

Tanner's Brook Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116114
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	312182
Inspection dates	16–17 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Gehane Gordelier HMI

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)	249
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	85
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Colmer
Headteacher	Miss R Baker
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Elmes Drive Millbrook Southampton SO15 4PF
Telephone number	023 8077 1659
Fax number	023 8078 5037

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Tanner's Brook is an average sized school. It is situated close to Southampton docks and is on the edge of a large council estate. An external provider offers before and after school clubs on site. The school shares its site with the local Junior School and the Regents Park Community Centre. The latter houses one of the many pre-school providers from which children transfer into the school's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The school also has a unit for learners who are hearing impaired. The unit has places for up to seven children and is used by Southampton and Hampshire local authorities.

The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly lower than is the case nationally. There are increasing numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups year on year. However, the percentage remains lower than in most schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with national averages and includes learners who are hearing impaired or have speech and language difficulties, moderate learning difficulties or have emotional, social and behavioural needs.

The school has received the enhanced Healthy School Status. It also has the Activemark as well as an award for the quality of its financial management. In 2008, the school won the Southampton in Bloom competition.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Tanner's Brook is a satisfactory school. There are some aspects of the school's work that are good and improving. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and many share the view that staff are efficient, caring and friendly, and that their children are happy to come to school. One parent states, 'It has always been a brilliant starting block in education for my children.' Another parent comments, 'It is so nice to see so many enthusiastic teachers.' Indeed the links the school has developed with parents as well as its partnerships with outside agencies and other schools are among the school's many strengths.

Children settle quickly when they begin school in the Early Years and soon become engaged in the range of exciting activities staff have prepared for them. They are encouraged to develop healthy habits from an early age by receiving fruit or a carrot as well as water and milk at break times and by engaging in physical activities. The staff in the Early Years cater appropriately for children's needs. This is leading to children developing well in many areas and preparing them for the next phase of their education. The school has started to work effectively at improving children's knowledge of letters and sounds and writing as these remain areas in which children do not progress as well as they could.

The school benefits from having a dedicated staff who work well together and are keen to do their best. This is leading to pupils developing as well rounded young people by the end of Year 2. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and have a good understanding of the school's rules, which they believe to be fair. They are respectful towards each other as well as to adults. Their behaviour is good and they contribute to their environment by helping each other and taking part in whole school local initiatives. Attendance is improving but remains a little below average. This is because some parents take their children out of school for holidays during term time. The school takes a number of robust measures to improve attendance; this includes employing a Community and Family Learning Manager, having the Education Welfare Officer in the playground with her two mascots Sam and Odo, and by introducing penalty notices for persistent absentees.

The school has made some improvements since the time of the last inspection; however, the standards reached by pupils are not as high as they were in 2004. The headteacher and her deputy are working hard to ensure that standards are rising once more and there is evidence that this is happening, even though standards have yet to reach national averages. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are still low. Lower attaining pupils are not progressing as quickly as some of the most able pupils who are increasingly reaching the higher Level 3.

The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory; as a result, pupils make adequate progress from a low starting point. However, rates of progress are uneven year on year and within year groups. This is because lessons are not always as good as they could be and some lack focus and pace. Pupils are not always encouraged to apply what they already know, for example with their reading and writing. Too many teachers do not check pupils' understanding or ask them to articulate what they are learning.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included. They are effectively supported by additional adults. Those who are hearing impaired receive good specialist teaching.

The school provides a well thought out and varied curriculum that reflects the needs and different abilities of the pupils. For example, the outdoor curriculum is developed through the creation of a sensory garden in the school grounds and the Trailblazers programme to meet

the needs of pupils who do not readily have these opportunities out of school. The school has developed a more cross-curricular approach to teaching subjects, although the duration of some subject lessons is at times too long. The school has yet to ensure there is formal guidance for the teaching of all subjects, which promotes good levels of progression in learning and skills. Although teachers are making better use of information and communication technology (ICT) pupils' access to ICT in class based lessons is limited.

