

Tannery Drift School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117134
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	358089
Inspection dates	7–8 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Graham Preston

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marc Hamilton
Headteacher	Rouane Mendel
Date of previous school inspection	13 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed seven

- teachers in 19 lessons. Meetings were held with governors, groups of pupils and
- staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including that relating to safeguarding practices, the school's self-evaluation and development planning. They also considered the questionnaire responses from 104 parents and carers and 55 pupils

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors investigated the extent to which the school's tracking data and other evidence show that pupils make good progress over their time in school.
- They considered the school's effectiveness in analysing and disseminating the best teaching and assessment practice across the school, in response to weaknesses identified in the last inspection.
- The team checked the effectiveness of the schools' care, guidance and support particularly in meeting the needs of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- They checked the impact of the much improved Early Years Foundation Stage provision in preparing children for their start in Year 1.
- The team analysed the success of school leaders and the governing body in sustaining school improvement over recent years including those periods when the headteacher has been absent.

Information about the school

This average-sized first school is located in Royston. Most pupils are of White British heritage with a small but increasing number from other cultural and ethnic heritages, including a few at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has increased, and is now broadly average. As part of extended provision, the school runs breakfast and after-school clubs. The school has gained the Activemark award.

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

Tannery Drift is a good school. In spite of a number of temporary changes in school leadership, it has successfully maintained the momentum for school improvement. These efforts have resulted in significant improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage, provision for special educational needs and/or disabilities and continuing strengths in its range of extra-curricular activities, especially in sports.

The successful Early Years Foundation Stage ensures children make a good start to their education. Pupils go on to make good progress, to reach above-average standards at the end of Year 2, and are well prepared for their transition to middle school by the end of Year 4. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make particularly good progress to reach standards above similar pupils nationally.

All parents and carers who responded say that their children are secure in school. Pupils readily agree that they feel very safe and well supported. They respond well to the opportunities for reflection in assemblies and are considerate and cooperative in their relationships with others. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school because staff successfully manage and support a small number of pupils who find it difficult to concentrate. This ensures effective learning because pupils know that any upsets and concerns are quickly addressed. Pupils' healthy eating and exceptionally high participation in sports and physical activities reflect, in many cases, exemplary healthy lifestyles. Pupils are actively involved in the school council as well as the house system, where many contribute to the school programme supporting pupils' social and emotional development. Others also take a lead on ecological concerns and participate in well-regarded music and drama events in the local community. Pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, enhanced by well-planned multi-cultural activities such as 'One World Week,' where pupils celebrate cultural difference.

Teaching is good, particularly in terms of personal relationships and classroom practice. Lessons engage pupils' interest and the varied activities, and particularly good additional learning support, enable pupils with different needs and abilities to make good progress. However, marking and assessment practice is variable in the detail and guidance it provides to help pupils improve their work, particularly in terms of National Curriculum levels.

The curriculum is strong in a number of ways, including developing literacy and numeracy both discretely and within other subject areas. Physical education and sports enrich pupils' experience and benefit from specialist teaching. Varied activities in the creative arts successfully increase pupils' interest and involvement. The good care, support and guidance reflect the inclusive and supportive nature of the school. Particularly strong is the extended schools provision that includes support for those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

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The school has an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses helped by a well-informed governing body that works very closely with the senior leaders. There has been a sustained and effective drive to improve the school through rigorous tracking of pupils' progress, recruitment of new teachers and good intervention programmes to support individuals. The headteacher's absence has been covered effectively. The school recognises that the role which inexperienced middle leaders play in monitoring and evaluation is not yet strong enough to help maintain the pace of improvement. The school has made good progress, particularly in the last two years, developing provision and ensuring good progress by pupils. It is in a good position to sustain its strengths and improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress by:
 - increasing the consistency in marking and assessment to reflect the best practice
 - explicitly linking pupils' learning targets to National Curriculum levels used in the school's tracking so that pupils have clearer goals for improvement and parents and carers are better informed as to how they can help their children improve.
- Strengthen middle managers' roles in monitoring and evaluating their own and others' work by:
 - relevant staff development
 - opportunities to meet and share best practice.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Children start school in Reception with skills that are in line with those expected nationally. They make good progress, so pupils now start Year 1 with above-average skills in numeracy and literacy. Pupils currently in Years 3 and 4 had average skills when they left Reception, but are also making good progress, albeit from a lower starting point. The current Year 4 pupils show an improving trend with most on target to exceed expected levels by the end of the year. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language progress as well as others, as do most of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Lesson observations confirm pupils' enjoyment and good learning in the different years. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils were developing their appreciation of different shapes through varied challenging activities and good learning support. These enabled pupils to label and describe shapes accurately and remain interested and involved throughout. Work on measuring perimeters in Year 4 actively involved all pupils in practical activities, with more difficult problem solving for the higher-ability pupils. By the end of the session, all pupils were working confidently.

