



Tenterden Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118382
Local Authority Kent
Inspection number 291116
Inspection dates 5–6 October 2006
Reporting inspector Liz Kounnou

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Recreation Ground Road
School category	Community		Tenterden
Age range of pupils	4–7		TN30 6RA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01580 762086
Number on roll (school)	201	Fax number	01580 766352
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Michael Wells
		Headteacher	Gillian Guthrie
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school situated in an area of economic advantage. Fewer pupils have learning disabilities and difficulties than is typical. When children start school, the majority have achieved levels of attainment that are higher than expected for their age. Most staff have worked at the school for some years. The school has a Healthy Schools Award.

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 school where pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils behave extremely well and thoroughly enjoy their lessons. All parents agree their children enjoy school. One wrote, 'My son has settled so well in a very short time, he loves coming to school and gives us lots of enthusiastic feedback at tea-times.' The good teaching and learning are fun and ensure that all groups of pupils achieve very well throughout the school. Pupils in Year 2 reach exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science. Girls achieve extremely well in all subjects and boys reach even higher standards in mathematics.

School leaders work hard to improve reading standards for more able boys. Particularly effective support from local volunteers has had a remarkable impact on boys' attitudes to reading. Much higher targets have been set for boys this year. Targets have not yet been shared with pupils or parents. Consequently, pupils do not know what they need to do to improve their reading skills and parents do not know how to help. The school is addressing this and plans to share pupils' targets in reading, writing and mathematics shortly.

School leaders make accurate assessments of the school's effectiveness and know what is working well and what could be even better. The headteacher has high expectations for all pupils and is driving forward further improvements. There are comprehensive changes in the way the Foundation Stage is organised this year. The quality of education for children in the Reception classes is good so they make good progress. However, the school realised that children were doing well in developing language and mathematics skills and in their personal development, but were not doing quite as well in other areas of learning. The new changes provide children with opportunities to develop their skills in more enjoyable ways. At the moment, activities provided for them in the outdoor area do not make the best use of the available space.

Good links between the different subjects have enhanced the curriculum for all pupils, and improved the quality of boys' writing really well. Boys are well motivated because much of their writing is about things that interest them. Pupils' independent writing skills are impressive and their rate of work extremely productive, but they do not show the same level of skill in all subjects. Assessment of pupils' work is rigorous in English, mathematics and science but not in other subjects. Consequently, teachers' expectations of what pupils could achieve in these subjects are not as high.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils know what they need to do to reach their targets and share this information with parents.
- Improve the range of opportunities for children in the Reception classes to develop their skills in the outdoor classroom.
- Ensure that teachers extend the accurate assessments of pupils' work to all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils reach exceptionally high standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Throughout the school pupils' achievement is good because staff have high expectations in these subjects. Most pupils start school with higher attainment than is typical and build on their skills well. The proportion of Year 2 pupils reaching the higher levels in all the subjects is exceptionally high, reflecting the challenging targets set for them. The few pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities do well because they receive good support.

Effective checks made by school leaders identified ways to improve boys' reading and writing even further. Boys now reach above average levels but they do not make as much progress as girls, who achieve exceptionally well in their English work. Girls' standards in all subjects are outstanding when compared to the national picture. Even so, boys achieve higher standards than girls in mathematics.

In other subjects, pupils are not consistently working at the same high standards that they achieve in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This is mainly because teachers do not have a clear overview of pupils' achievement in these subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding and underpins the good work of the school. Parents notice this. One commented, 'The school is full of smiling children'. Excellent behaviour and great enjoyment play a significant part in pupils' good achievement. Pupils are very keen to come to school. Attendance is usually above national averages, but fell last year as chicken pox swept the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Many parents comment on children's rapidly developing social skills in the Reception classes. In some subjects the level of challenge does not reflect pupils' high level of ability, and this holds back their spiritual and cultural development.

The importance of exercise and a good diet is well understood by pupils, who enjoy choosing meals such as 'chicken breast tossed in olive oil, garlic and herbs', from a delicious lunchtime menu. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and appreciate the school's diligent efforts. They said, 'It is a safe place to be', when asked to describe the school's best points.

