

Tannery Drift First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117134
Local Authority	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
Inspection number	312506
Inspection dates	13–14 November 2007
Reporting inspector	John Williams HMI

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Davison
Headteacher	Mrs Anna Greetham
Date of previous school inspection	28 October 2002
School address	Tannery Drift Royston Hertfordshire SG8 5DE
Telephone number	01763 235100
Fax number	01763 235102

Age group	3–9
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Introduction

An HMI and one Additional Inspector carried out the inspection.

Description of the school

This is an average size first school situated in the town of Royston. Twenty-seven children attend the Nursery part-time and nearly all pupils in Reception transfer in from the Nursery. There are large numbers in Year 4, which has resulted in mixed age classes in Key Stage 2. The vast majority of pupils are of White British background and the number eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the number with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Tannery Drift First School is a good school. There has been considerable staff change in the last twelve months so the impact of some management initiatives is only just becoming measurable. Important improvements in pupils' behaviour and in teaching, learning and standards are, however, evident.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is providing excellent leadership and has a good awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development. Self-evaluation identifies clearly what staff and governors need to do to ensure future improvement. Parents are very supportive of the way the headteacher has brought about change. Satisfactory progress overall has been made on the issues raised in its last inspection and the school currently demonstrates good capacity to improve further.

Teaching overall is good. It is satisfactory in Key Stage 1, very good in Reception and some of it is outstanding in Key Stage 2. The curriculum to support teaching is good because it is firmly based on the national guidelines but modified to provide further enjoyment for pupils.

Attainment when children begin school from the Nursery is average. Very good teaching in the Reception class means that pupils reach expected goals and often exceed them. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment, as measured by teacher assessment, is above average. In past years attainment by the end of Year 4 has slowed but this has now improved so that standards by the time pupils leave school are above average. The school is assessing and tracking pupils' progress more effectively although marking needs improving as it does not show pupils what is needed to improve their work. Progress and therefore achievement by the end of Year 4 are good.

Personal development is good. Pupils enjoy lessons, have positive attitudes to their work and develop excellent relationships with adults and pupils. Attendance is in line with national averages. Good personal support and guidance is provided although academic guidance is less well developed as target setting is not yet embedded in the work of the school. Pupils know how to stay safe and healthy and their behaviour is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and is well led and managed. Along with the newly sited independent playgroup, it provides pupils with a fine start to their education and contributes well to ensuring that they develop good basic skills. The curriculum is well planned to cover all areas of learning, both indoors and outdoors, with many opportunities to develop imaginative and structured play. There is good emphasis on teaching language, communication, personal and social skills so that pupils achieve well. Standards by the time they enter Year 1 are at least in line with those expected and often above. Assessment procedures and systems for tracking pupils' progress are new, but thorough and accurate. Relationships are excellent and pupils settle quickly and happily. Parents are rightly pleased with the provision. The school has good plans to improve the range of resources, the design and decor in the Foundation Stage.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1.

- Improve marking so that it links with learning objectives and shows pupils what they need to do to improve.
- Improve target setting and pupils' awareness of their targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children begin Nursery with standards that are in line with those usually found, though boys' communication and speaking and listening skills have been identified as a weakness. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children have met or exceeded the expected goals. By the age of seven pupils achieve, in tests, above the expected national levels in reading and mathematics and are in line with them in writing. The school knows it needs to do better in improving boys' writing. By the time pupils leave school, standards are good in many subjects. In information and communication technology (ICT), they are average.

The school caters well for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, who make good progress. Progress is good for most pupils due to effective teaching, although it is better in the Reception class and at Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 4 are well on track to achieve the challenging targets set at the beginning of the year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Good relationships between pupils and staff foster pupils' personal development well. Pupils relate well to each other. They enjoy school and value the after school clubs, many of which contribute to their good awareness of healthy lifestyles, as well as opportunities to play a range of musical instruments. Their attendance is close to the national average. They enjoy being play leaders to help younger pupils. Behaviour is mostly good in lessons and around the school because it is well managed by staff. However, a few pupils have poorer listening and attention skills, which slows their learning and that of others. Good development of skills in literacy and numeracy equip them well for later life. They have good involvement in the local community and the school council ensures pupils' views are heard. Pupils have a well-developed understanding about healthy eating and the benefits of exercise. Balanced school meals, fruit and vegetable snacks and a strong emphasis on physical education and sporting activities support these developments. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is satisfactory and improving. They celebrate other faiths and customs as well as their own, visit places of worship and support a number of charities, which increases their sense of responsibility for those less well off than they are. There are excellent links developing with a school in Nepal.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall and is often outstanding in Key Stage 2 where teachers have excellent subject knowledge and challenge pupils well. Here lessons move at a considerable pace so pupils make excellent progress. A history lesson was exceptional because pupils were completely enthralled by the teaching and achieved high standards. In the Foundation Stage teaching is very good and develops children's basic skills well. In Key Stage 1 learning is more pedestrian. Opportunities to develop learning to a higher level are sometimes missed and the pace of

lessons is slower because teachers often have to refer to lesson plans. While teaching remains satisfactory, lapses in pupils' attention are sometimes not dealt with swiftly enough.

