

Tennyson Road Infant School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	121862
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	380341
Inspection dates	5–6 July 2012
Lead inspector	Kath Campbell

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Pack
Headteacher	Caroline Hall
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2007
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

Inspection team

Kath Campbell

Additional Inspector

Mike Williams

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team observed 13 lessons taught by six teachers. Inspectors also spent time talking with individual pupils about their work and their enjoyment of school, as well as hearing some pupils read. In addition, inspectors observed some sessions where support is provided by teaching assistants. They held meetings with groups of pupils, members of staff and of the governing body, as well as talking informally to parents and carers to gain their views of the school. Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including samples of pupils' past and present work, information about child protection and safeguarding and the progress of pupils. They scrutinised 101 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

Information about the school

Tennyson Road Infant School is a smaller-than-average school close to the centre of the town. Nearly all pupils are of a White British background and none speaks English as an additional language. Currently, an above-average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has an above-average proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. The headteacher was absent during the autumn term of 2011. The school has gained several awards in recognition of its work, including the intermediate International Schools 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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school that is improving after the headteacher's return from long-term absence. It is a welcoming community that cares for and nurtures its pupils well. The school is not yet good because the quality of teaching and monitoring is not consistently good enough to ensure good achievement for all groups of pupils in Key Stage 1, particularly in English. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Improvements in the Reception classes mean that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start. In Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress, although boys do not do as well as girls in English, especially in writing, and more-able pupils do not always reach their full potential. Strategies to improve progress are showing signs of success, but have not yet had a full impact on attainment.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is good in Reception, but not all teachers focus sufficiently on ensuring that individual pupils make enough progress in lessons. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Marking is regular but does not always show pupils how to improve their work.
- Behaviour and safety are satisfactory. This is a harmonious community, where strong relationships ensure pupils behave well in lessons when their work is suitably challenging. Pupils feel safe and are mostly keen to learn. Tenacious monitoring has improved levels of attendance.
- The relatively new senior leadership team has been successful in moving the school forward during the headteacher's absence. The leadership of teaching and management of performance are given the highest priority and effectively support improvement. Monitoring is comprehensive but does not always focus sufficiently on the impact of teaching on the quality of pupils' learning.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- During the next academic year, accelerate progress in English so it is at least good for all groups of pupils in Key Stage 1, by:
 - developing pupils' reading and writing skills, so that they become confident, independent readers and writers as they move through the school
 - extending the range of opportunities within the curriculum themes that are specifically designed to engage boys' interest, as well as girls'
 - ensuring that all staff demand the highest level of work from pupils, particularly the more-able pupils.

- During the next academic year, ensure that teaching is good or better throughout the school by:
 - assessing the impact of teaching more precisely to ensure that the ongoing quality of learning of individual pupils is consistently high
 - using marking with greater consistency to move pupils on to the next step in their learning.

- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders' monitoring focuses with greater precision on measuring the impact of initiatives to improve teaching on pupils' learning outcomes
 - members of the governing body gain first-hand knowledge of the school's work so that they know whether standards are high enough.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Most parents and carers feel that their children make good progress. The work seen during the inspection and the school's own data show that pupils' achievement is improving after a period of interrupted leadership, but is satisfactory overall. In the lessons observed, children in Reception were typically making good progress, but for older pupils it was satisfactory.

Children enter the school with skills that are below national expectations for their age. Early language, literacy and social skills are particularly weak. As a result of good teaching and tight monitoring of individual progress, children make good progress across all areas of learning.

Current attainment in reading is average at the end of Key Stage 1. The school's strategies for developing pupils' knowledge of linking letters to sounds (phonics) are effective. Other initiatives to accelerate progress in reading have seen a rapid rise in the attainment of less-able pupils. Writing is the school's main area for development. Several initiatives to extend pupils' writing are beginning to motivate boys well and

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have already resulted in raising the proportion of pupils attaining expected levels to above average. Pupils' 'First of the Month' books provide a detailed evaluation of progress in writing. Boys, in particular, enjoy these books because they can see how much their work has improved over time. However, until recently, the school's focus on raising the attainment of less-able pupils has sometimes been at the expense of ensuring that more-able pupils reach the standards of which they are capable. Attainment in mathematics is above average. Most pupils develop secure numeracy and problem-solving skills by the time they leave the school. The introduction of more challenging activities during the introductory part of lessons is effectively motivating the more-able pupils, because they enjoy greater challenge.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress in line with their classmates, particularly during group activities. Good-quality input from teaching assistants provides the right level of support to develop their confidence and independence, and work is matched closely to their needs.

Quality of teaching

Nearly all of the parents and carers who returned questionnaires believe their children are taught well. There is some good practice, particularly for the younger children, but the quality of teaching varies and too much is no better than satisfactory.

In the Reception classes, a strong focus on developing children's personal and social skills lays secure foundations for future learning. Children gain greater confidence in expressing themselves because staff take every opportunity to develop language skills. Those who need individual attention benefit greatly from effective one-to-one support. Children experience a rich variety of rewarding and interesting learning experiences. A good example of this was seen when a boy was so highly motivated by his 'Super Heroes' pictures that he started to write spontaneously and independently.

