



Tewin Cowper Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117457
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280085
Inspection dates 3 May 2006 to 4 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Peter Lewis LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Cannons Meadow
School category	Voluntary aided		AL6 0JU
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01438 717378
Number on roll	111	Fax number	01438 718586
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs. Rachel McCreith
Date of previous inspection	11 December 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Eileen King

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 3 May 2006 - 4 May 2006	Inspection number 280085
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This popular primary school is located in an established residential area in the village of Tewin and takes children from age 4 to 11. The school is smaller than average, with 111 children on roll who come from a range of social backgrounds. In common with other schools locally, the school has experienced a decline in its numbers, although changes resulting from this situation have been planned and managed well. When children are admitted to the Reception classes, their attainment is similar to that normally found for children of that age. There are below average levels of pupils entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is average but the number identified with learning difficulties is above average. Nearly all pupils in the school come from White British families and, of those from other backgrounds, nearly all speak English at home. An above average number of pupils move in or out of the school at times other than at the usual admission or transfer points.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school that knows itself well. It is working hard, with success, to provide its pupils with the best possible education. Overall, achievement is good but is exceptionally well marked for pupils with learning difficulties. Standards are above average, reflecting teachers' high levels of skill and expertise. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 6. They were broadly average in 2005 and this improvement is indicative of the school's upward trend in standards and achievement. Children get off to a very good start in the Reception class and make great strides with their learning and personal development. The curriculum offered to pupils is exciting and challenging and the school is fully committed to involving all pupils in the full range of its activities. Pupils are exceptionally confident and thoroughly enjoy contributing to the smooth running of the school. Parents are very pleased with the education provided for their children and attendance is above average. The school has made many improvements since its last inspection and has resolved all the issues identified at that time. The school has recognised that more remains to be done to help teachers in tracking pupils' progress towards the challenging targets that are set, and has made a good start in developing this. The main reason for the school's success is the very good quality of the leadership of the headteacher. Staff and governors share a common vision for the future of the school and work well as a team to turn that vision into reality. In order to improve its capacity for informed self-evaluation even further, the school has begun to involve staff with management roles more fully in identifying development needs and assessing the changes that result. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement the school's plans to improve the way pupils' progress towards their targets is tracked and evaluated. - Ensure that information on pupils' progress is used effectively by managers at all levels to evaluate the impact of developments in those areas for which they are responsible.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. The attainment on entry to the school varies widely, but is broadly in line with that typically found for children of that age. Children make very good progress throughout the Reception class, as a result of the skilled teaching that they receive, and almost all achieve or exceed the expected levels by the time they reach the end of the Reception year. Pupils' progress throughout the school continues to build on these firm foundations. The school's increasing focus on target setting has improved pupils' achievement which, although broadly satisfactory in 2005, is now good. Pupils are set and achieve challenging targets, and this supports their learning effectively. The test results in 2005 for the end of Year 2 and Year 6 showed standards to be above those expected. Teachers' assessments show that this

is likely to be maintained, due to the high proportion of good and very good teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are particularly well supported and consistently make rapid progress in relation to their prior ability. The school makes very good use of assessment information to set and track targets set for these pupils and has made a very good start in establishing and using the same range of information to further improve provision for other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They thoroughly enjoy being at school and eagerly describe the different aspects of their learning and play, that excite them most. The vast majority are thoroughly proud of their achievements. This pride and enjoyment is reflected in their interest and good achievement in lessons and the exceptionally positive attitudes they develop. Pupils describe why they love being part of the close community that the school provides; pupils in Year 6 know that they will miss what two described as 'the school that's a family'. A significant strength is the exceptional degree to which pupils are encouraged to develop positive self-esteem and respect for the views and opinions of others. Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and so has a very significant impact on their personal development and behaviour. Children are encouraged from their first days in school to keep safe and healthy and even the youngest children know the importance of taking regular exercise. Through the links that the school carefully plans across the curriculum, for example, using computers and in local history projects, pupils are given numerous opportunities to develop strong understanding of the local community and are helped to develop the key skills that will support their future economic well being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and helps pupils to make good progress in their learning. Lessons are carefully planned and thoroughly prepared. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and help to promote positive attitudes towards learning. There are many examples of excellent practice and no teaching that is ineffective. This is a result of the school's good systems of monitoring and support for teachers. In the best lessons, teachers make good use of discussion and questioning. Target-setting with individuals and groups, particularly in English and mathematics, has already made a positive difference to the speed with which pupils learn throughout the school, and clear plans are in place to improve this further. Teachers and teaching assistants plan well together, and this ensures that the needs of different groups of pupils are met well. The school has worked hard to develop consistent, high quality planning and teachers use this well to provide activities that excite and challenge pupils. Recent work to improve the quality and use of assessment has begun to make a difference,

