

Talavera Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116151
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	290437
Inspection dates	6–7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Paul Armitage HMI

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Timmins
Headteacher	Miss J Batstone
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2001
School address	Gun Hill Aldershot GU11 1RG
Telephone number	01252 323137
Fax number	01252 350258

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector and one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Talavera is a large infant school in the heart of Aldershot's military complex. Most pupils are from families with military backgrounds and most others have migrated recently from other parts of the European Union. In consequence, the mobility of pupils is exceptionally high with very few spending all their infant years in the school. While pupils' economic backgrounds are stable, social backgrounds are very variable and there are inevitable pressures on pupils when parents and carers are posted to areas of conflict. A high number of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities and about a quarter have a first language that is not English. Only a small number of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good quality of education. Overall, standards are average with pupils doing particularly well in science. They do not do as well in writing, largely because they do not get sufficient opportunities to write. Pupils' achievement is good, reflecting the fact that most pupils start school with standards that are well below average and leave with average standards. Pupils' personal development is good. The school helps them to grow in confidence and develop clear moral values. It encourages them to work together and has made a good start to developing their cultural awareness. This good academic progress and personal development is particularly striking given that they are achieved in the context of the very high mobility and considerable instability experienced by many pupils.

The school identifies pupils' needs well and responds to them effectively by its good teaching and curriculum, and outstanding personal support. Staff are very keen for pupils to do well and teachers work hard. Particularly impressive are the arrangements for welcoming new pupils, something which teachers and pupils have to be good at given the constant arrival and departures. More able pupils do well but there is scope to offer them an even more challenging curriculum, something the school has already recognised. The use of the Reception area outdoor area could also be improved to meet children's needs better.

Pupils are well-behaved and attendance is average. Pupils feel safe; there is virtually no bullying or racism and any such issue is speedily resolved. Pupils contribute effectively to the school community, most notably through the buddy and play leader schemes. The knowledge, skills and understanding that they are gaining will contribute well to their next stage of education and their future well-being.

The school's leadership and management are very effective in providing a strong ethos which links good educational achievement with high quality care. The school is successful in doing this despite its ever-changing clientele. Managers are not complacent, monitor strengths and weaknesses well and have good plans for further improvement. In many respects, there has been significant improvement since the last inspection and the school has good capacity to improve further.

There were a large number of responses from parents to the Ofsted questionnaire. Though some parents raised critical issues – the impact on pupils when there are changes in teachers being the most frequent – the overwhelming view was that parents are very satisfied with the school. It should be clear from this report that inspectors agree with their judgement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of writing by providing more opportunities for pupils to write in different ways.
- Address, more, the needs of more able pupils by providing a more challenging curriculum.
- Improve the use of the Reception outdoor area to reflect, better the full range of children's needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When the youngest pupils start school, their knowledge, skills and understanding are generally well below average. In particular, many have poor language and communication skills. Standards

then improve so that by the end of Year 2 they are average. However, this overall judgement hides the fact that there is variation between subjects. Standards are average in reading and mathematics, above average in science and below average in writing. Given the low standards when pupils start school, this improvement in standards represents good progress.

Vulnerable pupils, those with learning difficulties and those who are in the early stages of language acquisition are provided with good support and make good progress. The same is the case for girls, boys and those from minority ethnic groups. More able pupils also make good progress although the school, rightly, sees opportunities for offering these pupils an even more challenging curriculum.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social, emotional and cultural development is good. They have a good developing sense of concepts such as sadness, love and why things are beautiful. Their developing confidence and self awareness is very obvious. They have clear views of what is right and wrong and understand and support the need for rules. They work well together both in class and in the playground and often have a lot of fun. The 'buddy' system in the playground is excellent, ensuring that children always have someone to play with. Children of different ethnic and other groups get on well with each other. As a result of the school's focus on topics such as Aboriginal art and dance from different countries, pupils' have made a good start in understanding other cultures.