The teaching of reading is increasingly secure because activities are engaging. Good-quality phonics teaching was observed in Year 1. Tasks were pitched at exactly the right level. A wide variety of fun learning activities, ranging from recalling previous learning quickly to practical and visual activities, ensured success through enjoyment. Pupils of all abilities made good progress because they enjoyed their work.

Strong relationships make a major contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, most pupils are enthusiastic about their work and want to do well. Teaching assistants play an important role in developing the skills of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Most teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn, and plan effectively to cater for differing needs and abilities. However, in Key Stage 1, teachers' expectations are sometimes not high enough to ensure better than satisfactory progress and they do not always move more-able pupils on to challenging work quickly enough. Occasionally, valuable time is wasted when pupils are slow to move to activities. Some teachers focus well

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on pupils' ongoing learning; others do not focus with enough precision on whether individual pupils have made enough progress. In discussions, pupils said they are sometimes not clear about what they need to do to improve their work because marking does not always show them the next step in their learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Almost all pupils say they feel safe and enjoy school. Parents and carers are very confident that their children feel safe but some, particularly those who have children in Year 2, express concerns about behaviour. A very small minority of pupils present challenging behaviour, but the school successfully integrates these pupils into school life. The dining hall is a happy place where pupils mix and chat with friends. Pupils know that bullying comes in different forms, such as prejudice-based bullying and cyber-bullying. They say that on the rare occasions when it does happen, particularly in the playground, it is dealt with effectively once they have talked to an adult. Pupils generally understand the systems of rewards and sanctions, and can see how behaving well helps their learning. Their favourite reward for good behaviour is 'Golden Time', when they have special rewards. They take their responsibilities seriously and the school council is very proud of its contribution to school life.

Pupils enjoy working together in groups. A good example of this was observed when pupils in Year 2 were constructing a well and finding out why or if it worked effectively. Strong teamwork and good humour prevailed and pupils were highly delighted with the results. During the inspection, 'Transfer Day' took place. This is a day where pupils work in their new classes. It was a very special occasion where the strong sense of community that permeates the school was observed at its best. Pupils of all ages settled quickly, preparing them well for the transition after the summer holidays.

Attendance has been an ongoing issue for the school. It has improved, and is now broadly average. The school works closely with families and relevant outside agencies to improve attendance. It has successfully reduced the amount of persistent absence, although the lack of cooperation of a very small number of families is having a negative impact on the learning made by the pupils involved.

Leadership and management

The relatively new senior leadership team has had a disrupted year following the headteacher's absence. The two senior teachers moved the school forward at a satisfactory pace during this period, and the current position is far more positive now that the headteacher has returned. Leaders at all levels are strongly committed to securing rapid improvement. Teachers are far more accountable for standards achieved. The introduction of better data analysis has strengthened the school's ability to monitor the quality of learning. More precise tracking ensures potential underachievement is identified earlier, getting pupils back on track quickly. The monitoring of teaching is detailed and systematic, including scrutiny of pupils' work in

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books. There is sometimes a lack of rigour in assessing the impact of teaching on learning, but focused staff training has been instrumental in bringing about some improvements. For example, better teaching has been successful in raising the attainment of less-able readers.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is effectively organised and supportive but does not have a clear enough view of whether standards are high enough. It ensures that safeguarding and child protection procedures meet government requirements.

The school is developing a more skills-based, creative curriculum. The current curriculum is broad and balanced but does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills in different subjects. International links, for example with a school in Ghana, add greatly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Planned opportunities, such as the recent residential visit to Grendon Hall, not only enhance pupils' enjoyment but also make a major contribution to their social development. Occasions such as 'Celebration Assembly' are very special and contribute well to pupils' spiritual development. Strong links with other schools forge good relationships and ensure smooth transition.

Tennyson Road is a very inclusive school. Through targeted support, it successfully removes barriers to learning. As a result, pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable succeed and are able to participate fully in school life. The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination effectively. Through improved assessment procedures, more precise data analysis and tighter monitoring of performance, it has a satisfactory capacity to secure further improvement.

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 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.



9 July 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Tennyson Road Infant School, Rushden NN10 9QD

Thank you for looking after us so well when we came to visit your school. You were very helpful and made us feel part of your school family. We liked talking to you about your work and watching you work and play together. Some of you who read to us enjoy reading very much and told us a lot about the books you like most. It was good to see that some of you have not missed a day at school this term.

You go to a satisfactory school, which means that it does some things well but also has some things to improve. Everyone cares for you a great deal, and children in Reception get off to a good start. In Years 1 and 2 you make steady progress in your learning, but some of you do better than others, particularly in English.

The headteacher, other staff and governors are doing a lot to improve your school. We were pleased to see your reading and writing is getting better. Most of you try hard to do your best because you like it when your teacher tells you how well you have done. We have asked them to do some things to help the school improve even more.

- In Years 1 and 2, we would like the boys and those of you who can work quickly to do even better, especially in writing.
- Some of the teaching is really good, and we want it all to be as good as that. We have also asked your teachers to make sure they let you know what to do next, each time they mark your work.
- We would also like the teachers and governors to keep a closer check on your work, to make sure you are all doing well.

Keep coming to school every day, and work hard in your new class after the holidays.

My best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely

Kath Campbell
Lead inspector

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