

Tanners Wood Junior Mixed and Infant School

Hazelwood Lane, Abbots Langley, WD5 0LG

Inspection dates 3–4 December 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The achievement of pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 is not as strong as it should be because the more-able pupils are not making good progress.
- The quality of teaching varies across the school and not enough is good or better.
- Too few pupils in Key Stage 2 are reaching the higher levels of attainment, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The leadership team's impact on improving the quality of teaching has not been rapid enough since the last inspection.
- Teachers do not always use the information they collect about pupils' progress to make sure that lesson activities cater well for different ability groups. The work set is not always hard enough to challenge the more-able pupils.
- The curriculum does not sufficiently develop or extend pupils' key skills in literacy and numeracy.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1.
- Behaviour in the classroom and around the school is good.
- Good partnerships with parents are promoted.
- The governors, the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior members of staff recognise the improvements that are required and have begun to take action to bring about change.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons, of which five were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with various senior members of staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of other evidence, including the school’s self-evaluation and development plans, attainment and progress information, senior leaders’ reports and evidence of lesson observations and the review of pupils’ learning in their books.
- Inspectors heard pupils read from Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. They also met the school council and a group of pupils selected at random.
- Inspectors took account of 103 responses to the Ofsted’s online Parent View questionnaire, and the questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors met with two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.

Inspection team

David Berry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Westall

Additional Inspector

Heather Housden

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Tanners Wood is an above-average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion that speaks English as an additional language is much lower than that found nationally.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion of supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (extra funding provided by the government for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The school meets the current government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is securely good or better, by always:
 - providing work for pupils, including the more-able pupils, that fully extends and challenges them so that they make good progress in lessons
 - ensuring that the questions teachers ask pupils challenge their understanding and allows them to give more detailed answers
 - checking on pupils' learning during lessons, so they can be given guidance on how to improve.
- Improve the progress of all pupils, especially the more-able, in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2 by ensuring that:
 - the curriculum develops and extends all pupils' reading skills and the quality and quantity of their extended writing
 - pupils are given better opportunities to use and apply their understanding of mathematics
 - children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are provided with more opportunities to develop their reading and writing skills.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that all leaders drive forward the key areas for improvement in a clear and systematic way
 - making full use of external links with outstanding schools so that all leaders have a clear and sharp understanding of best practice and the tenacity and commitment required to achieve it.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress has not been consistently good over time in Key Stage 2 in reading and mathematics, particularly for the more-able pupils.
- Children join the Nursery with skills and aptitudes that are just below those typical for their age. In 2013, children made the progress expected of them and reached levels just below average by the end of the Reception classes in language skills, but above average in their personal and social development.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and reach broadly average standards in reading and writing. In mathematics, standards have been above the national average for the past three years.
- Good progress is not maintained in Key Stage 2. Pupils make the progress expected nationally and reach broadly average standards, but too few pupils reach the higher Level 5 in reading and mathematics. Their progress requires improvement in view of their starting points in Year 3, particularly for more-able pupils.
- In the Reception class the children's knowledge and understanding of the sounds that represent different letters (phonics) are not developed consistently in either their reading or writing. Nevertheless, results of the phonics screening check in Year 1 in 2013 and for those pupils who took the check again in Year 2 were above the national average. This is an improvement on the results in 2012.
- In the national tests of 2013, the results show that pupils who are eligible for the extra funding through the pupil premium left the school almost two terms behind their classmates in writing, more than two and a half terms behind in mathematics and just half a term behind in reading. Nevertheless, the extra support provided by the school has enabled these pupils to make good progress in mathematics, reading and writing.
- Work seen in pupils' books and in lessons confirms that the progress they are making is inconsistent, particularly in writing and mathematics. This inconsistency in the development of these key skills was seen in Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2.
- The progress made by the small number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. This is because their needs are fully understood and appropriate additional teaching is in place to support them.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching is inconsistent. It is stronger in Key Stage 1 than in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2.
- Teachers do not always plan well for different groups of pupils. In a few lessons, there is insufficient challenge for some middle-achieving pupils. In too many lessons, expectations are not high enough for the more-able pupils.
- The teaching of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement. Teaching is variable and expectations are not always high enough in developing children's language skills.

Sometimes the activities are too easy and do not build on existing knowledge and understanding, in particular this was the case with the use of phonics and its application in reading and writing.