The senior leadership team have a clear vision for moving the school forward. The headteacher is well supported by her deputy and they help to create a positive learning and working environment. Under the effective leadership of the headteacher the school has worked hard with the local community and this has led to parents engaging more fully with the school and their children's learning. However, the role of some middle managers and subject leaders is underdeveloped. Many manage but do not lead sufficiently. Consequently, they are not all contributing as well as they might to school priorities and in helping to raise standards.

The quality of governance is satisfactory. The finance sub committee is particularly effective in helping the school to manage its budget. However, not all statutory requirements are fully in place. Governors have yet to monitor the effectiveness of policies relating to pupils with special educational needs as well as equality and diversity, and to communicate the outcomes of their findings to parents/carers and the governing body. They have also not kept parents and carers informed about the school's accessibility plans and the progress made on these. Governors are keen to support the school as best they can and attend meetings regularly. They recognise the need to further develop their role and ensure the guidance and support they receive from governor services is up to date and timely.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The EYFS provides a satisfactory curriculum that fully engages all children. Activities are resourced well and classrooms provide a bright, colourful environment for children. The outdoor area is spacious. Children cooperate willingly with their teachers and teaching assistants. They are happy and safe in school. Key workers have a good knowledge of the children in their care and observe their progress in a variety of ways, including by focused observations. Children's welfare needs are met well. Many children start school with a lack of key communication skills. Through the activities provided for them, they make good progress in a number of areas. However, in the key areas of writing and linking sounds to letters progress is satisfactory. The coordinator keeps detailed records of the children's progress and is aware of their needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly for lower attaining pupils by
 - improving the quality of teaching so that this is increasingly good throughout the school
 - ensuring that judgments about the quality of teaching are rooted in the impact on learning.
- Develop the role of middle managers so they are able to take on more of a leadership role and contribute more effectively to raising standards and school priorities.
- Governors need to ensure that all statutory requirements relating to equality and diversity as well as pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are met in full.

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

Pupils arrive at the school with standards that are below those expected for their age; they make satisfactory progress overall by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 2. The standards they reach are not as high as at the time of the previous inspection and are still lower than national averages. The 2008 test results show an improvement in standards from the previous year, which were significantly lower than they should have been. Pupils did not meet their very challenging targets in 2007 or 2008 for reading, writing and mathematics, but increasing numbers attained the higher Level 3, in line with national averages. The improved use of data has helped the school to set more accurate targets and focus sharply on those pupils at risk of underachieving. This is contributing to the school's efforts in raising standards and has helped to reduce the overall gap in performance levels between different groups. Following some successful intervention strategies, pupils from minority ethnic groups performed better than their peers in 2008 having attained less well in 2007. As a result of Primary National Strategy materials being used effectively, some of the lower attaining pupils as well as those with learning difficulties and disabilities are now making better progress than in previous years. The school recognises the need to raise standards particularly for the lower attaining pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

By the time they leave the school, most are developing into sensible and considerate pupils who are a credit to the school. 'The school is a happy place to be', said one pupil. Another said, 'The teachers are really good at teaching.' Pupils speak enthusiastically about their interesting lessons and feel they have good opportunities to take part in additional activities outside lessons, such as the gymnastics, cookery and sewing clubs. Pupils learn about a range of different cultures. They also learn from people, events and artefacts of the past, such as the life and times of Grace Darling and toys from the past.

Pupils have a very good understanding of healthy living and enjoy healthy lunches. They like the range of vegetables and fruit that are provided for them at break times and welcome the rewards for bringing fruit in their lunchboxes. One pupil said, 'This is a healthy school.'

Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community by raising funds for charities, such as comic relief and poppy day. They are developing satisfactorily with their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and this will help them in their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils settle down quickly to their work because they are interested in their lessons. They work well in pairs and individually. Relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils are good and this helps them to adopt positive attitudes to their work. Teachers plan and prepare lessons well and the learning objectives help in this respect. In the best lessons, activities

are matched well to the different needs of pupils, especially the least and most able, and there is a good balance between whole class teaching and individual work. Teaching ensures pupils fully understand what they need to do and pupils are provided with a helpful model to support them in their work. Where teaching is less effective some groups of pupils, especially those working independently do not receive enough guidance in their work to support them. Consequently, a few do not make the progress of which they are capable. At times tasks lack focus and on some occasions, teachers do not use information from pupils' prior learning well enough to plan work for different ability groups. Where teaching is weak there is a lack of structured support and guidance for lower attaining pupils, who as a result do not achieve as much as they should. Some teachers spend too long in whole class teaching and expect pupils to sit and listen for far too long. This results in many pupils not being able to recall all their teacher has told them and some pupils, especially boys, become distracted and do not make best use of their time.

Pupils' work is marked regularly and guidance is often provided for them about what they need to do to improve. However, teachers do not always make sure that pupils have acted on previous points for improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Subjects are linked together sensibly where it is possible to do so. This helps to consolidate pupils' learning. However, on some occasions, too much time is spent on literacy activities in a manner that lacks pace. The curriculum is enriched by a range of interesting activities about which pupils speak with excitement. These include science weeks, book weeks and visits to places of interest such as the Beaulieu Motor Museum and the New Forest Study Centre. A good range of out-of-school clubs is provided by the school and an outside provider. One pupil said, 'I like this school because it is fun.' Another said, 'I like to do lots of learning.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

All staff at the school provide high levels of care for pupils. This ensures pupils' well-being. The good links the school develops with parents and pre-school providers helps pupils to settle quickly when they arrive at the school. The quality of academic guidance and support is satisfactory. Where this is less effective, teachers do not maintain a sufficient overview of how well pupils are progressing during lessons or the additional support they may require.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive satisfactory support. Under the direction of class teachers, teaching assistants provide these pupils with effective guidance and encourage them to develop as independent learners. However, at times, lessons do not take sufficient account of relevant targets within pupils' individual education plans. Pupils from the hearing-impaired unit receive good support from specialist teaching.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management contribute to creating the warm and caring atmosphere in the school. The headteacher and deputy are appropriately focused on areas in need of improvement. The senior leadership team are making better use of data to help raise standards and set

appropriate targets for pupils. Leaders and managers have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, middle managers and subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in their subject area. Furthermore, the quality of subject action plans are too variable. Where these are weak, they do not clarify how new initiatives are intended to impact on learners and do not include measurable success criteria. As a result there is at times a lack of clarity about how improvements will be brought about and this slows down progress.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good.

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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

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	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
The extent to which 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	3
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 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?	3

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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

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

30 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tanner's Brook Infant School, Southampton, SO15 4PF

Thank you for being kind and polite when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and your teachers and were very interested in what you and your parents think about your school. We spent time in some of your lessons, looked at the work of the school and talked to the staff and some of the governors. We are glad that you like your school and agree that it is a safe and happy place.

Tanner's Brook is a satisfactory school. These are some of the things that are particularly good about your school.

- You enjoy coming to school and most of you are very well behaved.
- Your school works well with your parents and other people to help you with your education.
- From an early age, you quickly learn how to be healthy and keep yourselves safe.

Here are some of the things we have asked your school to do to help it to become even better.

- We would like your school to help you to do better with your reading, writing and maths.
- All staff with a responsibility need to be helped to contribute more to helping the school to become even better.
- The governors at the school work hard and care about you a lot. There are some things they need to do to make sure they are also doing an even better job.

You and your parents can also help your school by making sure you arrive on time for lessons in the morning and that you come to school when you are supposed to.

It was a real pleasure to visit your school and I wish you every happiness and success.

Yours sincerely

Mrs G Gordelier

Her Majesty's Inspector