particularly in identifying the needs of individuals and groups in English and mathematics. Pupils with lower attainment and with learning difficulties are well supported. Teachers also cater well for the higher attaining pupils, and this reflects their high expectations and determination to continue to improve the quality of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils' good progress and attitudes are derived in large part from the school's good curriculum, which is broad, meets National Curriculum requirements and ensures that time spent at school is interesting and worthwhile for pupils. The school has carefully implemented changes to the curriculum, particularly in English and mathematics which have been successful in improving provision and pupils' progress. Appropriate planning is in place to review the development of key skills across all subjects. The weekly timetable is successfully supported by a range of occasional curriculum enrichment weeks and a range of after school activities that provide additional in-depth experiences for pupils. Young children in the school are given a very good start to their educational career. The school is very committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all and, as a result, pupils' individual needs are met well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care and guidance is good. Pupils of all ages feel safe, secure and valued. All pupils are known by staff and their needs, interests, and enjoyment, along with their safety, and development - spiritual, personal, and academic - lie at the heart of the school's work. The school has a strong commitment to supporting every child both personally and academically. Nevertheless, the school is working to further develop the way in which it tracks pupils' progress in order that teachers can more easily ensure that pupils achieve the targets that stretch them in their learning. Child-protection procedures are secure. Very good teamwork between teachers and support staff contributes to the rapid rate of progress achieved by those pupils who have special educational needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall and are considerably enhanced by the very good leadership provided by the headteacher. Her strong commitment to achieving the best is the reason the school has sustained high standards, while constantly seeking ways to improve. There is a clear sense of purpose that is fully shared by all staff who, as a result, work very well as a team. This is a school in which children and adults feel cared for and appreciated. The capacity for further improvement is good. The effectiveness of the school's systems for checking how well it is doing are good as demonstrated by the accuracy of the priorities already initiated through the school's

development planning. The school has rightly identified the need to improve the ease with which staff at all levels can use assessment information in order to contribute more fully to evaluation. Recent developments have seen the introduction of a formal system to assist teachers in setting and tracking targets for their pupils, which has already begun to make a positive difference to their learning. The views of all members of the school's community are valued and are reflected in the consistent drive to further improve standards. Governance is good. Governors are actively involved in the school and through, meetings, visits and the headteacher's clear and open reports, they are kept well informed. For example, they have been fully involved in planning for the changes that will result from the reduction in the numbers of children that attend the school. Financial management is good. The way in which resources are allocated to identified priorities is logical and efficient. Value for money is good.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. You told me that you go to a good school and I agree with you. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and to your teachers, looking at your work and finding out about the things that you enjoy most in school. I was very impressed at the way you all behave and get on so well together and with the really polite and grown up way that you talked to me about your school. You older children do an excellent job of looking after the younger ones in the playground and around the school. I also agree with you when you told me you have good teachers who help you to do well in lessons and in the tests you take. I think that your head teacher does a very good job of running the school. Your teachers also work extremely hard to make sure you enjoy your lessons and I have asked those with responsibility for the different subjects to help even more in finding ways of making sure you always learn as much as you can. I know that they will work hard to use this information to make sure that your school stays as special as it is now. I hope you continue to enjoy life in your school and wish you well for the future.