- Some teachers do not make the best use of opportunities to ask searching questions that extend pupils' thinking, particularly during group or whole-class discussions. Where this is the case, lessons are not adjusted to accommodate the different needs of those who have misconceptions in learning or those who fully understand the task.
- In some lessons, for example in mathematics, the accuracy of pupils' work is not checked, which leads to mistakes sometimes being overlooked. At other times, pupils are expected to work for long periods with too little checking of how well they are learning or without being given guidance about how to improve their work. This impedes their understanding and slows down their learning and progress.
- Overall, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported and work is appropriately set for them because their needs are carefully assessed and fully understood by those who teach them.
- Since the last inspection, school leaders have ensured that teachers have improved the quality of marking. Marking is frequent and provides good suggestions about how pupils can improve their learning. However, teachers do not make sure that pupils read and act upon these useful comments.
- In some classes, mainly in Key Stage 1, where teaching is good or better, pupils make good progress because expectations of all groups of pupils are high, including the more-able pupils. In the best lessons seen, teachers regularly checked pupils' understanding, were clear about what they expected from pupils and shaped the learning accordingly. In such lessons, pupils like the challenge of discovering new information on their own, or solving problems using their mathematical knowledge.
- Teaching assistants work collaboratively with teachers and they provide good support for all groups during lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good and in some lessons it is outstanding. Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming. They talk positively about school and how well it supports them in their learning. Pupils' attitudes in lessons are very positive and most participate with sustained interest and enthusiasm.
- Behaviour in the classroom and around the school is good. It is also good when they are in the playground during play and lunchtimes. The school acts consistently and effectively to deal with any occasional incidents that may occur.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and expressed complete confidence and trust in how the school would deal with any form of bullying. Pupils know and understand the different forms of bullying. Moreover, they are very clear about internet safety and what to do if they encounter anything that is unacceptable. Pupils believe that behaviour is good and take pride in their school.
- The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination very effectively. The pupils talk about

their important roles, for example, as school councillors, classroom monitors, tutors and buddies. They like the 'Sunshine' approach to behaviour which leads to incentives and rewards or 'Pot of Gold'. They also value the wide variety of clubs that the school has to offer.

- Assemblies contribute well to the caring atmosphere of the school. In assemblies observed, pupils were encouraged to reflect upon social and moral themes.
- All adults provide good role models and seek to develop strong relationships and good levels of care for their pupils. This care provides a safe and positive environment in which to develop good personal and social skills.
- The replies from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View) support the view that pupils behave well and that the school manages behaviour extremely well.
- Attendance is above the national average. The school has taken effective action in maintaining a good attendance rate. The school makes clear that it is unacceptable for pupils to take holiday leave during term-time.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The senior leadership team has not yet secured consistently good or better teaching or consistently good progress over time for some groups of pupils.
- Although the inspectors saw some good teaching, there is still much that is inconsistent between year groups. Leaders are now using robust checks on pupils' progress. They hold regular meetings in order to evaluate how well pupils are performing and what needs to be done to accelerate their progress.
- Key issues for improvement resulting from the last inspection have only been partially addressed. There have been some changes in senior staff and a newly formed senior leadership team. All leaders are fully aware of the current position in the school and understand the need to improve teaching.
- The school leadership team is now focusing on the effective use of data to improve performance. However, the impact of this focus is only emerging and there is still more to be done. There is still a variation in the quality of teaching across the school and not enough has been done to raise expectations of what all pupils can achieve.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils' numeracy and language skills are not consistently promoted. Nevertheless, there is a good level of teamwork and a shared commitment to the welfare of the pupils. The outdoor provision is good and the Early Years Foundation Stage team has a positive impact on children's personal, social and emotional development.
- There is a variation in how well writing, reading and mathematical skills are used in the school's themed topics. Consequently, opportunities to extend and apply these skills are not being developed in a systematic and purposeful way across the curriculum.
- The use of the pupil premium funding is carefully planned and evaluated. The impact has been a closing of the gap between pupils eligible for this funding and those who are not. Additional teaching support across the school has brought improvements in progress for these pupils.
- The school has received half of its sports funding and plans to appoint a sports specialist in the

spring term. Thus, it is not possible to evaluate the impact of this funding. Nevertheless, the school runs a full and extensive range of clubs and is part of a sports consortium. Equally, the pupils spoke positively about the variety of clubs made available to them.

- The local authority has provided valuable support which has helped the leadership team begin to make the necessary improvements. They have recently brokered the external support of a Local Leader of Education to make stronger links with outstanding schools and foster the tenacity and commitment required to achieve consistently good and better practice.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are working hard to have a better understanding of the achievement of pupils. They were able to talk about what has improved but they also have a realistic grasp of the school's current position and what it needs to do to improve. It is clear that they hold leaders to account and ask challenging questions about pupils' achievement. Governors have a good range of skills and knowledge and ensure that the school is a safe place and that safeguarding arrangements are met. They know what is working, especially how well the school uses the pupil premium funding and that the gap that is now closing for these pupils. They visit the school regularly and make sure that they are now a fully integrated part of the leadership of the school. The school's finances are managed efficiently.
- Governors know that teaching needs to improve and have ensured that teachers' pay is now aligned with performance. They have robust systems in place for managing the headteacher's performance. The governing body have received training about school data and are able to access support from the local authority.

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	117178
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	425250

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	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Deborah Wain & Richard Chase (Joint Chair)
Headteacher	Michael Lansdown
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2011
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