

Turnfurlong Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110351
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310267
Inspection date	7 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Anthony Green

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 (total)	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Nicki Strachan
Headteacher	Mr Derek Hayward
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2005
School address	Turnfurlong Lane Aylesbury HP21 7PL
Telephone number	01296 489264
Fax number	01296 489264

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- how well pupils make progress and achieve, particularly in mathematics and especially for girls
- how consistent is the quality of teaching, particularly in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT)
- how well is assessment used to support pupils' learning and progress.

In addition, evidence was gathered from discussions, school documentation and parents' questionnaires, to evaluate the school's arrangements for care, guidance and support and the quality of leadership and management. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included in this report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school. The majority of pupils are White British. A fifth of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. One sixth of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with specific difficulties, such as speech and language and behaviour, including those with a statement of special educational need, is below average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The school runs a daily 'Early Risers' breakfast club.

The school has attained the Activemark, and the local council's Swan Award in recognition of pupils' involvement in their learning.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'I find the school has a bright and welcoming atmosphere. Everyone I have contact with is enthusiastic and cheerful with a 'can do' attitude. There is a team spirit which is shown by the support pupils show each other, without being prompted to do so.' This comment from a parent is typical of their overwhelmingly positive support for the school. This is a good and rapidly improving school, which is led very well by an effective headteacher, in close partnership with his assistant headteachers. He has been very successful in creating a culture where pupils thoroughly enjoy learning. All groups of pupils achieve well because of the school's strong emphasis on supporting those identified with specific learning difficulties, moderate difficulties and those identified as gifted and talented.

The school provides a good education for its pupils. Pupils enter the school from the infants school and elsewhere with standards that, overall, are above average. They achieve well and standards at the end of Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in mathematics, whilst above average, are not as high as in the other two subjects. The school recognizes that this is an area for development and is already beginning to address this by making mathematics the focus for this year. However, the impact of new initiatives has yet to be felt throughout the school. Pupils, including those learning English as an additional language and those at risk of falling behind in their work make good progress and build on their skills, knowledge and understanding because of good teaching. Pupils' basic skills equip them well for the future.

This is an extremely caring school. Very high regard is paid to pupils' personal development and well-being. The exceptional care, guidance and support draws on the very good links with parents and outside agencies and safeguarding arrangements are very robust. As a result, pupils feel extremely safe and happy and are able to achieve well academically. They behave very well in class and around the school and have first-rate attitudes to learning. As a result, attendance is well above average. As one pupil said, 'We all get on well together. It's lots of fun in the school and we learn a lot.' Close links have been established with the infant school and local secondary schools, to ensure a smooth transition between each stage of education.

Teachers are particularly successful in ensuring that pupils make good progress and achieve well in English and science. They assess pupils' progress well and make good use of this information when planning future activities. They ensure that work is challenging, enjoyable and matched to the needs of each individual. Pupils are clear about their individual targets and are involved in assessing themselves against the success criteria of a lesson. Well-informed teaching assistants make a good contribution to the good quality of teaching and learning, especially when working with individuals or with set groups. ICT is used very well by pupils to support their learning. For example, Year 6 pupils were observed using laptops competently to access the internet to challenge pupils from other countries to a multiplication game. As one said, 'It's great. We're challenging children from all over the world. It makes learning fun.' Interactive white boards in all classes also add stimulus and interest to lessons, and are used with confidence by teachers and pupils.

The outstanding curriculum underpins the good teaching and contributes to pupils' good achievement, very high levels of enjoyment and their respect for one another. By Year 6 pupils have a very clear understanding of the need to take responsibility and respect individuals. Themed days and themed weeks ensure that the curriculum has meaning and relevance to all

pupils, whatever their background or ability. Excellent links are made between subjects. For example, Year 5 pupils take digital photographs of healthy foods and manipulate the photographs so as to stress the persuasive features required in advertising to sell food. This links English, ICT and health education in a very meaningful way. The high quality of pupils' art is also a feature of a wide range of subjects. The curriculum is enriched by an excellent range of outdoor activities, visits and visitors. Parents are especially appreciative of the range of activities offered, including the 'Early Risers' breakfast club. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a number of residential visits ranging from a two day 'evacuation', as part of a Year 3 topic on World War II, to a one week visit to France, when in Year 6. Pupils and staff are rightly proud of the school's success in sports and music, and the high take-up by pupils in both of these subjects. The school's Jazz Band has performed at the Birmingham Symphony Hall and the Royal Albert Hall. As one pupil said, 'We have a really good orchestra and jazz band. The sound is fantastic.'

Pupils thrive and their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural dimensions, is outstanding. They thoroughly enjoy talking to visitors about their work and are very proud of their many achievements. They have an excellent understanding for their age about staying safe, caring for others, such as through the 'Buddy' initiative, caring for the environment, and of the need to live healthily and to take regular exercise. One said, 'We have to eat healthily because it improves our working and helps us to concentrate more.' Decisions made by pupils throughout the school, and the school council, are not only reflected in daily life but also extend into the wider community. For example, the school council was fully involved in the development of the school's pond and wildlife area and Year 4 pupils, in cooperation with the local council, are developing the playground facilities of a public park adjacent to the school. Pupils with responsibility as Junior Road Safety Officers, work very closely with local Community Police Officers to monitor parking outside the school, an issue brought up by a number of parents, and to develop opportunities for the school community to reflect on travel issues.

Leadership and management are good. There is a shared vision for the school which ensures that initiatives move the school forward at an appropriate pace. Leaders and staff at all levels are excellent role models. Subject leaders have an excellent knowledge of pupils' needs and are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating teaching and pupils' progress. Links with the local and international community are excellent. Close links have been made with schools in Ghana and Tanzania, including exchange visits by teaching staff. Governance is good. Governors are fully involved in evaluating the school's work, and contribute well to the school's continued improvement. The school is accurate in its evaluation of its performance. Issues from the previous inspection have been addressed well. The school is in a good position to maintain its current good standards and to continue to build on its success.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics to match those of English and science.

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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 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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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	1
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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

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

20 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Turnfurlong Junior School, Aylesbury, HP21 7PL

Thank you for your extremely friendly welcome when I visited your school. You and your parents told me that you attend a good school and I agree. I really enjoyed talking to so many of you, and it was obvious from what you said that you really enjoy all the different activities provided. I was impressed by many things.

- You work hard in lessons and are successful in your work.
- The standard of your work is above average, especially in English and science.
- Teaching is good, which is why you do so well.
- The work planned for you is very interesting. It is made even better by the visits you go on, the visitors who come into school, and the many clubs you attend. You are right to be proud of your successes in music and sports.
- You are very well cared for by all staff and you feel very safe at school.
- You work very well together and are developing into mature young adults.
- You know how important it is to stay fit and healthy and to eat healthily.
- The school is well led by your headteacher, senior staff and governors.

Even in a good school, there are things that can be improved. I have asked your school to help you to do as well in mathematics as you do in English and science. I know that your teachers are already making a start on this. You can help them by taking the many opportunities you are given to talk about your work with your teachers and each other.

I wish you all the best for the future. I hope you continue to make Turnfurlong Junior School such a happy place to learn and that you carry on working as hard as you do at present.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Green

Lead Inspector