

Tonacliffe Primary School

Tonacliffe Way, Whitworth, Lancashire, OL12 8SS

Inspection dates 16–17 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The skill levels of different year groups vary widely year-on-year, but no matter what their starting points are pupils make outstanding progress by the time they leave school.
- Standards have been consistently well above the national averages in English and mathematics for three consecutive years.
- The youngest children have an excellent start to their schooling in the Early Years Foundation Stage reaching levels which are well above those seen nationally, particularly in reading and writing. This prepares them exceptionally well for Key Stage 1.
- The majority of teaching is outstanding and teachers devise an excellent range of interesting and inspiring activities to extend pupils' learning.
- Homework is exceptionally well used to extend learning.
- Teachers have very high expectations of all pupils. Each child is recognised as a unique individual and learning activities are exceptionally well matched to their individual needs.
- Marking of work clearly informs pupils how to improve. However, older pupils are not always fully aware of the levels they are working at and precisely what they have to do to reach higher levels.
- Pupils have exemplary attitudes towards their learning. They enjoy school, have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe, behave outstandingly well and look after each other with care and understanding.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governing body provide inspirational leadership, creating a strong vision for high expectations and hold all adults to account in the pursuit of these high aspirations. As a result, the quality of teaching is strongly improving and achievement is rising.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, particularly the high quality of care and support provided and the improvements seen over the past two years.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.
- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons, including one joint observation with the headteacher. Inspectors also made a number of short visits to classrooms and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with one group of pupils and other opportunities were taken to talk with pupils on the playground. Meetings were also held with members of the governing body, one representative from the local authority, a number of parents and members of staff including senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents including data on pupils' progress, school development plans, documentation relating to teachers' performance over time and records relating to pupils' behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors took into account the 44 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), 36 staff questionnaires, one written response from a parent and the results of the school's own parental and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

John Dunne, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Pamela Hemphill	Additional Inspector
Maureen Hints	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Tonacliffe is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average but increasing.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for children in the care of the local authority or known to be eligible for free school meals) is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups who attend the school is well below average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's floor standard, which is the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is a before- and after-school club which is not managed by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continuing to build on the strongly improving trend in achievement by:
 - ensuring that all pupils in Years 3, 4 and 6 have targets which they understand and inform them how to improve their work to a higher level
 - ensuring that classroom displays have examples of pupils' levelled work, which clearly show what is needed to achieve that level.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children currently enter the school with skills and knowledge that vary widely from year to year but for the past two years have been broadly in line with that expected for their age.
- Outstanding teaching in Nursery and Reception classes has enabled standards to rise rapidly. As a result, children are now joining Year 1 with skills and knowledge that are exceptionally high in reading and writing and well above average in almost all of the other areas of learning, including number skills.
- Pupils currently in Key Stage 1 are making accelerated progress and lessons and work seen indicate that standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 are currently well above average.
- By the end of Year 6, standards in reading and mathematics are also well above average. The proportion of pupils making more than the expected rate of progress from their starting points is high with almost twice as many reaching the higher levels than seen nationally. A smaller proportion also reaches above expected levels in writing. The school has taken swift action to remedy this and current school data and work seen during the inspection show that significant progress has been made and that writing in all years is now a strength of the school.
- Pupils are taught to read exceptionally well. The highly effective teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds) in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1 is providing even the weakest readers with the skills to enable them to read fluently.
- Parents are highly involved in fostering their children's love of reading by listening to them read at home, as seen by the many comments in pupils' reading diaries.
- The use of homework to extend learning is highly effective and pupils proudly showed inspectors their homework books containing challenging work with high quality presentation.
- The school ensures that pupils with additional needs are very quickly identified and provides excellent support to help them succeed. As a result, pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs also achieve outstandingly well, attaining standards well above similar pupils nationally.
- The point scores from 2012 tests clearly show the attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above similar pupils nationally, considerably higher than in 2011 indicating that the gap between these pupils and others is closing.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The school provides consistently high quality teaching, which brings about outstanding levels of achievement. In more than half of the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was outstanding and never less than good. In the Nursery and Reception classes, outstanding teamwork from teachers and teaching assistants coupled with accurate assessments of what children need to do to propel them to the next stages, result in rapid gains in learning.
- In one English lesson, outstanding teaching enabled pupils to make outstanding progress in their understanding of writing because:
 - the pace of the lesson was brisk and it built strongly upon what pupils had already learnt
 - the enthusiasm of the teacher, coupled with her exceptionally strong subject knowledge, inspired pupils so they were really eager to learn
 - the work was skilfully adapted for pupils working at different levels and so pupils of all abilities were being 'stretched'
 - the teacher used sharply focused questioning which made pupils think deeply about the text they were working on
 - pupils of all abilities went on to apply their understanding to produce high quality written work.

