

Tanfield Lea Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131545
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	381360
Inspection dates	25–26 April 2012
Lead inspector	Frank Cain

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	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Olga Milburn
Headteacher	Kay Hemmings
Date of previous school inspection	2 October 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Frank Cain
Wendy Richardson

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 15 lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight different teachers and they also looked at pupils' work. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about how much they read. Discussions took place with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documents, including those relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation records, minutes of governing body meetings and the school's own assessment data. The inspectors analysed questionnaires from pupils and staff, as well as those from 122 parents and carers.

Information about the school

Tanfield Lea Primary is an average-sized primary school, with a slightly higher proportion of girls than found nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a small proportion from minority ethnic groups.

The school meets the current floor standards, which relate to the government's expected standard for pupils' attainment and progress. The headteacher has been seconded to assist another local primary school, but she retains close links with Tanfield Lea and was present for the entire inspection. The school has The International School Award and Healthy School status.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- Tanfield Lea is a good school. It is not outstanding because teaching is not yet consistent in driving rapid and sustained progress for pupils.
- Children enter the school with skills below, or in some cases well below, national expectations for their age. Some have attended nursery provision and others not. The good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to make good progress. By the time pupils leave Year 6, their attainment is average in English and significantly above average in mathematics. This represents good progress overall, but very good progress for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Teaching is good across the school, with some that is outstanding. There are some cases where marking is less effective in giving pupils clear targets for improvement and useful feedback on how to achieve them.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good and they have positive attitudes to learning. They are friendly and polite because the staff have high expectations regarding behaviour. Pupils are very aware of their own personal safety. Children in the Reception class explained that it was important to take it in turn when collecting their whiteboards, as rushing out might cause someone to get hurt.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has led the way in improving the quality of teaching and in managing pupils' performance since the previous report. The headteacher has appointed a strong and very competent leadership team that has also contributed towards school improvement. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual, and cultural development is outstanding because of the high priority given to it by all staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further increase the effectiveness of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - consistently giving pupils more detailed individual feedback on what steps to take next to improve
 - providing more sharply focused long-term individual targets for pupils across the curriculum
 - sharing the features of the best teaching practice within school, so that all staff adopt the most effective approaches to teaching and learning within their classroom.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils learn well in lessons and as a result make good progress. They show pride in their work and are keen to improve. One Key Stage 1 pupil proudly showed how his writing and sentence construction had greatly improved since September. Pupils work well in science lessons, for example, in explaining that the roots of plants acted like straws to suck up the water, showing a good understanding of how plants work. Good progress in lessons is seen especially when tasks are imaginative and stimulating. In a lesson on deforestation in Year 5, pupils acquired knowledge on the damage that it was causing in some areas of the world and gained an understanding of conservation work.

Pupils' progress is good overall. In the Early Years Foundation Stage provision has improved well since the last inspection and staff use 'starter booklets' and assessment folders effectively to plan the work to maximise children's development. Pupils who are eligible for free school meals throughout the school now make better progress than found nationally. The school has very efficient systems to track pupils' progress and has put in place effective intervention programmes to help pupils to achieve well.

Pupils' reading attainment in Key Stage 1, which had been weak, has been successfully targeted and pupils' reading skills are now broadly average. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading is securely average, representing good progress for this cohort of pupils. This reflects the priority the school places on developing pupils' reading skills. Many pupils say that they read frequently outside school and older pupils are able to talk confidently about which books or authors they prefer and can explain why. Pupils pointed out that reading at home is expected by their teachers, and younger ones keep details on books read in their personal organisers.

An overwhelming number of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire feel that their children make good progress in school and that they have sufficient information to support their children's learning. Inspectors concur with these positive views.

Quality of teaching

Inspection evidence shows that teaching is good across the school, and this correlates with pupils' and parents' and carers' views. In the best lessons, learning is well matched to the different abilities of pupils so that all ability levels are suitably challenged. This includes

disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. These pupils also get appropriate one-to-one targeting on specific issues, which is having a significant impact on their progress.

Teachers make good use of video clips, as well as role play, to stimulate pupils' interest in their work. Good use is made of paired work and questioning to encourage and challenge pupils to produce work of a high standard. Where appropriate, games are employed to assist learning, so that pupils find learning fun. In a mathematics lesson, a game was seen to stimulate the interest of boys and to make sure that they were fully engaged in the lesson. Independent work is promoted well with pupils and it is often built into the lesson planning. Mathematics in particular is popular with pupils, as it is made relevant to pupils' needs and they explain well where mathematics might be of practical use outside of school, for example when tiling a bathroom.

In all lessons, staff make an exceptional impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' conduct, their skills of cooperation and for the respect they show for each other's achievements, and pupils respond accordingly. Very good use is made of the talented and hardworking teaching assistants, both in classrooms and when they are working independently with small groups of pupils.

