

Tiptree Heath Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114733
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	357599
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2010
Reporting inspector	David Wynford-Jones

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	176
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Puttick
Headteacher	Delia Cooke
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited one assembly and eleven lessons, observing seven teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school improvement plan. Inspectors analysed 76 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The impact of the school's work in raising attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 and mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- The use of assessment to inform teaching, raise expectations and accelerate pupils' learning.
- The effectiveness of leaders in improving the quality of teaching and learning and in contributing to the development of the school.

Information about the school

Tiptree Heath is slightly smaller than the majority of primary schools. Almost all of the pupils are from White British or mixed White backgrounds. All speak English as their first language. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below the national average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is broadly similar to that found in other schools. The majority of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities have specific learning difficulties. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than the national average. Few pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual starting and leaving times. The school holds National Healthy School status.

A privately run after-school club operates on Monday to Thursday during term time. It did not form part of this inspection.

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?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

Main findings

Tiptree Heath Primary provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. The school is emerging from a difficult time in its history, which in part can be attributed to the long-term absences of the headteacher and the previous deputy headteacher, and the significant and frequent changes in teaching staff. Senior leaders are taking appropriate action to ensure that the slippage in pupils' attainment and their rate of progress, particularly in Key Stage 1, is redressed.

Pupils enjoy school. Their attendance is consistently above the national average. They are polite and engage with visitors. They have a good understanding of healthy living and are keen to take part in physical activities. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress. Over the last two years pupils have not made sufficient progress in Key Stage 1. Attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2010 dipped and was below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Changes in teaching staff and additional support provided are enabling the pupils to now make satisfactory and sometimes good progress. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. By the end of Year 6, pupils' overall attainment in English and mathematics is average. However, standards are consistently higher in English than in mathematics. This is because pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to investigate and apply their knowledge of mathematics.

The quality of teaching is steadily improving. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, there are some good examples on which the school can build, for example in the use of questioning and in the level of challenge provided for pupils. Assessment systems are developing satisfactorily. However, not all staff make sufficient use of the assessment data to consistently identify work that closely matches the needs of all groups of pupils and to raise expectations. The use of individual targets and the quality of marking is inconsistent. Although there are examples of good and informative marking, most does not routinely identify the next steps for improvement. Some pupils do not know their literacy and numeracy targets.

The senior leadership team and the governing body fully appreciate the difficulties that the school has faced and have made some hard decisions. They have correctly identified the priorities and actions to bring about school improvement in the detailed school development plan. However, the measures by which the actions can be evaluated are not sufficiently precise or linked closely enough to raising attainment and accelerating pupils' progress. External support from the local authority has been sought and steps taken to address the many parental concerns. However, parental confidence has yet to be fully regained. The school's honest evaluation of its own performance, the measures taken to address the weaknesses, the close monitoring and challenge by the governing body and continuing support from the local authority which has helped to bring about improvement indicates that the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2011, ensure that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and in mathematics in Year 6 are at least in line with the national averages by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - consolidating and extending the recently introduced strategies to accelerate progress in English and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to at least good by:
 - ensuring greater consistency in the use of assessment to plan work that closely matches the needs and abilities of groups of pupils.
 - identifying individual targets that are appropriate to the pupils' needs and level of understanding
 - ensuring marking consistently offers pupils clear guidance to reach their targets
 - giving staff more opportunities to share and build on good practice.
- Refine the school development plan to include clear and precise measures, closely linked to pupils' attainment and progress, by which the actions can be evaluated.
- Ensure that the headteacher urgently rebuilds the confidence and trust of parents and carers.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The vast majority of children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge similar to those expected for their age. In lessons that capture their interests, pupils are motivated and respond well to challenge. They are attentive and behave well. They speak positively about their teachers and support staff. They enjoy the opportunities they have to work together in pairs and larger groups. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson pupils were challenged to work together to identify how they travelled to school, to collate the information and to use computers to create a pictogram. The strong focus on promoting subject-specific vocabulary helped the pupils to use a range of relevant terminology and ask pertinent questions. Consequently, they made good progress in developing their social and linguistic skills and in their ability to collect and analyse information. In contrast, in another class, pupils of different abilities said: 'The work is sometimes too easy and sometimes it's too difficult so that we don't learn a lot in those lessons.'

The quality of pupils' writing is inconsistent between classes. In Year 2, pupils do not use a sufficiently broad vocabulary, their spelling is weak, handwriting is often untidy and letters are poorly formed. Older pupils write for a range of purposes and audiences. Their attainment in writing is in line with expectations. Pupils' reading skills are developing more consistently. Older pupils are able to use books for research purposes and enjoy relaxing with a reading book. There is little difference in the performance of boys and girls in

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English, but in mathematics boys tend to do slightly better than the girls. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress and achieve their targets because they receive appropriate support. Pupils' sound social skills and broadly average attainment provide them with a sound basis for the next stage in their education.

Pupils' good understanding of healthy living is evident in their knowledge of healthy eating and their understanding of the importance of taking physical exercise. This has contributed to the school being awarded National Healthy School status. Pupils feel safe and are aware of safety issues with the ongoing building developments. Pupils are keen to take responsibility, undertake tasks around the school and to become members of the school council. They raise funds for national and international charities and take part in local events. They have yet, however, to make a significant contribution to the development of the school. Pupils generally get on well with each other and with adults. Pupils are reflective and have an appropriate understanding of right and wrong. Their knowledge of other faiths, cultures, religions and beliefs is less well developed.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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 has a number of good features. For example, relationships, sharing ideas with a 'talk partner' and the use of electronic whiteboards to support learning. In some lessons, pupils of all abilities are challenged because teachers make effective use of questioning strategies; initial answers are probed and pupils' thinking is consolidated and extended.

