

# Tanners Wood Junior Mixed and Infant School

Hazelwood Lane, Abbots Langley, WD5 0LG

**Inspection dates** 17–18 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The school has improved since its previous inspection. School leaders and governors have driven up the quality of teaching through well-targeted and effective training. Consequently, pupils are making better progress.
- The governing body is well organised and carries out robust checks to ensure the school continues to improve. They know how the school is performing and challenge school leaders to improve it further.
- Teaching has improved and is typically good so that pupils make good progress in their learning. Teachers have high expectations of the quality and quantity of the work that pupils produce in most subjects.
- School leaders ensure the school is friendly, welcoming and purposeful. Pupils behave well and get along with one another happily.
- Pupils enjoy their learning. Their progress in reading, writing and mathematics has improved. Disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or have special educational needs are supported effectively to make good progress.
- Pupils feel valued and safe. Parents are right to be pleased with the way the school cares for its pupils.
- The early years provision is planned well and effective. Teaching is good. Children are enjoying their learning and making good progress.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is taught well. Pupils quickly link the letters they see to the sounds they make.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding because pupils are not consistently and fully challenged by the learning activities they undertake.
- Teachers do not have the same high expectations of pupils' work in history and geography as in other subjects.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors, often together with school leaders, observed pupils at work in all year groups and in different subjects. They looked at pupils’ written work in all years and checked the records of children’s learning in the early years.
- The inspection team held meetings with the headteacher, other school leaders, a representative of the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of pupils and, informally, with other pupils in lessons and around the school. An inspector listened to pupils reading and spoke to them about their reading habits.
- Inspectors examined several school documents. These included the school’s evaluation of its performance and its improvement plan, notes of governors’ meetings, information about pupils’ progress and attainment, evidence about the quality of teaching, and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 105 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also took note of the views expressed informally by parents as they arrived at school and of one letter from a parent. The team analysed 25 questionnaires returned by staff.

## Inspection team

James McVeigh, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Claire Nuttall	Additional Inspector
Jonathan Gardiner	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. There are two classes in each year group from Year 1 to Year 4, one class for Year 5 pupils and two further mixed-aged classes of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. The school has two full-time Reception classes and two part-time Nursery classes.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or children who are looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school runs a breakfast club, the 'Munch Bunch'.
- The governing body has been reconstituted and has new leadership. The Chair of the Governing Body is a Local Leader of Governance.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of history and geography and pupils' achievement in these subjects by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in these subjects
  - ensuring teachers' marking of pupils' work in these subjects is as effective in promoting more rapid progress as it is in literacy and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by ensuring that teachers always:
  - make work challenging for all abilities throughout lessons so that pupils are always tackling work appropriate to their learning needs
  - check frequently how well pupils are completing a learning activity and challenge them further when necessary.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The senior leadership team has taken positive action to ensure the school's improvement. For example, leaders have improved teaching by tackling any underperformance and establishing a culture of best practice which is shared across the school. School leaders have created a cheerful and purposeful atmosphere in which pupils behave well, work happily and feel valued and safe. As a result, pupils are making increasingly rapid progress in their learning.
- School leaders collect a wide range of evidence to support their evaluation of teaching and give teachers good opportunities for further training and coaching. For example, most teachers have taken part in an effective coaching programme, involving videoing activities in lessons for later review. Leaders set suitably challenging targets for teachers to meet, including improving the progress pupils make. The work of teaching assistants is also managed effectively. Teachers new to the profession are supported well through an in-school mentoring programme, visits to other schools and training courses organised by the local authority. Consequently, teaching has considerably improved.
- All teachers have responsibilities for developing particular subjects. Leaders of English and mathematics are closely involved in checking how well teachers are performing and pupils are progressing. Subject leaders improve their leadership skills by leading training sessions, coaching other teachers and attending training courses. As a result, most subject leaders are ensuring effective teaching and learning in their subjects.
- Leaders make sure pupils have equal opportunity. For example, the school does everything it can to support pupils' with behavioural problems so they can stay in the school and learn alongside their classmates. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well to make good progress in their studies.
- Leaders use the pupil premium effectively to help eligible pupils to make better progress in their learning and enrich their experience while at school. These pupils make good progress and, consequently, gaps in attainment between them and others are closing.
- Following the previous inspection, leaders have focused strongly on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy. In addition, following consultation with pupils themselves, the school provides a wide range of other subjects that successfully stimulate pupils' interest in learning. Physical education, music, science and art are prominent and other subjects are combined in topics that interest pupils. For example, each topic begins with an exciting event on a 'wow day', such as a trip to a farm or museum or a visit from a local expert, which engages pupils in their studies. However, limited time is spent on history and geography, although subject leaders are in the process of improving this provision.
- The school develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well. The school community operates harmoniously with tolerance, respect and friendliness. Consequently, pupils get on well with staff and with other pupils every day. Lessons and assemblies promote a good understanding of different faiths and cultures and the school has strong links with a school in Tanzania. The school actively seeks pupils' views and engages them in changes that are made to school practice.
- Pupils learn about the values of modern British society through lessons and visitors, such as a local magistrate, to discuss rights and responsibilities. They see democracy in action when they elect the school council or select 'eco-warriors'. Consequently, they are prepared well to become responsible citizens.
- The school engages well with parents. Parents speak highly of the support they receive to help their children at home. Parents have good opportunities to visit the school and many parents work to support school activities. For example, preparing the ground and garden for the 'green team' and working with staff and pupils to prepare the winning float for a recent local fete.