Pupils respond well in assemblies designed to help them appreciate cultural diversity. They develop a concern for others through well-chosen themes, including the school's support for a mobile library for school children in Kenya. A number of pupils are involved in 'green issues,' as Tannery Drift works towards 'Eco-school' status. Pupils successfully organised and ran an eco-market and gained financial awards for conserving school energy and resources such as water. These monies have been used by the school council to enhance

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outside play areas. Pupils show considerable maturity in their support for younger pupils in outside play activities, and in their regular contacts with governors and town councillors.

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good, based as it is on positive relationships between teachers and pupils, teachers' secure subject knowledge and consistently good adult support for learning. Lessons are mostly planned well, although some teachers are better than others at sharing with the pupils what they want them to learn. Most make good use of the electronic whiteboard, and plan interesting and purposeful activities that sufficiently challenge all pupils. In a small number of lessons, pupils spend too long sitting on the mat without being actively involved, which slows learning and makes too little use of the good support staff. It also reduces the time for otherwise well-planned activities that match different pupils' abilities and needs. Marking and assessment are consistently positive but often not very helpful in showing pupils how to improve the quality and presentation of their work. Pupils are not as clear as they could be about their targets. The school recognises that these are insufficiently linked to the otherwise good procedures for tracking pupils' progress against National Curriculum levels.

The move to a topic-based, creative curriculum has contributed well to pupils' enjoyment and is complemented by a strong focus on literacy and numeracy, aiding improved standards. The school benefits from its links with the local sports partnership as well as

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middle and upper schools that enhance provision in physical education, French and information and communication technology (ICT).

Parents and carers are particularly positive about the care and nurture children receive in Nursery and Reception. The breakfast club and after-school clubs provide worthwhile activities for pupils, and a nourishing start to the day for those who want it. Extended school provision also includes support for particular parents and carers, as well as specialist drama and music therapy for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. There are strengths, too, in the good safeguarding arrangements and a readiness by the school to review and adapt its support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Good care and guidance are also reflected in the close working with the middle school to ensure smooth transition arrangements.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher is well-regarded by parents, carers and staff for her positive impact on recent school improvement and her success in leading the school. She is supported effectively by the acting deputy headteacher who, as Early Years Foundation Stage leader, has significantly improved provision in that area. Staff are playing a greater part in leadership and management. However, some are still developing in terms of their understanding and involvement in monitoring and evaluating whole school aspects, such as teaching and assessment. Governance is good and benefits from a number of very well informed governors, some with relevant experience in school evaluation. These strengths are well used to rigorously scrutinise the school's performance. The governing body actively participates in the school self-evaluation, including observation of lessons. The good safeguarding is greatly enhanced by the regular and close scrutiny of school procedures by the child protection and health and safety governors.

The significant proportion of parents and carers who felt less well informed or consulted contrasts sharply with the considerable efforts the school makes to engage them. In addition to all teachers meeting parents and carers at the start and end of each day, the school has a very informative website, 'parentmail', weekly bulletins and publishes detailed responses to any concerns raised in parental surveys. However, despite these strengths, a lack of detailed and clear information about pupils' progress concerns some parents and carers.

Community cohesion promotion has been carefully evaluated and improved. It is reflected in well-developed links with Kenya, strong community ties and curriculum development.

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Strategies to promote further engagement with schools and groups at national level are underway.