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These lessons proceed at a quick pace and there is good balance between the teacher's and the pupils' contributions. In others, pupils are unclear about the purpose of the lesson. Although the learning objective is shared with the pupils, it is not precise. Some lessons are dominated by the teacher and pupils have little opportunity to contribute to their own learning or to work independently. In these, the level of work is not well matched to their needs and abilities and the pace of learning is too slow. This is because teacher assessments have not been used well enough to identify challenging outcomes for pupils of different abilities. The use of literacy and numeracy targets is inconsistent. Some pupils said: 'We don't know or use our targets. They are at home on a piece of paper.' Nevertheless, relationships between staff and pupils are positive and pupils know they can turn to staff if they have any concerns. Support and guidance for pupils meets their needs at significant points in their time at school and, for the most vulnerable, are soundly embedded in the work of the school. This ensures that they make the expected rate of progress. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are well established.

Provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. The school has recently enlisted the support of the local authority to improve provision and outcomes in mathematics. As a result, there is now a more systematic approach to teaching mathematics. A theme or topic approach is used to promote pupils' learning in different subjects. However, opportunities to consolidate, refine and extend basic literacy and numeracy skills have not been fully exploited. Partnerships to support learning are satisfactory and enable pupils to make sound progress. Good use is made of visits and of visitors to the school to promote learning. Pupils are keen to take part in a reasonable range of extra-curricular activities which contribute satisfactorily to their personal development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior staff, supported by their accurate evaluation of the school's performance and needs, provide satisfactory drive and direction for the school's development. Satisfactory systems are in place for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning. Performance data is analysed and is increasingly being used to identify areas of strength and weakness. This is contributing to improvements in the overall quality of teaching. The governing body provides a reasonable balance between support and challenge. Governors set suitably challenging targets and monitor the work of the school. They are increasingly asking challenging questions about pupils' performance and ensure equality of opportunity by investigating gaps in performance between groups.

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Consequently, they are aware that some year groups have made better progress than others and action is taken.

Governors ensure that the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures meet requirements and have been vigilant during the recent building work. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to promoting community cohesion. The governing body and senior staff are seeking to improve parental perception and to further involve the local community in the school. Links with a school in Brixton are valued, with regular exchange visits taking place. This contributes much to pupils' cultural development and helps prepare them for living in today's culturally diverse society. International links have yet to be established.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Induction procedures are good. Children settle easily, enjoy learning and quickly grow in confidence within a safe and secure learning environment. They follow instructions, develop their social skills and behave well. Relationships between children and with the adults are good. Routines are well established. Children quickly understand the importance of personal hygiene and healthy living. The classroom is organised and children's work is celebrated and displayed effectively.

Planning ensures that all areas of children's learning are covered. There is a reasonable balance between activities led by the adults and those that children choose for themselves. There is a strong focus on developing children's ability to work together. Appropriate use is made of the extensive outdoor area as a natural extension of the classroom to promote all aspects of learning. However, it has not been developed sufficiently to support and enhance children's learning in communication, language and literacy and in their understanding and use of number. The Early Years Foundation Stage

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team have worked hard to create an attractive indoor and outdoor learning environment. The coordinator has a sound understanding of the strengths and areas for development. Systems for assessing and recording children's attainment are in place and used satisfactorily to target support for individuals and groups of children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The percentage response rate from parents and carers was similar to most schools. All respondents stated that their children feel safe and enjoy school. The vast majority felt that the school helps their children to have a healthy life style. A significant number of parents expressed their concerns over many aspects of the school's work. Much of this stems from the many changes in teaching staff, concerns over the effectiveness of leadership of the school and the lack of communication. Inspectors investigated these concerns. They found that the impact of the frequency of staff changes has hindered pupils' progress, particularly in Key Stage 1. The school has put in place measures to redress the shortcomings in pupils' learning and has taken steps to improve the level of communication with parents. Much work still needs to be done to ensure that parents' and carers' confidence and trust in the school are restored.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Tiptree Heath 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 inspection team received 76 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 176 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	46	41	54	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	51	37	49	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	16	21	39	51	16	21	3	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	17	39	51	14	18	10	13
The teaching is good at this school	18	24	32	42	19	25	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	17	46	61	10	13	3	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	8	67	88	2	3	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)	7	9	45	59	13	17	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	14	44	58	14	18	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	12	45	59	15	20	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	9	36	47	22	29	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	12	16	20	26	28	37	8	11
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	22	39	51	17	22	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. 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.



12 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tiptree Heath Primary School, Tiptree, CO5 0PG

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit and talking to you. We were very pleased to see that your attendance is above average and that you have a good understanding of healthy living. You told us that the staff care about you. They make certain that you are looked after and kept safe. We agree with you, they do.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. Staff have been working to raise the standards of your work in reading, writing and mathematics. This is starting to happen but there is still work to be done, especially in Year 2. By Year 6 your attainment in English is similar to that found in most schools, but is slightly lower in mathematics. Most of you enjoy school and want to learn. We saw you working hard in lessons when they were interesting and challenging. Some of you told us that some lessons were boring because the work was too easy or you did not know what to do to reach your targets.

To help you improve further, we have asked the headteacher and the governing body to do four things.

Make sure that your attainment continues to rise and that your attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and in mathematics by the end of Year 6 is at least in line with the national average.

Ensure that lessons are planned and taught well, and that you are given more help to reach your targets.

Revise the school improvement plan to make greater links to your attainment and progress

Ensure that all your parents and carers are happy and proud of what you are doing and achieving in school.

Please remember, to make your school better, you must play your part by always trying your best and behaving well.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Wynford-Jones

Lead inspector

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