

Tanners Wood Junior Mixed and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117178
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	379368
Inspection dates	18–19 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Tusha Chakraborti

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	337
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Denyer
Headteacher	Michael Lansdown
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2009
School address	Hazelwood Lane Abbots Langley WD5 0LG
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 17 lessons taught by 13 different teachers in the 12 classes. Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff, pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's improvement plans, policy documents, pupils' work, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, minutes of the governing body's meetings and safeguarding documentation. They also scrutinised responses to the inspection questionnaires from 54 parents and carers, 146 pupils and 33 staff.

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

- What are the current rates of attainment and progress made by all groups of pupils, especially those of boys across the school?
- How effective are the improved assessment strategies being employed to eradicate the identified underachievement of boys and higher attainers and to set challenging targets for all pupils?
- How effective is the current leadership structure at driving focused school improvement?

Information about the school

This is a larger than average primary school with one and a half form entry. Most of the pupils are White British. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are well below average. Very few are at the early stages of learning English. The proportions of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals are below average as is that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Nursery and the Reception classes. The school holds Healthy School status and is part of the Safer Routes to School programme. It has also secured initial and intermediate International School 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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. It is an improving school where pupils' attainment is rising and progress is accelerating. The school provides a harmonious and welcoming learning environment where pupils enjoy learning and feel safe and secure. Pupils develop good personal and social skills and grow up as confident learners. The recent changes in the leadership team have ensured more effective teamwork. The leaders, teachers and support staff work effectively in close liaison with outside agencies to support all pupils. Parents and carers recognise the school's hard work in its commitment to improving all aspects of its work and this is reflected in their comments. For example, one parent stated, 'I am extremely happy with the school. It has a warm and caring feeling; all my children have been happy here.' Pupils' behaviour is good and their attitudes to learning and all aspects of school life are positive. This is reflected in their above average rate of attendance and in the responsible manner they display in their support for the smooth running of the school.

Overall, over the past three years pupils' attainment has been average by the end of Year 6 and pupils across the school are making satisfactory progress. However, standards of attainment rose in 2011 and were significantly above average. This represents a clear trend of improvement in both attainment and progress over the past year. Children enter the Reception class with skills and experiences that are below those expected for their age. They make good progress and, by the time they reach Year 1, most achieve standards that are average. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress as a result of the appropriate support they receive from all staff. Inspection evidence indicates that there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

Lessons are characterised by good relationships between staff and pupils. In the best lessons, teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn and how this will be achieved, matching work closely to individual needs; teachers have high expectations of their behaviour and work and engage pupils in paired and whole-class discussions that support their learning well. Generally, teachers assess pupils' progress during lessons well through skilful questioning. Nonetheless, assessment information is not used consistently to plan activities to meet the needs of pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils, who consequently do not achieve as well as they can. Marking is encouraging but does not always provide enough guidance to pupils about how to improve. Teachers do not have sufficient opportunities to share good practice within the school.

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The leadership team has a clear vision for the school which is shared with staff and governors. With the arrival of the new deputy headteacher and the rearrangement of responsibilities, the team is making good progress in strengthening its monitoring and evaluating roles further, with a clear focus on raising attainment. However, the monitoring and evaluation roles of middle leaders, including subject leaders, are not sufficiently developed. Leaders have recently revised the assessment procedures to track pupils' progress more effectively and to promote a more rigorous self- and peer-assessment system. This is being implemented successfully but has not yet resulted in consistently good target setting. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate and provides a secure basis for development planning. The governing body has a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Although the school has introduced several recent strategies to raise achievement, the impact of these actions is yet to be fully evident. The school's capacity to improve, therefore, is satisfactory.