- The primary physical education and sport funding is used effectively to promote pupils' physical activity, health and well-being. For example, a sports specialist helps to enhance teachers' coaching skills and broaden the range of sports available to pupils. The school has introduced more clubs, competitions and tournaments to raise the profile of sport and the interest pupils have in taking part.
- All safeguarding procedures comply with national requirements and are followed closely by staff. All the necessary training is completed and regularly updated, such as training for the designated leader of safeguarding and safer recruitment training for some senior leaders and governors.
- The local authority works effectively with the school to provide an objective view of the school's performance and validation of the school's own checks on improvements. As a result, the local authority's thorough reviews have contributed well to the school's improvement since the previous inspection, including in the early years.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is well organised and effective. It provides clear strategic direction to the school and monitors its work closely. Governors are supportive but also regularly challenge the school to do better.
  - Governors bring a wide range of relevant skills to the governing body and augment these with regular training. Governors gain a good understanding of the school's work, not only through reports from the headteacher but also from presentations by subject leaders, their own focused visits, talks with pupils and reports from the School Improvement Partner. They inform themselves by their competent analysis of the school's academic performance. They gather a wide range of evidence about teaching and its effectiveness. Governors know how well school leaders check the work of teachers and what the quality of teaching is in school.
  - Governors know how appraisal of teachers is used to secure improvement in their practice. They make sure that teachers' pay awards are warranted by improvements in pupils' progress and that underperformance is challenged robustly.
  - Governors ensure the school's finances are used well and that, by external auditing, financial management is sound. They check that the pupil premium is used effectively to support eligible pupils and that the sports funding has a positive impact on pupils' rates of physical activity.
  - The governing body sets challenging targets for the headteacher to meet, based on the school's development plan and checks his performance against them. Governors ensure safeguarding arrangements meet current legislation.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well as they move around the school. They help to keep the school site tidy and take care of its resources. Pupils act as monitors and are keen to help teachers and office staff.
- At playtimes, pupils either play in small groups or talk quietly together. Lunchtimes are well organised. Pupils eat sensibly, leaving little mess and move around the hall considerably. Adults and Year 6 play leaders organise games for younger ones. Pupils interact harmoniously.
- Pupils are happy to come to school and enjoy learning. They know the school's behavioural system and most are eager to move into the 'blue sky' or 'rainbow' during lessons by showing good behaviour for learning and gaining certificates or house points. Pupils listen to their teachers and settle into work happily. Occasionally, when activities are not engaging enough, a few pupils lose concentration and their learning slows.
- There have been no permanent exclusions and the numbers of minor misdemeanours are low. Although fixed-term exclusions appear higher than average, this reflects the school's good work in not giving up easily on any pupil, including the few with behavioural problems. The school's records of the support given

