

Tipton Green Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103928
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	286810
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Ted Wheatley

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	282
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Whitehouse
Headteacher	Laurence Rouse
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002
School address	Park Lane West Tipton DY4 8LE
Telephone number	0121 5579242
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average and just under a half of its pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Most of these pupils do not have English as their first language, but the proportion in the early stages of learning English is about average. The main other languages are Panjabi, Urdu and Bangladeshi. Attainment on entry is about average, although many pupils have poor literacy skills. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds and the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average. The percentage with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average.

The school has experienced considerable staffing changes over the last three years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school that is well regarded by the great majority of its parents. The headteacher provides strong leadership; he is well supported by all staff and there is a high level of commitment to raising standards, improving achievement and preparing pupils to become mature, valuable members of the community.

Recent disruptions to staffing are now mostly resolved, but there is still a residual impact on standards and achievement. The school has worked hard to deal with this, and standards are now average overall and rising, and pupils' achievement is broadly satisfactory and improving. In mathematics and science pupils often achieve well and they make good progress in their speaking and reading skills. However, standards of writing are below average and too frequently pupils do not write in complete sentences, punctuate their work well enough or spell accurately. Teaching is satisfactory, but it is improving, with challenging work for pupils of all abilities. Occasional weaknesses in explaining information accurately and in managing some pupils' behaviour inhibit learning a little, but the school is aware of this and is working to improve it. The curriculum is satisfactory, with some good features in the quality of information and communication technology (ICT), links with other schools and opportunities for enterprise. Practical and investigative work is limited by small classrooms, though the school does its best to overcome this.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, with the headteacher and senior staff providing good leadership and accurate evaluation of the school's performance. At other levels, leadership and management skills are not so effective but are improving, with good support through staff development.

Pupils' personal development is good and a strength of the school. Pupils are confident and have good social skills and frequently take on responsibilities in school. They enjoy school, eat healthily and take part enthusiastically in the wide range of activities offered. The great majority of pupils behave well, and attendance has improved. The school provides good care, support and guidance for pupils and, despite the age of the buildings, has ensured the school is a safe place to be. The classrooms and internal spaces are bright, cheerful and a very attractive learning environment. The guidance for pupils is good and nearly all pupils know what they need to do to make sure they do better at their work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing throughout the school, especially pupils' ability to write in complete sentences, to punctuate correctly and to spell accurately.
- Ensure that teachers consistently give clear explanations and deal with minor behaviour problems effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average overall and they are rising rapidly. In the past, standards were better in science but they are catching up in English and mathematics. Pupils' achievement is generally satisfactory and improving at a fast pace because of teaching that is well matched to pupils' needs. Pockets of underachievement related to past staffing difficulties are still evident, but are fast disappearing. Achievement in mathematics and science is often good. Pupils make

good progress in developing reading and speaking skills. However, standards of writing are below average and, while pupils' achievement in writing is improving, it is unsatisfactory because there are still too many pupils who cannot write in complete sentences, and have poor punctuation and spelling skills. Standards in ICT are above average and have improved recently.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because of sensitive, well-planned support by teachers, learning assistants and the learning mentor. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make satisfactory progress with limited but effective support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Coupled with good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, and satisfactory academic progress, pupils' preparation for secondary school and adult life is sound.