About 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?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - using assessment data more effectively to plan work matched to pupils' abilities, particularly higher attaining pupils, so that they are challenged consistently and achieve as well as they can
 - ensuring that marking consistently supports pupils to help them understand how they can improve their work
 - establishing a programme where teachers are able to improve their skills by observing best practice.
- Increase the capacity of leadership at all levels by improving the monitoring and evaluation roles of middle leaders.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at school and their achievement is satisfactory. Assessment data and observations of lessons and pupils' work show that, currently, pupils' progress in English and mathematics is accelerating. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and concentrate on the tasks they are set. However, in those lessons where they have to listen too long they lose concentration and learning slows. Pupils enjoy 'talk-partner' activities where they enthusiastically discuss their ideas in pairs before embarking on an activity, such as a continuous piece of writing. They explore

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the characteristics of different genre. For example, in a literacy lesson, pupils successfully identified key features of action and adventure stories with a clear focus on the use of imaginative language to capture the interest of audience. They review their own writing styles and learn to edit and improve their work, using correct punctuation. Pupils thoroughly enjoy challenges in mathematics lessons. They engage in investigative work and apply their knowledge and understanding to solve practical problems, such as designing a film set in given perimeters. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to others as a result of the consistent support that they receive.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They are confident that any concerns they raise will be listened to and dealt with effectively. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy, and most take part in a range of sporting activities organized by the school and through its sports partnership with other local schools. They behave well and learn to respect others’ values and beliefs. Their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their consideration and support for others. Pupils enjoy taking on roles of responsibility within the class, as members of the school council and in arranging activities to support school and local events. They make a good contribution to wider communities and recognise the need to do so. For example, they were very successful in raising a large sum of funds for an international charity to provide a water supply for a village in Africa. Pupils are developing appropriate basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology and are prepared satisfactorily for future education.

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	2
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

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How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers’ planning and classroom organisation are effective in promoting learning and enjoyment for pupils. In good lessons, the purpose of the lesson is shared effectively with the class so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Interactive whiteboards are used well to illustrate key teaching and learning points and to engage pupils in their learning. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss their work in groups and to investigate and solve problems. In some lessons, learning objectives are not clear and teachers spend too long talking to the class so that pupils do not have enough time to engage effectively in their learning. Although the use of assessment is improving, there is still insufficient consistency in planning and setting targets appropriate to pupils at different attainment levels. The teaching assistants are used well to support learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum offers a satisfactory range of learning experiences for pupils. The school has recently put in place a broader and more balanced programme with stronger cross-curricular links. Curriculum planning takes into account activities that interest and motivate boys; this is having a positive impact on boys’ achievement. There is a good range of after school clubs including sports and arts as well as special events that enhance pupils’ learning experience. For example, Years 1 and 2 had a whole day event linked to their history and literacy topic, organised by an external education agency. This supported pupils well in extending their knowledge and understanding of Stuart Britain and the Great Fire of London respectively.

The school’s good links with the external agencies strengthens the pastoral system continually. The improving use of assessment data is effective in identifying the needs faced by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. They are carefully targeted and effectively supported through early intervention programmes. However, in a small minority of cases, records of the support provided for these pupils are not maintained rigorously enough to track their progress systematically. The school recognises this and is in the process of addressing the issue. The arrangements for transferring children between the key stages within the school, as well as between Year 6 and the secondary schools, are effective. Steps to promote regular attendance are successful.

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

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The effectiveness of care, guidance and support

2

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team, supported by other leaders and the governing body, provides a strong sense of teamwork and is successfully driving improvement. Staff share a common ambition to build on what they have achieved so far. Leaders have a robust system in place for monitoring teaching from which they can develop the expertise of teachers. A revised assessment system is being used to ensure that the progress of individual pupils is more closely tracked so that all groups of pupils achieve as well as they can. The governing body has several new members who are being trained and getting to know the school. They are ambitious for the school to do well and are committed to use their expertise for the good of the school. They have identified the priorities for school improvement and recognise that they need to be more vigilant in monitoring the work of the school.

