

Turnfurlong Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110359
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310271
Inspection date	7 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Christopher Schenk

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	247
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	86
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Simon Winman
Headteacher	Mrs Jan Tyson
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Turnfurlong Lane Aylesbury HP21 7PL
Telephone number	01296 489265
Fax number	01296 489797

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who attended an assembly, observed teaching and learning in all classes, met a group of pupils, held discussions with the headteacher, governors and staff, and looked at a range of documents and at the questionnaires returned by parents. The inspection focused particularly on three things: the arrangements for moderating assessments; how well the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils; and the way in which leaders and managers have developed the roles of support staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors 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 where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

The school is a little above average size and is on the same site as the junior school to which its pupils transfer. Children first come to the school in the September of the academic year in which they are going to be five and most attend part-time until the term after their fifth birthday. However, the school provides extra funding to ensure that all children are full-time in the summer term of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to prepare them for transfer to Year 1. In the autumn and spring terms the school runs an Afternoon Club that provides care for Reception children between 12 and 3:30 pm. There is also a breakfast club that is open to the whole age range. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is higher than in the majority of schools nationally, and so is the proportion whose first language is not English. The proportion of pupils who have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national figure: most of them have moderate learning difficulties, but there are a few whose difficulties are more severe. The school has received a number of awards including Gold Artsmark and Activemark in 2006 and Quality Mark, Investors in People and National Healthy School status in 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'It is a wonderful school. Both my children have been extremely happy while having a brilliant education that has got the best out of them.' 'The school seems to have a lovely balance where the children are thoroughly enjoying learning.' These two comments from parents, typical of the overwhelmingly positive response to a questionnaire sent out at the time of the inspection, encapsulate what makes the school outstanding. The combination of high academic achievement with an exciting and interesting programme of work makes the school particularly effective. Its mission statement is to 'create a love of learning for a better future'. It is outstandingly successful in meeting this central aim and in combining excellence with enjoyment.

When children first come to school, they generally have the skills and knowledge expected of their age, though some are at an early stage of learning English. By the end of Reception, overall standards are above average in all areas of learning. By the end of Year 2, the standards are exceptionally and consistently high. For the last four years, the results of National Curriculum assessments have been exceptionally high and well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2008, nearly all pupils reached at least the expected level and an impressively large proportion reached the higher level: over half in reading, nearly half in writing and more than two thirds in mathematics. The school assesses its pupils very carefully and thoroughly, with excellent procedures for internal moderation of teachers' judgements, and external moderation that involves the junior school. Given the pupils' starting points, the standards they reach by the time they leave the school show exceptionally good progress and represent outstanding achievement.

One of the main reasons for the school's success is the careful planning of a stimulating and vibrant curriculum. There is a clear focus on the pupils' progress in their key skills, and they are highly motivated by the wide range of interesting things that they are learning about. At the time of the inspection, pupils throughout the school were studying Turner's painting of 'The Fighting Temeraire' as part of the National Gallery's Take One Picture initiative. The focus was well used to develop the pupils' skills in literacy, history, art and other subjects. From time to time, the timetable is suspended to enable themed weeks to take place; the most recent was on the theme of investigations. Every year, there is a money-making venture; for example, three years ago, the pupils wrote, illustrated, published and marketed a story book based on the research they had done about wildlife. A recent initiative has been the introduction of Philosophy for Children, which has already made an important contribution to the pupils' thinking and questioning skills. As one parent perceptively commented, 'My child's questions are more curious and precise.' The school offers a very wide range of clubs: this year, an impressive eleven are planned to start after half-term, including sporting, musical and creative activities. The photography club will be new, building on the successful involvement of pupils with a professional photographer in a creative partnership last year.

