

Tudor Court Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115057
Local Authority	THURROCK LA
Inspection number	311805
Inspection dates	29–30 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Glynis Bradley-Peat

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	635
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M. Carpenter
Headteacher	Mrs V. Northall
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2004
School address	Bark Burr Road Chafford Hundred Grays Essex RM16 6PL
Telephone number	01375 480662
Fax number	01375 480262

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	29–30 January 2008
Inspection number	311805

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Tudor Court Primary School is much larger than average and almost 70% of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of those from minority ethnic groups who speak English as an additional language is average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average, whilst the proportion with statements of special educational need is average. Pupils' socio-economic backgrounds vary, but the proportion who claim free school meals is low. The school has gained the Basic Skills Award and is working towards Healthy Schools Status. Currently, it is undergoing a major rebuild which is due for completion in October 2008. In September 2007 a new deputy headteacher was appointed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Tudor Court Primary offers its pupils a satisfactory standard of education with some good features. A real strength is the pupils' enjoyment in learning. In the words of one parent, 'My child loves to wake up in the morning to go to school. Even when on holiday she is always looking forward to going back to school.' This is because pupils are offered interesting topics to study in the satisfactory curriculum and a variety of activities to participate in. They also feel well cared for and say they know who to go to if they have any issues. Parents overwhelmingly support the school.

The leadership team, including the governing body, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have improved attendance since the last inspection and it is now good. They have also tackled effectively the problems centred on poor accommodation through the current building programme. Leaders and managers have worked well to ensure the least disruption but this has taken up much of their time. As a result, pupils' achievement in some areas has suffered. Whilst there have been improvements in writing, particularly for that of boys, standards in mathematics for boys and girls have dipped. This is because the monitoring of mathematics has not been sufficiently rigorous and there has been insufficient sharing of good practice.

The Nursery gives children a good start to their school life and they make good progress. This is because of consistently good teaching. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils make sound progress because of satisfactory teaching. Teachers' subject knowledge and effective joint planning enables them to set interesting and varied tasks for pupils. Sometimes, however, pupils spend too long listening to teachers' explanations and they become fidgety and lose their concentration. By the end of Year 6 pupils attain levels that are broadly average. The use of resources, including the skills of support assistants, is good which maintains pupils' interest in learning. Methods used to track pupils' progress are overly complex because of the number of different systems and initiatives. This leads to a lack of clarity when using the information to plan for the next steps in pupils' learning.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because they have ample opportunity to contribute to the school and local community. The school council is effective and pupils choose their own charities and raise money for them. They also clearly understand that along with 'rights', come 'responsibilities'. Pupils choose to eat sensibly and healthily. They are grateful for the opportunities to participate in various extra activities and clubs. Staff support pupils well and this is helping them to be happy in school and develop appropriate citizenship skills. However, academic guidance is less effective because marking does not consistently show pupils what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work in order to reach the next level.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children first enter the Nursery, their attainment is just below that expected for their age. It is however, notably lower in their communication skills. They get off to a flying start because the teaching is so good, and often outstanding. Lots of exciting activities, such as singing, 'Jelly on a Plate' and playing in the 'Ice-Cream Shop', mean that learning is fun. In the three Reception classes, teaching and learning are good overall, though not as consistently

