

Tudor Court Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115057
Local Authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	357685
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Mary Summers

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	674
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Garry Blackshaw
Headteacher	Vivienne Northall
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They visited 28 lessons, taught by 20 different teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documents associated with safeguarding procedures and school self-evaluation. They examined data and information about pupils' progress and looked at samples of their work. They also scrutinised improvement plans as well as planning for lessons and the curriculum. Minutes from meetings held by the governing body and monitoring and evaluation reports written by senior leaders and the local authority were also examined. Inspectors took account of the views of pupils and of the 43 members of staff who had completed questionnaires, as well as the content of 216 questionnaires that had been returned by parents and carers.

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

- Pupils' achievement in writing throughout the school.
- How well more-able pupils are challenged in lessons.
- How well pupils develop an understanding of life in communities outside their own experience
- The impact of the school's new systems to track pupils' progress.

Information about the school

Most pupils who attend this larger-than-average primary school come from the immediate area, although a small minority travel in from further afield. The majority are from White British backgrounds although the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is higher than is found in most schools. An average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language although very few are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low as is the proportion identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. An average proportion of pupils have statements of special educational needs. The school has won a number of national awards in recent years, including Healthy Schools status and the Gold Active mark.

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

This school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Pupils enjoy coming to school, as their above-average attendance shows. They develop good levels of understanding of how to keep fit and healthy. Behaviour is good. Pupils listen respectfully to each other's ideas and opinions and cooperate well together in lessons and in the playground. The calm atmosphere throughout the school owes much to the positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils. Adults provide good levels of care so that pupils feel safe, secure and ready to learn.

Children receive a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They come into school eagerly each morning, ready to participate in the wide range of activities that are organised for them. The children make good progress in all areas of their learning. The school has extended its work in developing literacy in Nursery and Reception classes this year and this is ensuring that children transfer to Year 1 with secure basic knowledge and skills.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, it is better in mathematics than it is in English. In mathematics, the level of work provided for different groups is usually well-matched to the pupils' abilities and needs. This is because teachers use the information gained from tracking pupils' progress to plan lessons which challenge pupils of all abilities, including those who are more able. However, this is not always the case in English lessons, particularly in writing, and leads to pupils making satisfactory, rather than good progress. Lesson plans do not clearly identify exactly what pupils are expected to learn. Pupils are not always aware of their individual targets so they are not as well-motivated to improve as they might be.

The school enjoys good partnerships with parents and carers, who speak highly of the work carried out to support their children. One parent wrote, 'Staff have always been supportive and my child has been happy at the school.' Positive links with a cluster of local schools provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of sporting and cultural experiences, which support their personal development well.

There are satisfactory procedures in place to enable senior staff to gain a reasonable picture of the school's performance. Improvement plans focus on the right key priorities but sometimes lack the clear success criteria, monitoring procedures and benchmarks necessary to secure more rapid improvement. Governance, while satisfactory, is not focused well enough on monitoring the success of initiatives and checking on school effectiveness. Nonetheless, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, especially in the way that the school has strengthened its procedures to keep track of pupils' progress and raise pupils' attainment in mathematics. There is satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement in writing by:
 - using the information from assessments to plan lessons which provide enough challenge for pupils and move them on in their learning
 - ensuring that lessons have clear learning intentions
 - ensuring that pupils know their individual targets and that teachers review pupils' progress towards these more regularly.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that school improvement and subject action plans contain clear and measureable success criteria , monitoring procedures and interim benchmarks by which to judge progress towards intended outcomes
 - involving the governing body more directly in monitoring and evaluating the school's work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children's skills vary considerably when they start in Nursery but are usually in line with those expected for their age. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, their attainment is average. Pupils do well in mathematics because the lessons are often challenging and more-able pupils receive good levels of extension work in small groups. In a mathematics lesson in Year 4, for example, the teacher shared clear success criteria with each of the three groups who were working at different levels. Pupils were well-motivated and worked well independently to change mixed numbers into improper fractions. The teacher's high expectations of the more-able pupils, along with her skilled questioning, extended their learning very effectively.

Attainment in English, although broadly average, is lower than in mathematics. The school identified that White British boys were making insufficient progress in writing. A range of strategies has been implemented to interest and motivate boys more effectively. This is having a positive impact on their achievement and the gap is beginning to narrow. For example, a project on 'Dr Who' for Year 6 boys, involving two other local schools, encouraged them to write instructions on how to overcome a 'Cyberman,' and to write diary entries in the character of 'Dr Who'. New strategies introduced in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 to extend pupils' literacy skills, are beginning to have a positive impact on attainment at the end of Year 2.

Because of the new systems in place to track pupils' progress, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are being targeted more effectively. Their progress remains satisfactory at present although is beginning to improve.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. All pupils demonstrate good levels of understanding for others' feelings and opinions and go out of their way to support and encourage each other. They reflect sensitively about how to meet the challenges of new experiences as they become older. They take on a range of different

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responsibilities in the school, for example, as 'playground pals' and school councillors. Their knowledge of cultures and communities outside their own experience is satisfactory and continues to develop as the school builds links with schools overseas.

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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	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?

Teachers use a wide range of strategies to maintain pupils' interest and concentration. They use interactive whiteboards to illustrate different teaching points, encourage pupils to discuss their work and question them effectively to check their learning. A good lesson in the computer suite for example, involved Year 5 pupils discovering how to format graphs to display information about the population of different countries. They worked enthusiastically in pairs, sharing their ideas and discussing various options. They were engrossed and extremely well behaved during the lesson and made good progress. Writing has been the focus for improvement this year and small-group work, often led by teaching assistants, is beginning to raise pupils' attainment. However, whole-class lessons are not always planned well enough and do not include enough detail about exactly what pupils are expected to learn. This coupled with the fact that pupils do not always know their individual learning targets, means that they are less well motivated to succeed. Although a range of activities are planned at different levels, often these do not match pupils' particular needs or challenge them to work at higher levels.

