

Tylers Green Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110303
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310252
Inspection dates	12–13 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Alan Jarvis

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	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Stidwell
Headteacher	Mr R Milne
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2004
School address	Cock Lane Tylers Green High Wycombe HP10 8DS
Telephone number	01494 812465
Fax number	01494 812741

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Tylers Green Middle School serves a prosperous commuter village. Most pupils are of White British heritage although a few have Asian British, Black African or Black Caribbean backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who need support for their behavioural, language or physical needs or have a statement of special educational need is below that typically found. More pupils than typically found start school with above average standards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Tylers Green Middle School provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. The leadership team has at its heart the objective of ensuring that pupils are 'Happy, healthy, hardworking and high achieving'. The school is particularly successful in enriching the curriculum. Together with good pastoral care this results in the good personal development of the pupils. Therefore, some of its key aims are met well. However, inconsistencies in the quality and effectiveness of leadership and teaching mean that academic progress is satisfactory rather than good as it once was.

There is good evidence that in the recent past standards have been consistently high and pupils made good progress. In 2007, although standards remained well above average they dipped from the very high standards reached in previous years, particularly in science and writing. Progress in 2007 was satisfactory. In addition, not enough of the higher attaining pupils made good progress and some underachieved. Progress seen in lessons, teachers' own assessments, and work seen in books show that standards in the current Year 6 are on course to be similar to last year and achievement remains satisfactory. A good focus on 'big writing' has helped reduce underachievement and bring standards closer to those in reading. Pupils say 'We have done much more practical work in science this year,' and there are early signs of standards improving. However, in both areas more work is yet to be done to ensure standards are back to the high levels they once were. The one area where standards remain high is in mathematics, where the effective setting arrangements and good teaching ensure all groups of pupils make good progress. Pupils who require individual support with their learning needs make good progress because work is carefully crafted to enable them to meet their challenging targets.

The school is particularly successful in ensuring pupils leave school having developed well as individuals and having good self-esteem. Their manners are very good. For a school of this size the excellent facilities and outstanding range of extra curricular opportunities, clubs and visits helps develop pupils' good healthy lifestyles, good personal skills and a good sense of community. Behaviour is consistently good, although pupils report it is occasionally marred by unkind behaviour at lunchtimes. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Exclusions are rare.

Pupils learn in a calm, safe environment. They say, 'We have lots of fun lessons, like our teachers and the many opportunities on offer'. Teaching over time is satisfactory and the key reason why progress is also satisfactory. Pupils work purposefully because work is satisfactorily matched to their learning needs. However, there is a core of good teaching, for example in the mathematics sets, where learning is more challenging across the ability range because teachers use the information they have on each pupil to tailor work much more precisely.

Until the last two years the leadership team was successful in ensuring pupils made good progress. However, the downturn in results has highlighted shortcomings in how rigorously the school tracks and analyses the progress of different groups of pupils and how incisively it evaluates the impact of provision on pupils' progress. There are inconsistencies in the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels and how well they are held to account for the progress pupils make. Although these aspects are uneven in quality, they are adequate overall. Whilst the school benefits from an effective governing body which discharges its responsibilities well, the recent track record shows the capacity for improvement is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and quicken pupils' progress in writing and science to the good level in mathematics by ensuring that teaching is as well tailored to pupils needs.
- Ensure the analysis of pupils' progress and the school's performance is accurate and more rigorous, and informs all activities to improve standards.
- Develop the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels and ensure they are fully accountable for their contribution to quickening pupils' progress.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The standards pupils attained in the 2007 national tests, although remaining well above average, showed a dip from previously high levels. Over recent years the gap between the standard the school attains and the national average has been narrowing. Pupils in the current Year 6 are on course to reach similar standards to last year which reflect satisfactory achievement from their well above average starting points at the start of Year 3. Standards in mathematics are, however, higher than the well above average standards in writing and science and remain high due to the very good climate for learning in this subject.

