

Tennyson Road Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109557
Local Authority	LUTON LA
Inspection number	310022
Inspection dates	15–16 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Jackie Cousins

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Tracy Cowan
Headteacher	Mrs Hilary Power
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2004
School address	Tennyson Road Luton Bedfordshire LU1 3RS
Telephone number	01582723230
Fax number	01582734616

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and one third are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who find learning more difficult is average. Many pupils start school with levels of knowledge that are considerably below the national expectations for four-year-olds, especially in reading and writing. A significant number of pupils are in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school part way through the year is higher than most schools. The school gained the Healthy School Award in 2006. A breakfast and after-school club are available for pupils to use.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Tennyson Road Primary is a good school. This is mainly because leadership and management, including governance, are good. Excellent leadership from the headteacher, ably supported by the senior leadership team, means that staff feel part of a strong team where their work is valued. This means that the school is in a good position to continue to improve in the future. Staff work really well to draw the community together. One parent says, 'The school creates a feeling of community and belonging.'

The school has an excellent partnership with parents, the family worker and other agencies. This helps new pupils to settle quickly in all year groups and make an effective start in the Reception class. The family worker gives an outstanding level of support to the school, parents and the community. For example, she has assisted in the creation of an extremely wide range of materials including mathematics games for pupils and parents to share at home. Parents can attend courses at the school and so develop effectively their own levels of understanding. A high proportion of parents who responded to the questionnaire were very positive about the school. Another parent summed it up by saying, 'I'm extremely pleased with the education my children receive at Tennyson Road Primary. Despite moving a few miles away I choose to keep my children at this school.' Parents are pleased with the good quality breakfast and after-school clubs held at the school.

The school's leadership set challenging targets for pupils' standards in 2007 and successfully met them. Pupils achieve well because teachers have high expectations of them and so standards are above average in Year 6. The school has rightly identified that standards of writing across the school are not as high as mathematics, reading or science. Pupils make good progress at the school because teaching and learning are effective. The good range of learning activities ensure that pupils develop their basic skills well. Occasionally, pupils are not clear about what they are going to learn by the end of the lesson and so it is not easy for teachers or pupils to evaluate the progress that has been made. Pupils' personal targets are not always used well and this means that they do not have a deep understanding of how they can improve their work and attain higher levels of skill.

The school's leadership places considerable importance on welcoming pupils from all backgrounds and of all abilities and integrating them successfully into all activities. This means that pupils thoroughly enjoy and value all aspects of their time in school. They are cared for, guided and supported well by staff. Pupils' good personal development is evident in their really positive attitudes to others and good levels of cooperation. Pupils behave well because staff manage them effectively. Their emotional needs are supported through good personal, social and health education. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles well because the school encourages them to eat well and take regular exercise. All pupils learn to swim independently by Year 6 because of the importance that the school places on this skill. Pupils have good awareness of the importance of a balanced diet that includes fruit, vegetables and protein. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education because of their good levels of understanding in English and numeracy and their well developed social skills.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Pupils make good progress in the Reception class because staff use effective teaching methods. For example, children develop their creative skills well because resources are used successfully to interest them when they make collages of starry skies. Their personal development is good, partly because staff care for them effectively and use snack time as an opportunity to develop children's social skills. Teachers encourage them to do things for themselves such as peel a Satsuma independently. The leadership of this phase of education is good and so pupils have rich opportunities to learn in the inside areas. Occasionally, pupils do not benefit from opportunities to increase their skills in the fresh air during morning sessions.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards of writing across the school to match the good levels in the other key areas of learning.
- Ensure pupils always know what they are expected to achieve so that they can evaluate their successes effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because teachers challenge them successfully. Pupils enter the school with a low starting point and make really good progress in Reception. This ensures that standards are broadly in line with expectations when they start Year 1, but a little lower in writing and linking letters and sounds.

Pupils make sound progress in Years 1 and 2 and this means that standards are average by the start of Year 3. Boys and girls made good progress in 2007 in learning to read. This is because the staff use guided reading sessions well.