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The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of experiences to make learning enjoyable for pupils. It contributes well to their knowledge of health issues and how to keep safe in and out of school. Pupils appreciate the clubs and activities on offer after school, including choir, dance and cheerleading. They have good opportunities to learn to play musical instruments. Visits to places such as The Museum of London and the National Gallery support their learning in history and art. Effective partnerships with local schools provide useful opportunities for gifted and talented pupils, and other pupils to extend their academic, creative and sporting skills. Senior leaders are currently reviewing the curriculum to ensure that pupils are being given enough opportunities to develop their skills in different subjects.

Pupils are well cared for in school. The positive atmosphere in the school means that pupils are happy to share any concerns with an adult, confident that they will be addressed. Good links with external support agencies ensure that teachers receive clear advice about how to meet pupils' specific needs. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to help them learn how to make the correct choices, for example, about their personal safety and health. Good transition arrangements help pupils move confidently to their secondary schools at the end of Year 6.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership team is giving a satisfactory steer to the school's work and there is a clear focus on securing improvement. Senior leaders and managers successfully implemented a number of initiatives which have contributed well to improvements to pupils' attainment in mathematics, as well as strengthened systems to check pupils' progress through the school. Phase leaders and managers are developing their roles satisfactorily and are involved in monitoring their teams through examining lesson plans and pupils' work. However, school and subject improvement plans lack explicit guidance to ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in evaluating the school's performance and driving improvement forward.

Parents and carers develop good levels of trust in the staff because of the strong partnerships that exist between them and the school. The headteacher enjoys very good support from parents and carers who acknowledge that any concerns that they might have are quickly addressed. Regular consultation evenings provide good opportunities for parents and carers to find out about their children's progress and these are supplemented by informative progress reports that are now available online. Good partnerships with a wide range of schools and other agencies have provided effective opportunities for pupils

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to engage in competitions, projects and visits to support their academic and personal development.

The governing body is supportive and has a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. At present, the governing body has a limited role in evaluating performance and in prioritising areas for school improvement but is keen to improve this aspect of its work.

Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. There are secure arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe at school. Policies and procedures are robust and regularly reviewed and management systems are clearly defined. Staff promote equality of opportunity satisfactorily. Senior staff are now able to track the progress of different groups of pupils to identify underachievement. Racist incidents are rare and procedures are in place to ensure that any which arise are tackled promptly. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. Although there is a strong feeling of community within the school and locality, links with communities and cultures outside the local area have yet to be fully 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	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	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

Children settle in quickly to the Nursery and begin to develop their confidence and independence. The atmosphere is warm and inviting and this means that children come into school happily each morning, ready to engage in all the activities provided for them. Their enthusiasm and excellent behaviour contributes to their good progress throughout Nursery and Reception, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and in the development of their literacy skills. Children in Nursery developed a good understanding of letter sounds during a story-telling session, led by the teacher. Through her probing yet sensitive questions, she was able to check on children's learning and

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encourage them to try to spell simple words. Children build upon these skills in Reception, writing simple sentences about pirates for example, using their secure phonic knowledge to spell unfamiliar words.

Leadership is good. There is a good balance planned between activities that are directed by adults and those that children choose for themselves. Adults model language well, helping children to increase their vocabulary and communication skills. Adults record extremely detailed observations of children's progress and this builds into a unique portfolio which tracks their development through Nursery and Reception. However, this valuable information is not used well enough to plan activities to challenge children at different levels of development and help them take the next steps in their learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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

The proportion of questionnaires returned from parents and carers was broadly average. The vast majority of parents and carers are positive about the school's work. Nearly all agree that their children are kept safe and that they enjoy school. They are very positive about the leadership and management of the school. A few expressed concerns about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors observed lessons in every class, observed behaviour in the playground and the dining hall, held discussions with pupils and examined the school's systems for managing behaviour. Their evidence confirmed that behaviour was good and well-managed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Tudor Court 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 216 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 674 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	143	6	68	31	4	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	146	68	67	31	1	0	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	89	41	112	52	12	6	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	86	40	112	52	11	5	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	99	46	105	49	6	3	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	89	41	112	52	9	4	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	95	44	108	50	6	3	2	1
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)	109	50	95	44	4	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	86	40	111	51	12	6	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	83	38	105	49	25	12	1	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	70	32	125	58	13	6	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	122	56	84	39	4	2	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	123	57	79	37	6	3	2	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



6 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tudor Court Primary School, Grays, RM16 6PL

Thank you so much for welcoming us recently to your school and giving us your opinions about the school. Your views, along with everything else that we saw, helped us to get to know your school and how well it works. You go to a satisfactory school. Here are some of the things we liked best.

You understand how to keep safe, healthy and fit.

You behave well in lessons and in the playground.

You are kind to each other and respect one another's different views.

The adults care for you well and this helps you feel secure and ready to learn.

The people in charge are working well with your parents and carers to make sure you are happy and healthy.

The children in Nursery and Reception get a good start to their education.

There are a few things that could be even better in your school. We have asked your teachers to help you make faster progress in writing by planning lessons more carefully, so that you all know what you should be learning and you understand your individual targets for improvement. We have asked them to use the information they have about your progress in writing to plan work which is at the right levels so that you can all improve. Finally, we have asked the headteacher and governing body to write more detailed plans to make sure that things improve at a faster rate and involve the governing body more in judging how well the school is doing.

You all can play your part in helping your school become better by making sure you work hard, behave well and attend school every day unless you are ill.

Yours sincerely

Mary Summers

Lead inspector

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