indicate that the behaviour of these pupils is well managed and improves. Observations during the inspection show that the behaviour of these pupils does not have a negative impact on learning in the classroom.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Consequently, pupils report that they feel safe in school and have an adult they could turn to if they were ever upset.
- The school has carried out all necessary safety checks and evacuation practices, and follows the appropriate health and safety guidelines. As a result, the school ensures pupils are kept safe.
- Pupils have a clear idea of what bullying is and the various forms it can take. They say they are not aware of many incidents of bullying and are sure teachers would tackle it quickly. They know teachers do not tolerate any name-calling or pupils being unkind to one another.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe. For example, they have learned about road and fire safety and appreciate the need for a balanced diet and regular exercise. In information and communication technology lessons, they learn how to stay safe when using the internet.
- Absences are followed up promptly. The family support worker liaises closely with families, including about getting pupils to school regularly and on time. The breakfast club has contributed to improving the attendance and punctuality of a few identified pupils. In 2014, attendance was broadly average.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is typically good. Teachers have responded well to the training they have attended, coaching from colleagues and advice from senior leaders. In particular, a programme involving teachers in videoing their own lessons has been effective in highlighting weaknesses in skills and has promoted the sharing of the good practice that exists in school. As a result of improved teaching, pupils are making good progress in reading, literacy and mathematics.
- Teachers establish good relationships with pupils. They ensure lessons are conducted in a calm and purposeful manner. They use display in classrooms well to motivate pupils and remind them of recent learning activities. For example, a recent school competition prompted pupils to decorate their classroom doors in the theme of a chosen storybook.
- Teachers manage their classes well. There are clear routines that pupils follow closely, for example to stop talking and listen when the teacher wants to gain the attention of the whole class. Pupils expect to settle to work promptly and sustain their efforts.
- Teaching assistants are usually well deployed. They liaise with the class teacher well to plan their roles and report back about the progress individual pupils make. They help pupils to understand what all are expected to do and to make good progress.
- Teachers often ask questions that make pupils consider their answers and think harder. For example, pupils in Year 2 made outstanding progress in learning how to find a quarter of a number. The teacher's deliberate mistakes and consequent questioning teased out pupils' understanding and pushed them on to the next steps in their learning.
- Teachers take into account the different learning needs of pupils in their classes, usually guiding them to work that is suitably challenging. The activities are typically interesting and motivating, and engage pupils fully. For example, in a well-planned science lesson, pupils in Year 4 made good progress in developing a way to find out the effect of exercise on breathing rates. They enjoyed the range of activities, such as exercising, timing, team discussions and recording results and worked enthusiastically. Pupils of a wide range of abilities gained from the different activities.

- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils are appropriately challenged by the activity they select for themselves. Occasionally, teachers do not check how well the pupils are getting on with the learning activity and a few pupils spend too long on something they have already mastered or with which they need more help. As a result, learning slows and some pupils do not make the progress they could.
- Phonics is taught well. Teachers and teaching assistants demonstrate clearly how to make the correct sounds and how to blend them together to make a word. Adults regularly challenge pupils to use phonic skills during writing or reading activities.
- Teachers mark pupils' written work frequently. They follow the school's marking policy closely when looking at pupils' work in literacy and mathematics and include good advice on how pupils can improve it. However, marking in history and geography is not of the same high quality. Teachers do not mark in as much detail nor give as much guidance to pupils. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in history and geography are not as high as in literacy and mathematics.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- In 2014, pupils in Year 6 left school with attainment that was broadly average in reading, below average in mathematics and above average in writing. Pupils in Year 2 performed better, reaching above average attainment in writing and mathematics and average attainment in reading.
- The school's information on pupils' current performance, confirmed by pupils' work seen in books, shows all year groups are making good progress and achieving well. Children in the Nursery and Reception make good progress in all areas of learning.
- In Year 2, current pupils' standards in reading have risen above last year's result and have been sustained at last year's strong performance in writing and mathematics. Currently, Year 6 pupils' standards in mathematics and reading have risen and last year's strong performance in writing has been sustained.
- The school provides effective support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Consequently, these pupils make good progress in their learning.
- Teachers provide regular opportunities for the most-able pupils to work on appropriately challenging activities that will make them think hard. The most-able pupils make good progress, particularly in writing and mathematics. For example, more pupils in Years 2 and 6 are currently working at higher levels than was the case at the time of the previous inspection.
- Pupils learn phonic skills successfully. In the annual screening check in 2014, more Year 1 pupils exceeded the expected standard than nationally. These skills help pupils to improve their reading and spelling quickly. Pupils who are learning to read have good opportunities to read to adults at school and most parents are strongly encouraged to listen to their children reading at home.
- The school successfully promotes regular reading by pupils, for example through reading competitions. Classroom have attractive and enticing reading areas and the school library has been recently revamped, with the help of parents, to provide a wide range of well-organised and exciting books.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2014, the gaps in attainment between Year 6 pupils eligible for pupil premium support and others in school appeared to have widened. In reading, writing and mathematics these pupils were two, three and six terms respectively behind in each of these subjects. Compared to others nationally, they were three, one-and-a-half and six terms behind in these subjects.
- In 2014, over half of the pupils eligible for the pupil premium joined the school late in Key Stage 2. These late arrivals were attaining lower standards on arrival than those of other disadvantaged pupils in their classes, who had already gained from the school's good provision. Comparison of the attainment of disadvantaged pupils who were late arrivals and that of those pupils who had been at the school

throughout Key Stage 2 shows the latter attained standards very much closer to those of their classmates and others nationally.

### The early years provision

is good

- The early years provision is effective. A larger proportion of children than is usual start in the Nursery with skills and abilities that are below those typical for their age. Good teaching and the high expectations of all staff ensure children's rapid progress in all areas of learning and their skills are much stronger by the time they move into Reception. Their good progress continues in Reception. As a result, the proportion reaching a good level of development on entry to Year 1 in 2014 was above average.
- The early years department is led and managed well. The recently appointed early years leader is improving the areas of concern raised by a review conducted by the local authority into, for example, how well adults were checking children's progress. The local authority has helped the leader to develop effective procedures to follow each child's progress closely and plan accurately for the next steps in learning. Learning journals are accurate and complete records of children's achievements and help guide teachers in directing learning.
- Children are well cared for and kept safe. Parents appreciate the care staff take in settling children into the school. For example, adults make home visits before new entrants start, hold welcome meetings and stay-and-play sessions. Good use is made of outside experts to identify the additional needs that some children have.
- Teacher-led activities are organised well. All children are engaged and enjoy what they are doing. For example, in a phonics session in the Nursery, children sustained their concentration throughout because they enjoyed the teacher's approach and learning the actions associated with making the sounds of different letters. The teacher skilfully helped children to correct any mistakes and they all made good progress in their learning.
- The environment in the early years offers exciting opportunities for children to play and explore. The space is colourful and vibrant, particularly inside, with displays and activities that cover all areas of learning. In the caring and supportive atmosphere, children develop self-confidence and are willing to try out new things.
- The children usually persevere at their chosen activities and concentrate on what they are doing. Adults encourage them, for example by emphasising, 'It's OK to make mistakes.' They extend children's learning through skilful questioning. Occasionally, boys are not encouraged well enough to choose writing activities so their progress in writing lags a little behind that of girls.
- Adults manage their groups effectively and establish class routines quickly. Children behave well. They are considerate of others and learn how to share and to take turns.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117178
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	463410

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	411
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Deborah Wain
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Lansdown
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 December 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01923 262229
<b>Fax number</b>	01923 269631
<b>Email address</b>	admin@tannerswood.herts.sch.uk

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