Achievement is satisfactory. The many higher attaining pupils are making satisfactory progress and are on course to reach the reasonably challenging targets that have been set for them. Far fewer are underachieving this year. The priority given to writing has helped quicken progress. Progress in science whilst satisfactory is however, not as strong. This is because the initiatives taken to improve scientific enquiry are still at an early stage of implementation. Boys and girls achieve equally well regardless of ethnicity. Pupils with behavioural, language or physical needs make good progress because of the well-targeted support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. They say how much they value teachers' help. Their good attendance and punctuality reflect how well they enjoy school. Pupils' good behaviour, attitudes and enjoyment are significant strengths of their personal development. Pupils develop a strong sense of wonder as they take part in the wide range of activities available, such as watching growth and change in the inspiring environmental area or making music together. These opportunities help raise self-esteem and contribute immensely to their good social and moral development. Pupils have a thorough understanding of the need to live healthy lives. Many eat healthily and walk safely to school. They contribute well to the local community through organising charitable fund raising and taking part in village events. Members of the school council make a good contribution to the development of the school such as the building of an eco-friendly greenhouse using recycled plastic bottles. The good standards they reach and their very good interpersonal skills provide them with a good start to secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers set clear learning objectives for each lesson that ensure a satisfactory pace to learning. However, there are inconsistencies in the precision with which teachers use the information they have on individual pupils to ensure learning is well matched and challenging for pupils of differing abilities. In English and science, for example, the work set is often very similar for each group of pupils with the higher attaining pupils having more to do and the lower attaining pupils receiving some guided support. Some higher attaining pupils who say, 'We would make faster progress if our work was harder' recognise this. In contrast, pupils work on well-matched and challenging tasks within the different ability sets in mathematics. Some teachers are encouraging pupils to assess their own progress, and this is helping quicken learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Outstanding enrichment through extra-curricular clubs and extensive educational visits help enrich the curriculum extremely well. These are helped by good links with other schools and local organisations and collectively make very a strong contribution to pupils' personal development and well being. There is something for everyone. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the vibrant choir, orchestra, art, line dancing, chess and wide ranging sporting activities they enjoy. The first class accommodation, which includes a swimming pool, large environmental area, a library and music and information, communication and technology rooms, boosts learning. Year 6 pupils relish their residential week in Wales, and visits linked to topic work make a good contribution to their personal development. Setting based on ability works well in mathematics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good personal care helps ensure pupils feel safe and secure and is effective in raising their self-esteem. The arrangements for child protection and safeguarding pupils are rigorous. Good attendance is encouraged. Good strategies are in place to enable the school to identify at an early stage individual pupils who may require extra support. Pupils know they can talk to a member of staff if they have any worries or concerns. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils have reasonably challenging targets in English and mathematics, but are not always clear about what they need to do to improve because of inconsistencies in marking.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Pupils' good progress in their personal development owes much to the success of initiatives the leadership team have put in place to enrich the basic curriculum and ensure pupils have good self-esteem, and respect themselves and the environment. Strong parental support continues to assist this. However, the educational direction provided at all levels and the teaching are currently not strong enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress in all classes and subjects. One reason for this is that the data the leadership team have on pupils'

progress is not analysed well enough to provide them with an incisive picture of how well groups or individuals are doing. Additionally the monitoring of teaching, whilst giving an overview of individual lessons and the rate at which pupils are learning, does not take enough account of the impact of teaching and learning on the progress pupils make over time. Whilst the school development plan has accurately identified the correct areas that need addressing, the lack of clear success criteria means the success of initiatives cannot be accurately assessed. However, subject leadership and management in mathematics and special educational needs is good and has a good positive impact on pupils' progress. Governors have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their efficient committee structure and regular visits to school enables them to hold the school to account very well.

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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?	3
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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 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	2
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?	3
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?	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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

26 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tylers Green Middle School, High Wycombe, HP10 8DS

As you know the inspectors visited your school recently to find out how well you were doing. We enjoyed seeing all the interesting things you do. We would particularly like to thank the school council and Year 5 pupils who told us so much about what you liked and what you thought could be better.

The report says that yours is a satisfactory school. Your headteacher and teachers have created a caring school community where you enjoy learning and feel safe. You behave well in lessons, are thoughtful and considerate and show respect to each other and the adults who work in the school. You told us how much you enjoy the many extra curricular activities for you and residential visits and trips. We agree these are first class as is the wide range of accommodation a school of your size provides for you. Currently you are making good progress in mathematics and satisfactory progress in English and science. Many of you told us about the focus that you have given to writing this year. Your work clearly shows it has helped you make faster progress. However, there is still some way to go before your standards are back to previous high levels. So keep up the good work. You really enjoy the many interesting things to do, in addition to your lessons. Also in science you like the greater opportunities for practical investigations. Again, please keep on working on these as more work need to be done here to enable you to reach high standards. Those of you who receive one-to-one support make good progress.

Your headteacher, teachers and governors are working hard to make your school better. I have asked them to look at these three things to improve the school further.

- Ensure the teaching in writing and science is as consistently challenging as it is in mathematics so you make good progress in all subjects.
- Look very carefully at all the information that is collected about your progress and teaching so that the staff ensure you make good progress in all subjects.
- Ensure that all teachers with specific responsibilities help you to accelerate your progress.

You can help by continuing to work at the more challenging tasks we hope will be set for you further strengthen your skills in assessing how well you are doing. I hope your school improves further so that you all achieve as well as you can.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Alan Jarvis

Lead Inspector