Teaching benefits from clear planning linked to National Strategy guidelines. All teachers put the onus on pupils to make decisions about their own learning, which helps pupils to take responsibility for it. Individual, paired and group work are used effectively. Across the school there are good relationships between pupils and between adults and pupils. This ensures that learning is enjoyable and fun. Teachers make sure that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are fully included in what is provided. Pupils themselves follow this example by encouraging those with learning difficulties or disabilities to take part.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The strong emphasis on teaching literacy and mathematics across the curriculum, with particular focus on developing pupils' speaking, listening and communication skills, helps them to make good progress. The good personal, social, health and citizenship education is matched well to the needs of pupils and makes a significant contribution to their personal development and well-being. Physical education and music have a high profile in the school, both in lessons and in well attended after school activities. These provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills further for leisure and for competitions, such as festivals or team games. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of visitors, along with regular opportunities to visit places of interest. Good developing links between subjects ensure that basic skills are being taught across the curriculum. The school continues to explore ways of linking subjects creatively in order to make learning even more stimulating, such as through the 'creative journey curriculum'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

From the Nursery upwards, good emphasis is placed on developing pupils' self-esteem and independence. Adults know pupils well and are sensitive to their needs. Individual needs are identified early and a wide range of additional sessions is provided to help pupils fill gaps in their learning of basic skills. External agencies are used effectively to support learning and other needs of identified pupils. Teachers are approachable and pupils say they like their teachers, feel safe, and know they can turn to anyone if they have concerns. They know that bullying or poor behaviour is dealt with quickly and effectively. Child protection arrangements, health and safety and safeguarding procedures are all robust. Staff are appropriately trained and kept well informed. Parents are very positive about the school and the high level of care their children receive. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils have some understanding of their targets for learning but this is at an early stage of development. Marking is always positive but lacks clear links to learning objectives and what pupils have to do to improve their work. This remains an area for further development as systems for recording and tracking pupils' progress become more established.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. A period of significant turmoil and staff change means that several subject leaders are new to their roles and as such there are inconsistencies in managing and evaluating the effectiveness of subjects. Nevertheless, subject leaders have a good understanding of what is required of them and what their priorities are. The headteacher and governors are developing new senior and subject leadership teams and the Key Stage 2 leader has been effective in providing support for the newly qualified teachers in this phase.

The relatively new headteacher has had to take on much of the leadership of the school directly. The evaluation of teaching and learning is comprehensive and accurate. Finances are used particularly well to promote improvement, for example by keeping classes small where the need for improved standards is greatest. The headteacher has thus led the school very well through a period of difficulty.

Governors, ably led by the chair, now have a good understanding of the school's strengths, weaknesses and priorities, including the need to update some policies and procedures. Progress since the last inspection was satisfactory. However, it is now rapid. The school's self-evaluation is a well written and accurate document that has led to precise targets for the coming year. Owing to successful recent changes in the school, staff and governors are committed and enthusiastic, contributing much to the good capacity to continue improvement.

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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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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 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	3
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	3
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?	2
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?	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?	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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	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

15 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Tannery Drift First School, Royston, SG8 5DE

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting and talking with you.

Tannery Drift First School is a good school. You get off to a good start in Foundation Stage and the progress you make through the rest of the school is good. When you are in lessons you work well on your own, with each other, and with the teachers and teaching assistants. You seem to enjoy coming to school and behave well.

Mrs Greetham, all the teachers and teaching assistants take good care of you. The food the school provides for you at lunchtime is good and you know how to stay fit and healthy. Well done!

We enjoyed much of the teaching in the school, particularly in the Reception class where it is very good and in the Year 3/4 classes where some of the lessons we saw were fantastic. I remember being a time traveller in a history lesson particularly well! We have asked the school to try and make all the lessons as good as the best ones. We have also asked the school to look at ways in which the teachers' marking can help you to be more aware of what you need to do to improve. This will help you to know your targets better in the future.

I hope you will continue to do well at Tannery Drift First School.

Yours faithfully

John Williams

(Her Majesty's Inspector)