good as they are in the Nursery. Nevertheless, daily routines are managed effectively, enabling the children to settle quickly and sensibly. With the help of kindly adults to support them, they enjoy learning and take part eagerly in tasks set for them. Most children make good progress and achieve the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1, with some exceeding them. In the Foundation Stage all staff work very well together and teamwork is a real strength of the provision. The curriculum is planned appropriately to the recommended areas of learning for indoor and outdoor activities. Systems for assessing children's progress are very good indeed. An area for further development is to make better use of assessment information to ensure that planning is focused on increasing children's skills at a faster pace. However, this information is not always used as well as it could be to tailor planning to meet individual children's needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and mathematics by simplifying the method for tracking pupils' progress so that teachers can more easily plan the next steps in learning.
- Ensure work is marked consistently and that comments help pupils know what is good and where to improve.
- Improve teaching by ensuring the pace of lessons is suitably brisk.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children start Nursery with levels of attainment that are generally just below that expected for their age. Skills in language and literacy are lower than in other areas of learning. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and most attain the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. At both Key Stages, in 2007 results of national assessments and tests in English and science were broadly average. In mathematics, the results were just below. The school has correctly identified particular issues centred on boys' writing and have taken effective action to improve this. Inspection findings indicate that standards are broadly average across the school. The school's accurate records show that an increased percentage of pupils are on track to meet challenging targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils really enjoy school and are particularly enthusiastic. This is reflected in their good attendance rates and polite, courteous behaviour. Pupils have pride in their school, behave well and are considerate towards each other. They have good relationships with teachers and other adults. Every effort is made to ensure that pupils are able to learn in a safe, supportive environment. The school council takes its responsibilities very seriously and pupils are confident that adults listen to their views. They understand about the importance of a healthy diet and are enthusiastic about exercise and sporting activities. Pupils make a good contribution to their school, for example by helping younger children at lunchtime and by raising substantial sums of money for local, national and international charities. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their attainment in basic skills, including information and communication (ICT) skills equip them adequately for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall with good features. Teachers plan together and this makes sure that a range of interesting activities are offered to pupils in lessons. As a result, pupils really enjoy their learning. However, planning is often too ambitious because teachers try to provide activities at five levels of difficulty which is too difficult to manage. In addition, the activities are not always matched sufficiently well to the needs of the pupils. This is particularly so for higher attaining pupils, some of whom told inspectors that their work was too easy. Best practice was seen in an outstanding mathematics lesson, where the teacher's high expectations, very good use of resources, excellent range of activities and super relationships with pupils ensured that they learnt a great deal in a very short time. They were very quick to realise, in a horse racing game, which numbers stood the best chance of winning. In less effective lessons, teaching does not make good use of explicit time limits for activities, so the pace of learning is slower. Sometimes, pupils spend too long listening to teacher's explanations and have insufficient opportunity to show initiative and learn independently. In most classes, teaching assistants work closely with the teacher and support learning well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The re-organisation of subjects so that they are linked together in topics has been a success. It is helping teachers plan interesting work that combines aspects of different subjects, for example, history, art and literacy. Learning is brought to life and is made more exciting as a result. This is a new approach and opportunities for teachers to develop pupils' numeracy, literacy and ICT skills are missed sometimes. The impact of the new approach is clearly evident in pupils' enjoyment but academic gains are not yet showing in test results. The school organises a good variety of trips to enrich the work in class and to develop pupils' understanding of the world around them. A good range of clubs and sporting occasions add to pupils' experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care and welfare of the pupils is a strength of the school. Effective systems for safeguarding children are in place, including health and safety risk assessments and child protection procedures. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are managed and cared for with sensitivity and dignity. The school works well with outside agencies to help and support pupils. This is appreciated by parents. One wrote, 'staff show genuine concern for my child's well-being, happiness and safety'. Teaching assistants are well trained and confident in supporting and extending learning. The school has several systems in place for tracking the achievement of pupils. However, these are not yet having sufficient impact in helping them make better progress, particularly in mathematics. Pupils are not always sure what it is they have to do next in order to improve because marking is not always consistent or helpful.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The senior leadership team and governors have strong, shared values for the school and are passionate about it being somewhere where all children flourish. They strive successfully to make pupils happy learners who are keen to come to school. They are also aware that standards should be higher and that progress in mathematics in particular is not good enough. Several innovative and interesting initiatives have begun to improve standards. These range from changing the management structure, to re-organising the curriculum and developing new procedures for tracking pupils' progress. There are many positive aspects to these developments, staff regularly adjust and improve their ideas as needed. However, all this hard work has not yet had a sufficient impact on raising standards and pupils are still only making satisfactory progress. The wide variety of initiatives and developments is leading to over complexity which does not always ensure good practice is identified and shared. In light of these facts, the school is judged to have satisfactory capacity to improve, rather than good as stated in the school's self evaluation. Although there has been improvement since the last inspection, a few issues have not been completely resolved.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	3

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	1
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	3

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?	3
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?	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	3
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

31 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tudor Court Primary School, Grays, RM16 6PL

Thank you for taking the time to speak to us when we came to visit your school recently. We received a very warm welcome and think you are polite and well behaved. You really do enjoy school. Many of you and your parents told us this. You pay careful attention to eating healthily. You raise money for chosen charities, which is highly commendable, well done! There is lots of building work going on at the moment and it was good to see that you are being sensible about this and keeping yourselves safe. Your school will be much improved when this work is finished.

Mrs Northall and everyone are keen for you to do as well as you can in school and they all work hard. We think that Tudor Court Primary gives you a satisfactory standard of education. This means that it does some things well but needs to improve others. Your progress is satisfactory and the boys in particular have improved their writing. We have asked the school to help you improve in mathematics. You can help by always listening to your teachers carefully and by doing your best work. We have also asked that your books are marked more regularly and that teachers write helpful comments to ensure that you can improve your work next time. Finally, we have asked that Mrs Northall and Mrs Dean make sure that they are able to follow your progress more easily, so that you learn even faster.

I hope that you continue to work hard and do your best!

Kind regards

Glynis Bradley-Peat Lead inspector