Attendance is average and has increased since the previous inspection, and pupils enjoy the range of experiences the school provides. Most pupils behave well and their positive attitudes, especially their ability to work collaboratively, support their learning well. However, a small minority of pupils misbehave when teaching does not fully engage their interest. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and an awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle, especially in relation to exercise. Indeed, some pupils have represented the school at regional and national level in cross-country running and in rugby. At some point all pupils take on responsibilities, such as being library monitors or acting as representatives on the school council. Pupils take great care of the school environment, for example, by litter picking, and the school has won a Tidy School Award. There are very few instances of racism and bullying and pupils have a good awareness of the range of faiths and cultures within Britain.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is improving and is a major factor in the improving progress pupils make. Lessons are planned well, based on the increasingly accurate assessment of pupils' performance and as a result teaching is often good. Recent changes in the teaching of English are leading to better progress, especially in pupils' writing, although there is still some way to go. Teachers regularly check on pupils' understanding and quickly provide support for those pupils experiencing difficulties. Relationships are good and enable pupils to develop confidence, especially in responding to questions in class. Good use is made of ICT to engage and motivate pupils. Marking is satisfactory overall and much, though not all, is perceptive and helpful, guiding pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work. In a few lessons, teachers' explanations are unclear, so pupils do not understand the work and this leads to time wasted by pupils talking, which the teacher does not deal with effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provides pupils of all abilities with a sound level of challenge and a positive range of experiences. The school rightly places a strong emphasis on the development of pupils' skills in English, mathematics and science. Links between subjects are satisfactory but improving

as the school works on making the curriculum more creative. A varied programme of activities enlivens the curriculum. It includes residential visits, visitors and clubs and along with out-of-school activities promotes pupils' personal development, health and well-being well. Provision for sports coaching is particularly strong. The curriculum is increasingly responsive to the needs of individuals, with good support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, enabling them to make good progress. Provision for pupils who do not have English as their first language is satisfactory. The school makes the best use of teaching rooms, but they are too small and limit the activities pupils undertake, such as some investigations in science.

There are good links with secondary schools that contribute effectively to pupils' experience of business and enterprise and ICT and ensure a smooth transition between schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good pastoral care, and pupils feel confident that they have someone to turn to if they have problems. Procedures to deal with bullying and racism are good and pupils say that they feel safe from bullying. The school has secure procedures to safeguard pupils. Procedures to promote and encourage regular attendance are good and have led to a marked improvement in attendance, although a small number of parents take their children away for holidays in term time.

Academic progress is tracked thoroughly and pupils are set clear targets. The great majority of pupils know what their targets are and how to reach them and this is contributing effectively to improving achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides very strong, determined leadership, with a sharp focus on raising standards and promoting pupils' well-being and personal development. Among senior staff the quality of self-evaluation is good, with clear identification of the important areas for improvement. This is not so evident among other managers, largely because many people are new in their posts and do not yet have the full range of management skills. The school is working hard to provide the necessary leadership skills to ensure this happens. The commitment to improvement is impressive.

The impact of recent work is only just starting to show in pupils' improved performance and achievement. While there are still some weaknesses, especially in pupils' writing skills, the capacity for further improvement is sound.

Governors are supportive of the school. There are some vacancies on the governing body that limit its effectiveness, but governors work hard to ensure they are properly informed about the school. They provide a good level of challenge for the headteacher.

The school has effective links with a wide range of agencies that help promote the welfare of pupils. The school has effective links with parents and takes their opinions and those of pupils into account when planning improvements.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We very much enjoyed our time at your school. You made us feel very welcome because you were friendly, polite and very helpful to us over the two days we were there. We spoke to quite a number of you and you helped us to gain a clear view of your school. Many of you spoke to us of your own accord, too, and that we really liked.

These are the main things we found out about your school:

- Your school gives you a satisfactory education and it is improving fast.
- The headteacher and other staff are working really hard to make this a good school.
- Your progress is satisfactory and sometimes good. You are doing best in mathematics and science and also in your reading and speaking.
- Teaching is satisfactory and a lot of it is good and makes you work hard. Most of you know what you need to do to do even better.
- You have good attitudes and most of you behave well. You enjoy school, most of you attend well and your attendance is improving.
- Almost all of you take on responsibilities willingly.
- The school takes good care of you. It is safe and nearly all of you eat healthily and take part in the physical activities.
- You enjoy all the extra activities and trips the school organises.

To improve things further, we have asked the school to:

- Improve your writing, especially making sure that you write in whole sentences, put in all of the right punctuation and spell correctly.
- Make sure that teachers always explain work clearly and deal effectively with pupils' talking when they should be listening or working.

You can help, too. The small number of you who talk when you should not, should listen properly and not talk so much so that everyone can get on with their work quickly.