The new school council members organise their own budget and have some big ideas for changes. Pupils have already raised funds for Food Aid this year. Pupils develop excellent skills for life. Their basic skills are extremely good and many lessons encourage them to work together.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and ensure pupils of all abilities achieve well. The majority reach high standards in the core subjects. There is a purposeful atmosphere in lessons and a very good focus on teaching basic skills in an enjoyable way in English, mathematics and science. There are comprehensive assessment systems in these subjects and teachers provide work that is well matched to pupils' abilities. Teaching assistants support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities well. Pupils are organised by ability for mathematics lessons, and this is particularly effective for the most able pupils, who are being stretched really well. In subjects, other than English, mathematics and science, teachers do not make formal assessments to check how well pupils are doing and pupils do not reach the same high standards.

In the Reception classes, teachers have recently moved away from a whole-class style of teaching and learning to provide more challenge for children of all abilities across all the areas of learning. Children make good progress, particularly in their personal development. Parents praise the sensitive way that teachers help children settle into school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is interesting and well thought out. Enjoyable extra activities cater for pupils' particular talents. French, drama and music clubs combine with visits to enrich pupils' learning. Classrooms are filled with bright attractive displays of work that illustrate the good links between different subjects. Pupils with learning disabilities and difficulties are well catered for and make good progress. The most able pupils are challenged very well in English, mathematics and science and work consistently at the higher levels. Currently, they are not stretched as well in subjects such as history and geography, where most of the work is average.

A new style curriculum is developing in the Reception classes to ensure children make good progress in all areas of learning. A cover has been ordered for the outdoor classroom to extend the possibilities for work in all curriculum areas throughout the day. At the moment, the very good space available could be used more imaginatively.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Provision for care, guidance and support is good and the school provides an excellent level of pastoral care for all pupils. There are rigorous procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety. Governors play a particularly strong role in monitoring the school's systems for safeguarding pupils and promoting healthy lifestyles. Teachers work

extremely effectively in partnership with health professionals and other agencies to ensure pupils' well-being.

Guidance for academic learning is good. The school sets targets for pupils each year. Previously, pupils were given target cards and this was effective in helping them to understand how to improve their work. Year 2 pupils remember the targets they were set last year. However, pupils have not been given their new targets for this year yet. The delay in sharing them lessens the effectiveness of the school's system because pupils do not know what they need to do to improve their work and parents do not know how to help them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Parents overwhelmingly agree that the school is led well and many single out the headteacher for praise. Leadership and management at all levels are good and continually drive forward school improvement because the school checks how well it is doing effectively. As a result, standards have been consistently well above average for several years. The ample information the school keeps about each pupil's progress is not always used efficiently, as pen and paper methods are used to analyse the figures. This slows up the drive for better achievement and has contributed to the delay in target setting.

The school has a good capacity to improve further. School leaders are not complacent and have been working for some time to improve boys' current good achievement in reading, so that it more closely matches girls' outstanding achievement. They have already improved boys' writing successfully and have recently transformed boys' attitudes to reading. Extremely challenging targets have been set this year, reflecting the school's high expectations. Governors are fully involved in reviewing the school's effectiveness and make good contributions towards plans for further improvement.

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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	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1

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?	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.

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

Tenterden Infant School, Recreation Ground Road, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 6RA

Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us when we visited your school.

You help to make this a good school. The girls do especially well in reading and writing. The school is working really hard to help boys do as well as girls in their reading. Girls make very good progress in mathematics but boys do even better.

- Here are the things that we think are best about your school
- You work hard and reach very high standards for your age.
- You thoroughly enjoy your lessons and have a lot of fun, and your behaviour is extremely good all day.
- Because you have a lot of interesting things to do in your lessons, the classrooms are filled with exciting displays of your work.
- You have a remarkably good understanding of how to keep yourselves healthy and stay safe.

- These are the things that we think could be even better
- Make sure that all of you know what you need to learn next to reach your targets and share this information with your parents. You could help the teachers by telling them when you think you have reached your targets.
- Make the outdoor activities more interesting and enjoyable for children in the Reception classes.
- Make sure that teachers check how well you are doing in all your lessons.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.