Standards are above average in Year 6 except in writing. Standards of writing are lower because not all teachers have good levels of knowledge in this area. Pupils achieve well from Years 3 to 6 partly because booster classes are really effective in Year 6. More able pupils are extended successfully. Pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language are supported satisfactorily and so they are progressing adequately.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' enjoyment of school is good. Their attendance is satisfactory and they show a clear sense of purpose in learning and making progress. They relate well to each other and show good consideration for others. The school is effective in promoting pupils' awareness of safety, for example by improving their cycling skills and awareness of their own safety. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Year 6 play leaders help pupils socialise effectively and play games at break times.

Pupils have a good level of knowledge and respect for different people's cultures and beliefs. They are enthusiastic contributors in school and more widely, raising money for many charities. A few pupils do not know how to meet their personal targets and so they do not have a deep understanding of how to develop their work and skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is effective and helps pupils make good progress. Oral feedback from staff is good and so pupils learn about what they have done well in their work. Staff encourage pupils successfully to be independent and think for themselves. Time is used well because lessons are planned thoughtfully. Good teaching methods develop pupils' basic skills. For example, Year 6 pupils learn to round numbers to three decimal places, effectively using small wipeable boards to help them. Pupils from minority ethnic groups make good progress because they are included well in lessons. Assessment activities are used well and especially to identify pupils who are exceeding expectations or underachieving. The use of skilled teaching assistants with a small group means pupils receive valuable individual attention. Occasionally, teachers do not explain clearly what pupils are expected to achieve and this means that pupils do not always have opportunities to evaluate their successes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and includes good provision for literacy and numeracy across the school. The curriculum is well planned and is being developed successfully as a result of the good contributions made by subject leaders. Further work is focusing on the curriculum being more flexible and creative in response to pupils' needs and interests. However, learning opportunities are relevant, interesting and challenging for pupils. This contributes much to their enjoyment of school. Different groups of pupils are catered for well. Pupils with learning difficulties are provided for effectively and so they achieve well. Pupils have a good choice of extra activities including sports and music. Their curriculum is enriched well with visits to places of interest and by visitors to the school. The school's nurse makes a good contribution to increasing pupils' awareness of health matters.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All staff offer pupils a dedicated and good level of welfare and care. This ensures that pupils develop into mature and thoughtful young people. Pupils are encouraged successfully to lead healthy and safe lives. Health and safety issues in school are checked carefully and resolved. The school works carefully to safeguard pupils, and procedures meet requirements. Pupils who arrive part way through the year are supported successfully and they achieve well. Academic guidance is good. Pupils' progress is tracked thoroughly. Language targets for those who speak English as an additional language are not always specific or measurable.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's leadership is impressive. She has raised the school's expectations and set a clear direction which is increasing the rate of improvement throughout the school. This has had a positive impact on pupils' standards and achievement. Subject leaders' roles have been strengthened by clearer definitions of their responsibilities. This has sharpened the focus of

these leaders on linking the quality of provision to pupils' results. Monitoring of the school's work is systematic and both strengths and areas for improvement are clearly identified. Improvement planning is effective as a result. Governors and staff contribute successfully to high quality self-evaluation of the provision of education offered. Occasionally, the recording of self-evaluation does not concentrate successfully on measurable outcomes for pupils. Governors are well informed and closely involved with the school.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

17 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tennyson Road Primary, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU1 3RS

Thank you for helping us find out about your school. We enjoyed watching sessions and talking to you. We really enjoyed your singing. You are lucky to attend such a happy and friendly school. Good things about your school include the facts that:

- You make good progress and behave well.
- Your headteacher has really good ideas about ways to improve the school.
- Teaching is good and staff work hard to make lessons interesting.
- You are encouraged to lead healthy and safe lives.
- There are excellent partnerships between the school, your parents and the family worker.
- Teachers and staff care for you well.

I have asked your school to look at how it can make things even better. I hope that you will help your teachers by listening to them carefully. The most important things are:

- Improving standards of writing to match the good levels in the other key areas of learning.
- Making sure you always know what you are expected to achieve so you can assess your successes more clearly.

Keep working hard at Tennyson Road Primary School.

Jackie Cousins

Lead inspector