

Tiptree Heath Primary School

103 Maldon Road, Tiptree, Colchester, CO5 0PG

Inspection dates

12–13 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children get a good start to their education in the Reception class because practical activities are used well to capture their interests.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress because good teaching enables them to be successful every day and develop their basic skills effectively.
- The pupils behave well and they are keen to share their work in class and in assemblies.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school as a result of the careful eye that staff keep on them.
- Attendance is above average.
- Reading is taught well and so results in the Year 1 letters and sounds check were above average and pupils in Year 6 read complicated books successfully.
- The good leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher mean that teachers and support staff work thoughtfully to ensure that pupils achieve well all the time.
- Leaders, governors and staff work successfully as a team and they are always looking for ways to improve the school. For example, since the last inspection, the use of assessment activities and the way the school watches over pupils' progress has got a lot better.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not regularly discuss their personal targets or set their own areas for development after they have received comments from teachers.
- Targets given to teachers to improve their skills are not consistently followed up.
- Parents do not understand fully what levels of knowledge and skill children are expected to reach at certain ages and they are not totally clear about how much progress their child is making.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons or part-lessons and all seven teachers were observed. There were two joint observations with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and one governor, school staff, parents, children and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector observed children's behaviour and scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures.
- The inspectors took account of the 72 responses to the school's Parent Consultation Feedback forms which were collected in November 2012 and 51 responses to the online Parent View survey. The questionnaires of 10 staff were also taken into account.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at documentation including teachers' planning, the school development plan, tracking documentation of pupils' progress, performance management documentation and minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Jackie Cousins, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Rosenthal	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than most primary schools.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and a small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds. No pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language.
- No pupils attend any other school for part of the week.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- A privately run after-school club operates on Monday to Thursday during school term times. This provision is subject to separate inspection arrangements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' progress to outstanding by making sure that:
 - all pupils discuss carefully each week whether they have met their personal targets
 - all pupils learn to think about how they can improve their work after they have received the teachers' comments
 - staff help to gather evidence every six weeks for how they have successfully met their personal target for improving their teaching skills.
- Develop a stronger relationship with parents and carers by ensuring that they:
 - understand what skills and knowledge children are expected to have by a certain age
 - are better informed about how well their child is doing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Boys and girls achieve equally well in learning to speak, read, write, socialise and use mathematics because the teaching is matched effectively to each pupil. For instance, more-able pupils learned to use averages successfully to solve complex problems because the teacher used questioning thoughtfully and ensured that pupils learned to explain their ideas clearly. Work in books and from checks on how well pupils are doing show that Year 6 pupils' skills and knowledge are above those typically expected.
- The children start in the Reception class with a broad range of skills and understanding, but a significant proportion are lower than expected. Due to the good use of practical activities, they make good progress and, by the time they join Year 1, they reach levels that are expected for their age, especially in communication, language, literacy, calculation and personal development.
- Pupils make good progress in learning to read. The staff work together effectively to make sure that pupils learn to use letters and sounds (phonics) and they have regular meetings to consider the best ways to work with different groups and individual pupils.
- The pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding make as much progress as the others because the school watches their progress as closely as it does all pupils. These pupils have received extra one-to-one tuition and financial support to go on trips. These have helped to develop their basic skills. Their attainment is below average overall but the figures for this group's attainment are skewed by the fact that it is a very small numbers group so the results of one or two pupils make a big difference.
- Pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, learn to write because regular sessions are planned to discuss ideas and practise writing. For instance, Year 6 pupils learned to write a balanced argument about whether pupils should be allowed to stay indoors at break times because they planned out their thoughts well before they started writing. As a result, pupils learned how to use punctuation, paragraphs and imaginative vocabulary.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given extra support which is adapted successfully to their personal needs. These pupils made good progress from their various starting points.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Staff are creative in planning topics which interest pupils. They think about the questions they ask and choose activities which encourage pupils to be original. For example, pupils learned to make up a fascinating story about the night before Christmas because the teaching developed their imagination and use of language well.
- Teachers and support staff create an atmosphere in the school which is successful in encouraging pupils to concentrate. This means that there are good opportunities for the pupils to learn and develop their knowledge. For example, Year 4 pupils learned how to create and label maps of the United States of America to show where tornadoes are likely to happen. This is because teaching focused the work so well on developing geographical skills.
- Staff are skilled at building pupil's self-confidence, including of those who need extra assistance. This means that pupils are keen to explore ideas for themselves, follow their own interests and

extend their learning by working with a rich variety of materials. For instance, Year 6 pupils learned to design a prayer mat because they had studied a variety of Islamic prayer mats to see how patterns and shapes could be combined before they started planning their own colourful designs.

