

Tavistock Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113265
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	289566
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

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 on roll	
School	368
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mandy Parkes
Headteacher	Joe Flynn
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2001
School address	Plymouth Road Tavistock PL19 8BX
Telephone number	01822 616044
Fax number	01822 610009

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school. The attainment of children on entry to the Nursery is very wide-ranging between above average and very low. Overall, it is below average in all areas of the early years curriculum. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above average. The school houses the Area Resource Base for pupils with high levels of communication and interaction difficulties as well as a Nursery Unit.

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 school providing a sound education for its pupils. The school's performance has improved after a lean period when standards fell and the achievement of pupils was inadequate. With good support from the local authority the school has turned around. There have been significant improvements in both English and mathematics, with the result that overall standards are now average and achievement is satisfactory. The management of these two subjects is particularly strong and has been instrumental in driving standards up. However, although leadership and management overall are satisfactory, there are weaknesses within the leadership team. There is a reluctance on the part of some of its members to follow the headteacher's drive towards improvement. Overall, staff and governors have an accurate view of how well the school is doing. However, whilst the capacity to improve is satisfactory, it cannot be any better than this until a cohesive leadership team with a common purpose is created.

Pupils enjoy positive relationships with their teachers and interact well with them. Year 6 pupils speak of lessons as being fun, but challenging. As a result of this good teaching they are doing well. However, teaching and learning overall are satisfactory because some pupils in other year groups do not always make enough progress with their learning. Tasks are not always matched precisely enough to their needs. This particularly applies to pupils who have some learning difficulties and whose performance is slightly below average. A satisfactory curriculum ensures pupils are interested in what is being taught. However, it does not include enough planned opportunities for pupils to use the skills they have gained in English and mathematics in other subjects. This restricts their chances of consolidating their learning. Children in the Foundation Stage receive a good start to their schooling in a lively and exciting learning environment.

'I blame Jamie Oliver,' intoned one pupil morosely when asked about healthy eating. However, he perceptibly brightened as he and his peers went on to extol the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, showing a very good understanding of the importance of diet and exercise. Pupils enjoy school; this is reflected in their above average attendance. They take on responsibilities maturely. For example, pupils in Year 6 willingly help to sort out playground disputes. Behaviour is generally good and this enables pupils to pursue their learning in a calm and purposeful atmosphere. All these factors, together with their enthusiasm and friendliness, contribute towards pupils' good personal development and well-being. Overall, the care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory. The staff are committed to the all-round development of the pupils and there are particular strengths in the care and support the school provides. As a result, pupils feel safe and they say there is always someone with whom they can share their problems. Systems to monitor pupils' progress have been introduced comparatively recently, and information is beginning to be used to set targets. Most pupils know these and understand what they need to do to improve. Information is used well to plan for pupils with severe learning difficulties but not as well for those with more minor learning problems and this hampers their progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure there is a united and consistent approach by the senior leadership team to improving standards and that leadership and management at all levels play a full part in setting and achieving the school's goals.
- Use assessment information more effectively to plan for the needs of pupils with learning difficulties who perform at a just below average level.

- Plan and provide more opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects across the curriculum. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. When they enter Year 1, standards are a little below those expected. Across the school, appropriate action has been taken to address weaknesses in writing and mathematics and, as a result, standards are rising. Overall standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. 'Special Writing Books' and activities that motivate boys to write have all been effective. In mathematics, the school has taken good action to improve calculation and problem-solving skills. However, pupils have too few chances to use literacy and numeracy in other subjects, missing opportunities to strengthen these skills in a wider context. The school narrowly missed its targets for pupils achieving the nationally expected level last summer in English and mathematics, but it greatly exceeded the targets set for pupils reaching the higher level. It is well on course to meeting the challenging but realistic targets set for this year. Pupils with severe learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well towards to their targets and receive good support. However, those pupils at an early stage of learning difficulty and pupils operating at a just below average level do not always achieve as well as they could, because tasks are not matched sufficiently well to their individual needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils make a valuable contribution to the local and wider communities by supporting a range of charities, including a local children's hospice and a child in India. Their moral and social development is strong and this is reflected in their attitudes and behaviour to each other and their concern for those around them. Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. The 'befriending' system and 'peer mediation', where Year 6 pupils endeavour to resolve playground differences, are particularly effective. Pupils have opportunities to reflect and these contribute to their sound spiritual development. Pupils develop a sound understanding of different faiths and cultures and are gaining a satisfactory awareness of being part of a multi-ethnic Britain. The school council positively influences change and developments. Pupils are prepared appropriately for future life by the satisfactory standards they achieve in literacy and numeracy and in the skills they acquire in working independently and in teams.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