As a result of the broad, interesting and exciting curriculum, pupils are highly motivated and have excellent attitudes to learning. The teaching is thorough and carefully planned and delivered in a lively way that makes good use of the pupils' enthusiasm and willingness to concentrate and work hard. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and their approaches to teaching and to the management of behaviour are consistent and effective. The learning support assistants make a particularly important contribution to the outstanding teaching and learning. They greatly value the support and training they are given, describing it as 'excellent

and comprehensive.' They give freely of their time, for example to attend whole-school training, parents' evenings and planning meetings that are over and above their normal duties.

The pupils are mature and willingly take on a wide range of responsibilities. The school council is active and brings about improvements. Last year's council instituted a system of playground leaders who now have an important role in making sure that playtimes are harmonious and that no-one is left out. The pupils are very well cared for, guided and supported. Because the teaching always takes careful account of the different levels of attainment within the class, pupils are given the right amount of challenge and support for them all to make excellent progress. The provision for the gifted and talented, for those who speak English as an additional language, and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are all very well organised and managed.

The leadership of the headteacher is inspirational and has been a key factor in the steady improvements that the school has made over many years. These improvements demonstrate the school's outstanding capacity to improve further. The headteacher is ably supported by the senior leadership team and by other members of staff whose skills are developed and valued exceptionally well, leading to high levels of job satisfaction. The governors play a very full part in the life of the school because they enjoy being involved. There is a strong sense of common purpose and shared values among governors, senior leaders and staff.

The school and its governors communicate regularly with parents and consider their views. For example, last July the school's annual survey of parents specifically asked for comments on the new duty that has recently been placed on schools to promote community cohesion. Parental comments and the schools' response to them show that the school is already making a good contribution. While there are good arrangements for parents to communicate with staff in writing and to make appointments to see them, they do not always have sufficient opportunities for informal contact. At the start and the end of the day, it is only the parents of pupils in Year 2 who are allowed into the playground.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The school's provision for children in the three Reception classes is outstanding. The curriculum is imaginative and well thought out. To develop literacy and numeracy, children hunt in the outdoor area for rhyming objects or matching shapes. Children are able to sustain concentration well and persist in tasks. They respond well to challenges, such as being given boats with holes in their hulls to investigate which materials will successfully plug them and prevent the boat from sinking.

Children behave sensibly and already, after four weeks, they are used to the routines. Their behaviour in assembly is excellent. Members of staff consider the unique talents of every child when planning activities to stimulate and motivate them all. They make excellent use of observations to track the progress of each child. As a result, all children achieve well. All staff provide a high quality of care for the children in their charge. The setting is well equipped, safe and secure, enabling all children, including the most vulnerable, to thrive.

Leaders and managers have exceptionally high aspirations and evaluate provision thoughtfully. The school runs a highly effective after-school club for children who stay on from the morning session. They are very well cared for and the provision enhances their personal development. Those who attend the Breakfast Club are given a good start to the day, with a healthy selection

of foods served in a calm and pleasant environment that helps them to develop their social skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Reconsider the arrangements at the beginning and end of the day to make it easier for parents to have informal contact with members of staff.

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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?	1
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	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 Infant School, Aylesbury, HP21 7PL

Thank you for your welcome when we came to visit your school. You were all very polite, friendly and helpful to us.

We think you go to a very good school indeed. You are really keen to learn and you work hard and behave very well. You have lots of exciting and interesting things to do and to learn about. When I asked some of you what you thought of the school, this is what you said:

'It's good because they made up something called Golden Time.'

'I really enjoy this school because I like counting and the best thing is numeracy.'

'I really like literacy because I've learnt new things that I didn't know how to do.'

'I really like everything because I want to go to school every day and learn new things.'

Your teachers and other staff look after you very carefully and help you to get on very well indeed with your learning. They challenge you to think hard and you rise to the challenge. As a result, you are reaching very high standards for your age.

Your headteacher, teachers and governors are always on the look out to find ways of making the school even better. They have made some good plans. When we met some of them before we left, we encouraged them to follow the plans they have made. We also asked them to think again about the beginning and end of the day, to make it easier for your parents to talk to teachers if they want to.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Schenk

Lead Inspector