The topic-based curriculum is well taught and teachers interweave themes into literacy lessons well. For example, in work on the Victorians the teacher asked pupils to devise an escape plan from a nineteenth century workhouse, where children were badly treated. Visits to Beamish and to Craggside help to develop pupils' understanding of local history and geography. Pupils' knowledge of their academic targets and where they are in relation to them is variable. There are some areas, notably in some writing tasks, where marking and feedback are outstanding, but in some areas they are less effective.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Inspectors concur with the view of the vast majority of parents and carers who think their children are safe in school and that behaviour is typically good. Pupils strongly support this view because they know that staff are always available if they need help and that behaviour management is consistent and fair.

Pupils are helpful and considerate for others. One child in the Reception class, without prompting, gave a classmate her mini-whiteboard marker and then went to get another for herself. Pupils smile at visitors and open doors for them. Pupils' attitude to learning is very positive and they quickly settle down to work.

A small number of parents and carers believe that a few lessons are interrupted by inappropriate behaviour. Most, however, think that poor behaviour does not routinely affect learning and is good in most lessons. Inspection evidence shows that teachers deal with problems well, using non-confrontational strategies and that pupils respond well to adults' guidance and instructions.

A few parents and carers and pupils did point out that there are some incidents of bullying, but school records show that these are infrequent and incidents are well recorded. Pupils pointed out that examples of poor behaviour are dealt with quickly by staff. Pupils are very aware of the different forms of bullying that might occur. They are particularly well informed

about the dangers associated with those relating to computers and telephones, especially with regard to social media.

Good behaviour is actively promoted by the school, which gives pupils many opportunities to develop their personal qualities. The lunchtime supervisor was observed tirelessly organising games for the pupils, encouraging them to work and play together well. Pupils are encouraged to undertake positions of responsibilities as playground 'buddies', or as acting school receptionists at lunchtime. Their resilience and independence are fostered by popular residential visits. Their awareness of what is right and wrong is regularly promoted in lessons and in assemblies. In the latter, younger pupils sang a version of their school rules with enthusiasm and pleasure. The school has worked diligently to improve attendance, which is now average. It is successfully reducing the incidence of persistent absence.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of the school are good. As a result of the headteacher's clear vision with regard to succession planning and, in particular, the development of her middle leaders, staff have been empowered to take on roles of greater responsibility, for example in monitoring teaching and learning and ensuring that there is consistency across different subject areas. Subject leaders observe their colleagues teaching, and senior leaders undertake detailed work scrutiny, offering constructive feedback to staff on their strengths and weaknesses. These are fed into appropriate professional development for staff. Therefore, the leadership of teaching and learning is strong as it is shared by a number of staff. However, to make this aspect of management outstanding leaders acknowledge that the sharing of the best teaching practice needs to be more widespread. The leadership team has an excellent understanding of the strengths of the school and is aware of areas for development. There have been effective improvements since the previous inspection. Such strengths in leadership and management indicate that there is a good capacity to improve further.

The curriculum is good and is planned effectively. There are opportunities for cross-curricular work in science, and information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively in literacy work. Pupils have the chance to play musical instruments, for example a Year 3 class were observed playing the ukulele. The short 'concert' they gave was outstanding, and the pleasure the pupils took from their excellent performance was clearly evident. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because of the opportunities afforded to them by the school. One pupil pointed out 'the people who create this school make us the people we are'. Pupils are given opportunities to show an understanding of different faiths and cultures by speakers and visits, as well as linking on the internet with other children across the world. Pupils are encouraged to develop good social skills and notably they are rightly proud of their own radio station, even interviewing local celebrities. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of right and wrong and show that they care about others and have many charity fund-raising events.

The school's leadership and management are successful in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination, including for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The very good progress made by these pupils is an indication of this effective provision.

Members of the governing body are proud of the school and they have a clear picture of the strengths and areas for improvement within school. They are effective in ensuring that the

needs of the school are met. Safeguarding arrangements meet current statutory requirements. Visitors are well monitored and the site is very secure.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons. Taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	The national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



27 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tanfield Lea Community Primary School, Stanley DH9 9LU

I want to thank all of you for the extremely friendly welcome that you gave us when we inspected your school. We found the time we spent talking with you, your teachers and other adults extremely enjoyable and rewarding. You go to a good school. We were impressed by your keenness to learn. You make good progress and your work by the time you leave in Year 6 is in line with children in other schools, because the teaching is good.

Your school is well led and managed. Most of you feel extremely safe and secure and we found that behaviour was good in lessons and around the school. The majority of you said that staff dealt quickly with any cases where behaviour was a problem.

In order to help you make even better progress and to improve the school further, we have asked the school's leaders, teachers and the governing body to:

- spend more time helping you to understand how well you are getting on with your work
- ask teachers to share their good ideas for lessons with other teachers.

I am sure you will all want to help make your school better by working hard and playing together well.

Yours sincerely

Frank Cain
Lead inspector

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