- All the teachers and support staff work well together to provide a good range of practical experiences for pupils to develop their basic skills. For instance, the Year 1 pupils learned about the properties of shapes because the teacher used resources well when pupils sorted shapes into different groups.
- All staff check pupils' progress and make notes about what they are able to do. They keep detailed records and chart progress carefully. These show a detailed picture of each pupil's achievements over recent years. Senior leaders and staff make good use of data to keep a close eye on how much progress all pupils are making in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Marking is specific, and often shows pupils their area of weakness, but teachers do not often ask pupils to write their own area for development after they have read the comments in their books. This means that pupils do not learn to identify for themselves ways to improve their work.
- Not all teachers make time each week to discuss with individual pupils whether they have achieved their personal targets and so the pupils are not all totally clear about how well they are doing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are keen to start activities the minute they arrive at school. Pupils learn to persist when activities are difficult because staff encourage this skill. For instance, Year 2 pupils learned to solve complicated problems because staff gave them positive comments and encouraged them to keep trying when they were having difficulties.
- Pupils learn to work together when they play ball games, such as outdoor sessions where they enjoy developing their football skills. They carefully share equipment and learn to take turns fairly.
- Pupils learn about everyday risks and how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, they learned what to do if there was a fire because drills were used to develop safe ways to react to situations.
- Staff are well skilled at supervising pupils and helping them make the most sensible choices. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe while they are using the internet because of careful tuition given by staff.
- Pupils say that the very rare incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively and that they have staff to turn to if they have any problems. Pupils understand the different types of bullying which can occur. For instance, they know about different types of prejudice-based and cyber-bullying.
- The school handles occasional behavioural events with pupils, including those who need extra support, carefully and works conscientiously with pupils and their families when these unusual events occur. This ensures that the pupils understand swiftly why certain behaviours are not acceptable. No pupils have been excluded in recent years.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership of the headteacher and others at all levels is good and the school has successful systems for evaluating what works and what is less helpful. Leaders and staff are regularly looking for ways to improve the school. For instance, since the last inspection, many teachers have collected and made use of ideas they have gained from visiting other schools.
- The school's improvement plan contains useful ideas about ways to develop the school. Senior leaders and governors regularly check on whether the school is likely to meet its targets. This is another significant improvement since the last inspection.
- The school uses a wide range of activities to share information with parents and carers but this is not totally effective. Some parents do not feel well informed about their child's progress and their knowledge of what skills a child is expected to have at certain ages is not good enough. The school is keen to develop a more positive relationship with parents and carers and they plan to improve the way they explain what levels of skill pupils are expected to reach at certain ages and keep them better informed about how much progress their child is making.
- Staff have a great commitment to the care and welfare of pupils. One pupil said, 'Adults are very very nice to us.' The school works efficiently with other professionals and so pupils regularly gain the benefit of working with specialist staff.
- Many activities are planned which promote good levels of skill and understanding in several areas of learning at one time. For example, pupils learned to make films because their literacy and information and communication technology skills were used productively.
- Children from different backgrounds and abilities have a good range of opportunities to work together. Many topics help them to learn productively about different people's cultures in this country and abroad. For example, older pupils learned about the differences between people's lives in Africa and Great Britain.
- The local authority keeps in regular contact with the school and provides thorough support and challenge. It has assisted the school to improve the quality of teaching and learning by training leaders in how best to observe lessons.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body fulfils its duties well. Governors complete training courses which enable them to hold the school to account. They have a good understanding of school data and they check on the quality of teaching by asking questions about the data which identify how much progress is made by different groups of pupils. They make sure that decisions about how money is used ensure that they always give best value. The governors have good systems to decide whether teachers and staff should be supported to improve or rewarded with salary increases. They review targets for the headteacher. The governing body meets all the requirements about making the school a safe place and makes sure that staff are suitably checked and trained in child protection.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	114733
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	405530

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	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Puttick
Headteacher	Tracey Oram
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2010
Telephone number	01621 815445
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