small core of parents who find it difficult to ensure their children attend regularly. There is very effective support for pupils with speech and language difficulties as teaching assistants have had specific training to help them. Pupils at the early stages of learning English take part in an excellent programme to help them learn English. This allows them to be fully included in all aspects of school life. Excellent links are made with parents, including the opportunity for parents to come into school to work with their children before school starts. The school cooperates exceptionally well with outside agencies and with partner organisations, including the neighbouring junior school. Excellent target setting and tracking procedures and effective use of ability grouping for English and mathematics ensures pupils' learning needs are very well met. Pupils know their targets well and use them effectively to improve their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

There is excellent attention to school improvement through a thorough analysis of performance, a willingness to embrace new ideas and a tireless quest for excellence. All staff and governors share this vision and teamwork throughout the school is a hallmark of its success. Self-evaluation and monitoring are very thorough and highly effective. This has ensured the high level of outstanding teaching, excellent pupil achievement and personal development. However, this highly successful school is not complacent in any way as senior leaders hone their skills through acting as lead teachers within the city and school improvement partners wider afield. Governors support and challenge the school in equal measure and contribute very effectively to its success. Excellent relationships with outside agencies and the wider community are used very well to extend pupils' 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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness in the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

08 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Townhill Infant School, Southampton, SO18 2FG

I am writing to tell you that we thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helping us with the inspection. We enjoyed meeting the school council and Year 2 pupils. We were delighted to learn how much you enjoy school, especially all the after-school clubs.

I agree with your parents that your school is an excellent school.

Here are some other things I particularly liked about your school.

- You have an outstanding headteacher, teachers and school staff who are ensuring your school is a happy, safe place where you can work hard and do your very best.
- You make excellent progress because you are taught extremely well.
- You thoroughly enjoy school, especially all the fun activities, visits, visitors and special events you have.
- Your kindness, thoughtfulness and outstanding behaviour show how keen you are to learn and reflects the excellent care you receive from all adults.
- You make an excellent contribution to the school as school councillors and friendship monitors who want to make the school a better place for everyone.

Every school has something it could do better, so this is what I have asked your school to do to help you learn even more.

- Ensure you come to school every day unless you are very unwell so that you can benefit from all the very good things that are happening in your school.

You can help by making sure you are ready to come to school in good time.

Yours sincerely

Janet Sinclair
Lead Inspector