Pupils have a good developing understanding of what makes a healthy lifestyle. They respond very positively to physical education and sporting opportunities and appreciate the freedom to drink water. School meals are nutritious, cooked on site and well-presented and are appreciated by pupils. They say that they feel safe in school and there is virtually no bullying or racism. Attendance is average. Pupils' contribution to the community is very positive. For example, play leaders provide a significant service to their fellow pupils and pupils respond well to citizenship awards. Pupils' good academic and personal development prepares them well for the next stage of their education and for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and ensures that pupils make good progress. In the Reception class teachers focus on language is relevant to pupils' needs and many activities have been carefully planned to support this; for example, art that encourages discussion about symmetry. However, there are opportunities for further improvement, for example, by making better use of the outdoor area to address the full range of children's needs identified in the Foundation Stage curriculum in particular, their physical development.

In Years 1 and 2, teaching also addresses the needs of pupils well. Teachers monitor pupils' performance effectively on a day-to day basis and adjust further work accordingly. What they plan is appropriate and realistic. Teaching assistants are well deployed to support those with learning difficulties and disabilities. The needs of the more able are recognised though, as indicated elsewhere, the school rightly acknowledges that more can be done to support them. The marking of pupils' work is effective and provides praise as well as guidance on future

development. Teachers and assistants are particularly good at responding to new entrants, those with learning difficulties and disabilities and children at the early stages of English.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum and other activities match pupils' needs, aspirations and capabilities very well. There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy in line with the clear needs of pupils. The focus on speaking, listening and reading is particularly relevant and is reflected in pupils' good progress. More, however, could be done in respect of writing, largely by encouraging pupils to write more in different ways. Other subjects strike a good balance between national requirements and the needs of the pupils; they add colour to the curriculum and contribute to pupils' enjoyment and achievement; for example, the Year 1 'who are we?' project using dolls was fun and very successful in helping pupils develop an understanding of others. Another example, in Year 2, was the link between geography and numeracy when studying the weather. The curriculum is enriched by visitors to the school, visits to places such as a Winchester science hands-on experience and additional physical education and football provision during and after school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of the care, guidance and support provided for all pupils including vulnerable groups is outstanding. It starts from first contact between pupils, parents and the school. Rightly, the school regards this as very important given the very high mobility of its pupils. The arrangements made to welcome pupils and make them feel comfortable are highly valued by parents and pupils from all backgrounds settle easily. The subsequent support in class and elsewhere for all pupils is also noteworthy; for example the reassurance given to a pupil who was worried about what her mother might say about her scuffed new shoes. As indicated in the teaching, there is good academic support for pupils. Teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully and help and advise pupils accordingly. The high quality physical environment shows respect for pupils. There are effective arrangements with outside agencies including the military.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The perceptive headteacher is well supported by a dedicated senior leadership team including a highly effective deputy. They use data and other information effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses and use this to promote the interests of all pupils and bring about further improvement. For example, following a recent and successful drive on raising attainment in science the school is now rightly focussed on developing provision more generally for more able pupils and improving standards in writing. Subject coordinators manage their subject well and, as part of the school's interest in a more creative curriculum, are active in developing links between subjects. Resources are well used to provide good value for money. In recent times, senior managers have made a conscious effort to devolve management more to all staff and this has been successful. A good example is the work of curriculum working parties. Governors fulfil their role well. They understand the school; they monitor pupils' progress carefully and offer well-considered advice.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

19 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Talavera Infant School, Aldershot, GU11 1RG

You know that we recently inspected your school. We met many of you. I would like to thank you for talking to us. Your opinions about your school are important because you are the school's 'customers'. You helped us make our judgements.

You said that your school is good and you liked your teachers. You said that they help you a lot and want you to do well. You said that lessons are fun and that you really do learn things. You said that you feel happy at school and that you all get on well together. If there ever is any trouble, then it is quickly sorted out. You have some very clear ideas on what is right and wrong. You like being 'buddies' and 'play leaders' because it means that you can help other people. You said that every now and then, children can be a little naughty but that really, behaviour is very good.

We agree with you about your school. We think your school is good. You and your teachers work hard and, as a result, you learn a lot. Your improvement is very clear in reading, mathematics and science. We agree with your teachers that you could do better in writing and that some of you could do even better than you do now. We have also said that where you play outside in Reception could be better used. Your teachers have plans to make this happen but they will need your help. I am sure you will enjoy doing this.

When it is published, you can see our full report on the computer at www.ofsted.gov.uk. Your parents and carers may also like to read it.

I give you my best wishes for the future and once again, my thanks for helping us.

Yours sincerely

Paul Armitage
Her Majesty's Inspector