Partnerships are strong, evident in the close links with the middle school. Close working with RASP, the local school cluster in Royston, provides important shared staff training. Regular liaison with the local social agencies supports the school in its effective work with pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

The promotion of equal opportunities is supported effectively by the school's tracking systems for groups and individuals and discrimination is tackled well. These ensure that staff have a thorough knowledge of all the pupils and are sensitive to their needs especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

These are the grades for 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

Provision has improved considerably in recent years, reflecting strong and effective leadership. Children enter Nursery with knowledge and skills broadly in line with those expected for their age, though with some children having less developed language skills. Well-planned learning activities, including use of phonics (how letters relate to the sounds in words) to develop communication and literacy, now enable children to enter Year 1 with standards above average. As the children develop from Nursery to Reception, they steadily gain in confidence and become more actively involved in choosing their learning activities. Children are settled, increasingly independent and inquisitive, and able to concentrate well during the teacher-led group activities. They maintain good relationships with adults and each other, and behave very well.

The learning areas are well planned with varied resources to stimulate and promote learning in all its aspects. They provide an appropriate balance between adult-led and

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child-initiated activities. For example, the Big Bad Wolf story is well used to enable key skill development in physical motor skills, creative role play, construction and art work. Outside areas are safe and provide good opportunities for children to develop their physical and creative skills. Assessment is good with careful tracking of children's progress.

The good leadership ensures that learning takes place in a safe, caring context, particularly in Nursery where some children need sensitive, carefully-planned support. Strong partnerships with parents and carers keep them fully informed through the different school communication and consultative procedures. The Early Years Foundation Stage team work closely in planning and implementing provision. The overall effectiveness of that provision continues to improve and is reflected in the school successfully achieving the Hertfordshire Quality Standard (HQS).

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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A high proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires. The great majority of questionnaires are positive about the school. In their written comments, many recognise the improvements made and are particularly positive about their children's experiences in Nursery and Reception, the strengths of some teaching, the excellent range of school activities and the positive leadership of the current acting headteacher. However, parents and carers express particular concerns about behaviour, being kept informed about their children's progress and the continuity of school leadership. Inspectors noted that behaviour management was one of the school's past improvement targets and that effective action has been taken. During the inspection, pupils' behaviour was consistently good. Inspectors were aware of temporary arrangements to cover senior leadership on three occasions in recent years. The team found that the acting headteacher, and senior and middle managers, supported well by a strong, well-informed governing body, are enabling the school to improve significantly. However, in spite of the considerable and successful efforts the school makes to engage parents and carers, not enough is done to explicitly share, with pupils, parents and carers, how pupils progress in terms of their National Curriculum targets.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Tannery Drift 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 inspection team received 104 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 193 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	62	36	35	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	58	56	44	42	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	34	33	52	50	14	13	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	38	56	54	5	5	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	55	53	42	40	4	4	3	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	40	56	54	6	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	44	53	51	3	3	2	2
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)	38	37	59	57	1	1	6	6
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	36	60	58	5	5	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	21	61	59	15	14	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	27	65	63	10	10	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	37	36	55	53	9	9	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	54	44	42	3	3	1	1

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



9 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tannery Drift School, Royston SG8 5DE

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. It gives you a good education, and ensures that most of you achieve well by the time you leave. Your school has numerous strengths and we particularly like the way it helps you to settle in Nursery and Reception, and places a good emphasis on helping you develop your reading and writing. You told us the school is a safe place to be and we were pleased to see that you behave well and work together in lessons. We were very impressed with what the school is doing to help you develop healthy lifestyles. You benefit from specialist physical education teaching and almost all of you get involved in sports and other activities. Your school council also encourages you to eat more healthily and many take advantage of the healthy options at lunchtimes.

Many of your parents and carers told us how much you like school and you certainly enjoy your lessons; this is reflected in your good attendance which has noticeably improved. You get on well with your teachers and support staff. They plan different activities that make your learning interesting as well as helping you to make good progress. However, very few of you know the National Curriculum levels that you have reached in reading, writing and mathematics or what you need to do to get to the next level. We have therefore asked the school to use those levels in your classwork books and homework which will also help your parents and carers better understand your progress and how they can help you.

The acting headteacher, the governing body and all the staff are working hard to further improve your school and we have suggested that more staff training would help in this. You can all help by working hard and continuing to take an active part in the life of the school.

Yours sincerely

Graham Preston

Lead Inspector

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