

Toll Bar Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106677
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	336722
Inspection dates	02–03 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Fiona Gowers

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 of pupils on the school roll	141
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Robinson
Headteacher	Mrs Jill Northwood
Date of previous school inspection	November 2006
School address	Askern Road Toll Bar Doncaster DN5 0QR
Telephone number	01302 874324
Fax number	01302 820878
Email address	admin@tollbar.doncaster.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 0845 404045
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school's safeguarding documents and policies, the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings and documents relating to monitoring and evaluation. Thirty-eight questionnaires completed and returned by parents were analysed. The inspection team also received and analysed questionnaires from pupils and staff. The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the impact that the number of pupils joining and leaving the school has on overall attainment at Key Stages 1 and 2; the progress pupils make and how well they apply themselves in lessons, particularly boys in writing activities
- the effectiveness of the school's strategies to raise levels of attendance
- whether there are any variations in the quality of teaching and the curriculum throughout school, especially in view of the need for mixed-age classes
- the effectiveness of leadership at all levels in bringing about sustained improvement.

Information about the school

The school is below average in size. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is well above average. About a third of pupils are of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller heritage; almost all other pupils are White British. Very few pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. A significant minority of pupils move into and out of the school between Years 1 and 6. Pupils join the Early Years Foundation Stage at the age of three years. The school has received the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools Award, Study Support Award, Activemark, a Clean Air Award and a local Eco Gold Award.

The school was very significantly affected by flooding in June 2007. Staff and pupils were initially accommodated at neighbouring schools and then on the school site in temporary accommodation. Following substantial building works, they returned to the school building in September 2008.

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

Toll Bar Primary is a good school. Many parents express their appreciation of the excellent care, guidance and support provided for the whole family, typically commenting: 'The staff at Toll Bar School have helped us through a lot and they have been superb. I am deeply grateful for this. It is a wonderful school, as everyone helps everybody else.' Pupils are very much known as individuals and, consequently, feel extremely safe and secure. They are very proud of their school and play a full part in contributing to their community. For example, pupils were fully involved in deciding how they would like their school to be refurbished after the devastation caused by the flooding. In addition, all older pupils have the opportunity to carry out roles of responsibility, which they do with great care and maturity. Pupils particularly enjoy growing and selling produce in the school garden and taking the lead on recycling, as a group of pupils agreed: 'We are learning how to make a better world when we are older.'

The school has improved significantly since the last inspection. Levels of attainment have risen to broadly average. School leaders at all levels have an accurate view of the strengths and a clear view of how they want to improve still further. All groups of pupils make good progress, because they receive good quality teaching and an effective curriculum. The school is keen to improve further and is now focusing on increasing the number of pupils reaching the higher levels. Although more able pupils generally make good progress, occasionally activities are not challenging enough and the pace of learning is not always fast enough for them to sustain the best possible progress. The strengths of leadership have been recognised in that the school is increasingly playing a leading role in its work in other schools. The school clearly demonstrates good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress made by more able pupils, by ensuring:
 - activities are challenging enough for them in all lessons
 - the pace of learning is always brisk enough to sustain the best progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

As a result of the very positive learning environment throughout school, pupils grow in confidence in their own ability. Pupils are engaged in lessons, motivated to work hard and behave well. They are keen to discuss their work and proud of their accomplishments. In fact, many pupils agree that 'learning is fun!' The majority of pupils, including boys in writing activities, make good progress. Pupils from the Traveller community do as well as others in school because they receive good support when travelling and very well-targeted support when they are welcomed back to school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those more vulnerable make good or better progress because of the well-organised learning programmes and excellent pastoral support provided. However, more able pupils in a minority of lessons do not attain as highly as they could. This is because they do not always have the opportunity to extend their learning further.

A significant proportion of pupils enters and leaves the school at various stages of the year. Those pupils who join the school at different times make good progress overall, considering their starting points. This mobility can depress the overall attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in national tests and assessments. Even so, pupils' levels of attainment have risen since the last inspection to broadly in line with the national average. Pupils make the fastest progress in mathematics and science. However, as a result of a whole school initiative, pupils are beginning to make faster progress in reading and writing.

Other key features of pupils' outcomes:

- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, as this is particularly well promoted through the curriculum and visitors into school.
- Pupils show they have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy. They enjoy the nutritious school meals, the many sporting activities, growing vegetables in the school garden and cooking in the 'ready steady cook' club.
- Pupils make a very significant contribution to their local community, such as when working with community wardens or with the Forestry Commission to plan a new play area in the locality.
- Pupils' satisfactory basic skills ensure they are prepared for the next stage of their education. Levels of attendance have risen rapidly for all groups of pupils, including those who have been persistently absent, as a result of extremely rigorous strategies to promote good attendance. However, the overall attendance trend can fluctuate when a significant number of pupils are travelling.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school provides very strong pastoral support for all groups of pupils. The schools' work with pupils from the Travelling communities is exceptional and enables the pupils to make the best of the opportunities provided by the school. As a result, the families are increasingly becoming involved in school life and participating in regular events on the school calendar, such as the pantomime trip and camping weekend. Likewise, the school's support for more vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is outstanding and is deeply embedded at all levels. A very wide range of systems ensures all pupils are very well supported and have the opportunity to talk through any worries or concerns they may have. This could be through the 'worry box', 'drop in' sessions at playtimes, as well as one-to-one support with a trained member of staff. The school works very closely with the local high school, successfully preparing pupils and their families for the transition on to the next stage of their education.