- Most teaching is like this, with learning tasks which are imaginatively planned and at times inspirational, and as a result, pupils' enjoyment of lessons is considerable.
- Teachers develop basic skills, particularly writing, very well across a range of subjects. The standard of handwriting across the school is exceptionally high.
- The way lessons exploit pupils' curiosity and the teaching of the arts, in particular music, strongly promotes pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
- Most work is very effectively marked and much is exemplary, clearly indicating where pupils have demonstrated successful learning and what they have to do to improve.
- Pupils have clear personalised learning targets which they understand and were able to explain to inspectors. However, in Years 3, 4, and 6 many pupils do not know what level they are working at and are unclear as to what they need to do to reach the higher levels. This means that pupils have to rely too much on teachers' marking and are not developing the skills to assess their own work and to decide for themselves what they need to do to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Lessons are so interesting that inappropriate behaviour in lessons rarely happens because pupils are so keen to be involved in their learning. All pupils spoken to said the quality of teaching in their school was 'the best'.
- Pupils and parents expressed highly positive views about standards of behaviour in lessons and around school and this mirrored the outstanding behaviour observed by inspectors throughout the inspection.
- The two parents who asked to see inspectors praised the school for the way it supported and cared for their children who had particular needs and enabling their self-confidence to flourish. A parent's letter described how moving her child to this school from another had transformed previous behavioural issues and wrote, 'Thank you seems such a small word to say for all the effort and kindness we have received'.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe and greatly enjoy school. This is shown by their attendance which is significantly above the national average.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe including how to keep safe when using new technologies, such as the internet.
- The way in which pupils from many social backgrounds interact harmoniously is a strength of the school and provides a secure climate for learning.
- There is almost no evidence of bullying, and parents, carers and pupils express confidence in the schools' systems for dealing with such occurrences should they arise. Pupils are well informed about different types of bullying that they may encounter.
- Pupils show great consideration and respect for others and greet visitors in a very polite and friendly manner, reflecting the way they are treated with care and respect by staff.
- Pupils' ability to work exceptionally well in groups and independently for extended periods makes a significant contribution to their outstanding learning.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school is exceptionally well led by a headteacher who strives to ensure that every pupil has the very best educational experience possible.
- She is ably supported by a highly effective team of middle and senior leaders and a governing body who share the same clear, unwavering ambition to sustain the pace of improvement.
- Teamwork is exceptionally strong.
- The management of teachers' performance drives improvements in teaching.
- Targets are linked to an effective programme of training which has helped to raise the overall

quality of teaching. Teachers have clearly understood targets linked to the progress pupils make, and additional pay is linked to ambitious targets for pupils' progress.

- Highly effective procedures are in place to regularly check up on the progress of groups and individuals. Teachers meet at regular intervals with senior leaders, any underachievement is very quickly identified and the individualised support put in place is highly effective in bringing about improvements.
 - Teachers strive to ensure that all pupils gain a good awareness of the diversity of the world in which they live. Consequently, a wide range of cultural festivals are celebrated and visitors and trips are well used to enable pupils to understand different faiths and lifestyles. Such good practice effectively promotes cultural understanding and equality of opportunity.
 - The local authority currently provides light touch support for this school as it has confidence in the capacity of the school's leadership to continue to drive up improvements.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are extremely knowledgeable of the school and provide considerable support and challenge. Governors hold teachers to account for pupils' progress, ensuring that high standards are maintained. Ambitious targets are set for teachers which are linked to pupils' progress and salary increases. The governing body is provided with data and assessment information which gives them a secure understanding of how much progress pupils are making in each class. Subject governors ensure that pupil premium funding is appropriately spent and the impact on this support for relevant pupils is closely monitored. The governing body ensures safeguarding meets statutory requirements and that the school budget is managed effectively.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	119271
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	403376

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	321
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Wright
Headteacher	Joanne Heap
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2008
Telephone number	01706 344609
Fax number	01706 642713
Email address	bursar@tonacliffe.lancs.sch.uk

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