The school is committed to equal opportunities and is seeking ways to raise standards of achievement for all groups of pupils. Statutory policies for equal opportunities are monitored and evaluated regularly. The school has successfully developed a strong partnership with parents and carers, involving them well in their children’s education, for example through the school website, regular meetings and newsletters. Safeguarding procedures illustrate good practice. Clear policies and strategies are monitored regularly and ensure that pupils are safe. Community cohesion operates well at the school and local level. Global links are developing well through pupils raising funds for local, national and international charities. These give pupils an opportunity to develop greater understanding of cultural diversity. The school is successful in liaising with outside agencies and local schools, including the contributory pre-school provision and secondary schools. This supports pupils’ learning and well-being effectively. The school manages its budget efficiently and provides satisfactory value for money.

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	2

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff form good relationships with children. Behaviour is good and well managed by all adults. An attractive learning environment, with vibrant displays and a good range of resources, interests and engages children well. Consequently, children greatly enjoy their learning and make good progress.

Practical activities are wide-ranging and planned effectively to ensure that children learn through a balanced programme of child-initiated and adult-led activities and develop independence. Children are confident learners and develop good communication and language skills through whole-class discussions and group activities. For example, in a role play session on 'The hospital' one child, in the role of a receptionist, made an appointment for a patient over the telephone, clearly stating the time of appointment and that the patient needed to be examined by the doctor; another child helped the receptionist to record this in a 'booking form.' Children develop good coordination and personal and social skills as they explore the well organised indoor and outdoor activities. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well integrated and benefit from good support from skilled teaching assistants.

Children's welfare and safety are given the highest priority. The school works successfully in close partnership with families through an effective induction system and maintains close contact with parents and carers. As a result, children settle quickly into their daily routines and engage in activities with interest and enthusiasm. Assessment of children's progress is rigorous and the information gained is used effectively to inform planning. Leadership is effective in providing children with an enjoyable, safe and secure learning environment.

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

The proportion of parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaire was

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low. Most of the parents and carers responding to the questionnaire report that their children enjoy school and that they are very pleased with their children's experience in this school. They appreciate that the school keeps their children safe and ensures that pupils develop good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. Most feel that they are well informed about their children's progress. Discussion with parents and carers in the school also support these views. Inspectors agree with the views of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Tanners Wood Junior Mixed and Infant 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 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 337 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	67	17	31	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	70	14	26	2	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	20	37	30	56	2	4	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	26	35	65	2	4	2	4
The teaching is good at this school	24	44	25	46	1	2	1	2
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	24	44	27	50	1	2	2	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	44	28	52	2	4	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)	20	37	29	54	2	4	1	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	24	44	25	46	3	6	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	28	36	67	2	4	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	31	31	57	1	2	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	23	43	27	50	0	0	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	29	54	23	43	1	2	1	2

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



20 October 2011

Dear pupils

Inspection of Tanners Wood Junior Mixed and Infant School, Abbots Langley, WD5 0LG

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly and helpful. We were pleased to see how much you enjoy school. This is clearly reflected in your good rate of attendance. We agree with you that your teachers take good care of you. You behave well and are always keen to help each other. You carry out your duties, including your jobs as play group leaders and school council representatives, willingly and responsibly. Thank you also for the questionnaires that you filled in for the inspection and for sharing your views with us.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. You progress at a satisfactory rate in your learning and most of you reach average standards in English and mathematics by the time you leave Year 6. We also think that your standards of achievement are now improving steadily. To improve your school further, we have asked the headteacher and staff to:

- make sure that the work provided for you is just a bit harder to move your learning forward as rapidly as possible, especially those of you who learn quickly
- ensure that teachers help you to understand how you can improve your work
- arrange for teachers to observe the best teaching to improve their teaching further so that you make even better progress
- make sure that teachers with responsibility for each subject take on greater responsibility for helping to improve your school.

I am sure that you and your teachers will work hard to make these improvements. You can help the school to get even better by continuing to work hard and attending regularly, so that your school remains a happy place.

Yours sincerely

Tusha Chakraborti
Lead inspector

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