The great majority of teaching is securing good progress and learning. Effective classroom management and use of praise helps create a positive classroom environment conducive to learning. Lessons have a clear focus and learning is built up in stages. Staff skilfully use a range of strategies and activities, which usually get pupils talking about their work, thinking hard, and considering how they can do even better. However, in a few lessons the pace of learning slows. Occasionally, pupils spend too long on an activity so their interest wanes or time is wasted a little in between activities. Although learning activities are generally amended well to meet the needs of a range of different ability groups in mixed-age classes, more able pupils are not always challenged enough to reach their full potential.

A greater emphasis on interactive 'hands on' activities in mathematics and more creative approaches to writing have led to rising attainment. Boys, in particular, are much keener to write than they had been previously. Imaginative links are made between subjects which add interest and purpose to learning. For example, activities in a Second World War topic involved pupils: using drama techniques to explore how a character might be thinking, speaking and feeling in a related novel; discussing film clips, as well as enjoying a trip to a former 'Prisoner of War' camp. As a result, pupils worked with enthusiasm and were keen to explore and find out more. In addition, a growing number of enrichment activities, trips and visitors into school enhance learning and broaden pupils' horizons.

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 school has improved significantly since the last inspection. It is a mark of the strengths of leadership and the dedication and commitment of all the staff that the school has continued to improve in spite of the devastation caused by the flooding. The emergency arrangements during the flooding were managed with exceptional expertise and ensured high quality care and support for pupils and their families were maintained. High priority is given to the continued professional development of staff and as a result, many members of staff are developing the expertise to take the lead on school initiatives.

Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. The governing body is very committed and supportive, and ensures policies and procedures are regularly reviewed. Governors are able to fulfil the role of a critical friend, because of their strong community links, professional expertise and regular training. In particular, the governing body played a key role in the financial management of the necessary refurbishment of the school following the flooding.

The promotion of equality of opportunity is at the heart of all the school's work. School leaders are determined to provide the best for all pupils. Through rigorous monitoring of the performance of individuals and different groups in school and the excellent pastoral support provided, the school is addressing any unevenness between groups. The school works very closely with parents and other agencies to ensure all pupils can benefit from and take part in all the school has to offer.

The school makes a good and improving contribution to community cohesion. The whole school enjoys celebrating Gypsy, Traveller and Romany month and exploring different cultures of pupils in school, as well as those further afield. As the pupils explained; 'We learn how to respect others at our school.' In addition, the school values partnerships with schools in Wales and Germany that have developed in response to the flooding.

These are the grades for the 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

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a very nurturing environment with a warm family atmosphere. Children quickly feel 'at home' and settle in very well because of the very positive relationships and well-established routines. They work hard and become absorbed in the range of activities provided because they have many opportunities to make choices and talk about their learning. Children learn to talk about their feelings from an early age: They listen to 'Mood Music' and then explore their feelings through discussion, dancing with ribbons and a variety of art activities. Children grow in confidence and make good progress overall from generally very low starting points. Leadership of the setting is good. The committed staff team clearly have a good understanding of the needs of very young children. They are continually seeking to broaden children's experiences and enhance their learning even further, currently focusing on children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their early writing skills. Staff go to great lengths to develop a very positive partnership with parents and carers, providing a range of workshops. Children are also very well supported as they move on into Year 1, as a member of staff goes with them into their next class.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers value all the school does for their children and this is reflected in the supportive questionnaires returned and discussions with individual parents and carers during the inspection. They appreciate the growing range of workshops and activities on offer, and the very strong support provided for themselves, as well as for their children. Inspection findings confirm many of the strengths identified by parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Toll Bar 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 inspector received 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 141 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	68	9	24	3	8	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	82	7	18	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	66	13	34	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	68	10	26	1	3	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	26	68	10	26	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	58	13	34	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	50	18	47	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)	18	47	18	47	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	63	11	29	3	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	55	17	45	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	53	16	42	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	61	13	34	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	74	9	24	1	3	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 all 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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 pupils' 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.



4 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Toll Bar Primary School, Doncaster, DN5 0QR

Thank you very much for being so friendly and welcoming when I inspected your school recently. I very much enjoyed talking to you about your school, speaking to staff and joining you in lessons, at lunchtime and in assembly. I can understand why you are very proud of your school. I was very impressed with how well you behave and how bright your school looks now it has been refurbished after the flooding. You told me how much you enjoy all the activities you do at school.

Adults in school look after you extremely well so you feel very safe and confident about asking them for help or talking to them about any worries. You also work very hard to help look after your school, for example as a Playground Buddy or Eco Warden. You told me you are 'learning how to make a better world' when you are older.

Your school provides you with a good education. You work hard and make good progress in your lessons to reach the standards that are typical for your age when you leave at the end of Year 6. Your headteacher leads your school well and makes sure you are happy and you learn well. Your headteacher and all the staff in school are always looking for ways to make your school even better. I have asked them to:

- make sure you learn at a fast pace in all your lessons and to have some more really challenging activities where you really have to think hard.

Thank you for helping me so much with the inspection. Keep working hard and enjoying your school!

Yours sincerely

Mrs Fiona Gowers
Lead inspector

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