A wide range of exciting activities is planned for the children in Nursery and Reception. These enable them to learn effectively but, because changes are relatively recent, teaching and learning are currently satisfactory rather than good. Pupils have good attitudes towards their work and they participate enthusiastically in lessons. Teaching in Year 6 is consistently good. However, although progress is improving, there are inconsistencies in teaching across the other classes. Learning objectives are not always specific enough, which means that neither pupils nor teachers

can measure how successful pupils' learning has been. Pupils with severe learning difficulties receive good support and make good progress against their targets. However, teachers are not always confident in their provision for pupils at a just below average level. Marking is satisfactory and improving. Although some identifies what pupils need to do to make progress, marking does not always give pupils enough guidance as to how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum for children in the Reception class is good. Provision has improved significantly and a stimulating and exciting learning environment has been created. In Years 1 to 6, the planning of work based on topics ensures that the curriculum is covered in a lively and interesting way. However, links with literacy and numeracy across different subjects have not yet been sufficiently developed. Planning for higher attaining pupils is good but there is not enough emphasis on planning for pupils of just below average ability. Good provision for pupils with severe learning difficulties enables them to make good progress. There is good provision for pupils' personal development and a wide range of visits, visitors and school clubs enriches pupils' learning and promotes positive attitudes towards school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school cares for its pupils well. Procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe and secure, including those relating to child protection, are well established and staff are familiar with them. Pupils are secure in the knowledge that they can seek help and advice from their teachers and other adults if they have a problem or concern. Academic support is still at the early stages of development. Systems for checking pupils' academic progress are improving and as a result the school is beginning to identify more effectively areas requiring improvement. However, systems of tracking the progress for pupils with learning difficulties do not currently give a sufficiently accurate view of overall progress. As a result some pupils at an early stage of learning difficulty are not receiving support in class that is sufficiently well matched to their learning needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory. He has worked tirelessly and has a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve further. However, not enough has been done to resolve differences within the senior leadership team and attempts to move forward have been hampered by the lack of support for the headteacher's actions from some key staff. Strong action has been taken to mitigate the effects of this by extending the team to include literacy and numeracy co-ordinators. This has resulted in faster progress being made to achieve the school's current satisfactory level of performance. The governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are becoming more involved in monitoring and school evaluation. They actively challenge the school in its progress towards achieving the priorities on its action plan. The school is beginning to use data appropriately to check its own performance and there are particular strengths in the monitoring of literacy and numeracy which have enabled good improvements to take place. Sound monitoring of teachers'

planning, the quality of lessons and standards of pupils' work ensure that pupils make appropriate progress.

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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 quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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	3

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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
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?	3

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	4
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

17 May 2007

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Tavistock Community Primary School, Tavistock PL19 8BX

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You certainly seem to be very happy and it was good to hear how you enjoy your work and all the extra activities in which you are involved. We think your school gives you a sound education and is working hard to make it even better than this. This is what we thought about your school:

- You behave well and are really keen to learn.
- You are doing much better in English and mathematics this year.
- You take seriously the importance of eating healthily at school and taking physical exercise.
- The curriculum covers all the subjects you are supposed to learn and you enjoy the visits and visitors which bring learning alive for you.
- Teachers help you to learn effectively so that you make the progress you should, and you say learning is often made fun.
- The teachers and staff take good care of you while you are in school.
- There are some things we think can be improved:
- Some of the people who run the school need to work more effectively together to decide what needs to be done to help you improve your work.
- Some of you who find learning more difficult are not always given tasks that are matched to your needs.
- You need more opportunities to practise your literacy and mathematics in other subjects.

We hope you will continue to work hard.

Very best wishes,

Mrs Christine Huard Lead inspector