

Tunbury Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118493
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312965
Inspection date	21 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	561
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Hughes
Headteacher	Heather Brown
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2005
School address	Tunbury Avenue Walderslade Chatham ME5 9HY
Telephone number	01634 863085
Fax number	01634 672505

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school with a particular focus on the following: the progress made in addressing standards in writing, the effectiveness of those staff in their roles as 'learning leaders' and the quality of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, the chair of the governing body, various staff and pupils. Parents' questionnaires were analysed and visits made to lessons. Work samples and a range of documents and data were examined. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments given in its self-evaluation were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

All children begin the Reception class at the start of the autumn term following their fourth birthday in this oversubscribed, larger than average three-form entry primary school. The oldest pupils begin full-time in September. The youngest begin part-time and commence full-time in January. The percentages of pupils who are entitled to free school meals and those from minority ethnic groups are lower than those usually found. The proportions of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language are lower than national averages.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Tunbury Primary is a good school. It has made good progress since the last inspection, as shown in pupils' increased rates of progress from Year 2 to Year 6 in the last two years, which have been above those in most schools. The good rates of progress look set to continue. Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards, but their progress in writing throughout the school has not been as rapid as in other aspects of the basic subjects. The school has given good attention to this issue. There are signs of a recovery and the school recognises the need to continue this focus.

Some aspects of the school are outstanding. Pupils' personal development and the staff's care, support and guidance of the children are excellent. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, as shown in their above average attendance. They demonstrate excellent behaviour and attitudes to their work. These result in a very positive atmosphere in lessons in which pupils are confident to contribute. Pupils get on extremely well together. They engage maturely in group work and discussions and benefit from sharing one another's contributions. They have a very good understanding of keeping themselves safe and practise healthy life-styles through regular participation in sport, both in and out of school. They eat a healthy choice of food. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

Staff take very good care of the pupils who feel able to discuss any concerns with them. Child protection arrangements and health and safety matters receive very good attention. Links with parents are very good. The school puts on events for parents so that they are well informed about teaching methods. These assist them when they support their children at home with their learning. The overwhelming majority of parents express much satisfaction with the school. They confirm the very good welcoming atmosphere and the kind and supportive teachers. As one parent puts it, 'It is a lovely, friendly school where children know their boundaries and are polite and well behaved.' Staff take very good care of vulnerable pupils, for example setting up social skills groups so that they can engage more successfully with others.

Teaching is good throughout the school. An openness among staff in planning contributes to a sharing of ideas and interesting lessons. Staff make very good use of modern technology to prepare and present their lessons in a visual form which holds pupils' attention and supports their understanding. Good questioning engages pupils' thinking and the well-planned activities meet different pupils' capabilities. Able Year 4 pupils, for example, handled protractors confidently and showed great accuracy and skill in measuring angles. Teachers mark the pupils' books well and help them to make improvements in their learning. They keep very good records of pupils' progress and so can set up special learning programmes for them if they do not make the progress that is expected. Pupils know what they must do in order to improve their work, particularly in English.

The provision for pupils who have learning difficulties is improving. In the past, their progress has not always been as good as it should have been. The school has been addressing this issue. The release of the inclusion manager from class duties enables her to give her full attention to the needs of groups and individuals and to oversee their progress. Teaching assistants have received enhanced training. Some now specialise in particular aspects of provision, such as speech training and occupational therapy. Consequently, pupils who experience emotional problems or difficulties in their learning now meet the targets set for them and are making better progress than before. Good links with external agencies support the provision.

The school is well led and the staff work harmoniously as a team. The governing body is very supportive and has good strengths in its financial expertise, enabling it to manage successfully its own building projects. A new school extension is about to open which will add considerably to the facilities. Some governors have specific responsibilities for subject oversight or an aspect of the school's work and these help to keep the governing body well informed.

The new arrangements for 'learning leaders' is working well. These members of staff lead teams of teachers in particular sections of learning, each of which contains more than one subject or aspect of the school's development. The technology area, for example, has information and communication technology, design and technology and art under its umbrella. This fairly new arrangement brings staff together with common skills and is helping to develop staff professionally. The system is instrumental in ensuring consistency in practice across the school in teaching and learning. Staff undertake particular roles and assignments in the teams. These roles help to develop staff's skills further and assist succession arrangements when staff leave. Monitoring of provision through these teams is becoming increasingly effective. However, monitoring of teaching is not yet sharp enough and reports on lessons are too descriptive and do not make staff aware enough of how they can improve their practice. Leaders have a very secure knowledge of assessment and use the information effectively in planning pupils' future work.

The school's aim to reach out and make the school a welcoming centre is very successful. Pupils make a very good contribution to both the school and local communities. They undertake various school duties effectively, for example as members of the school council or helping to manage equipment in assemblies. The school has good links with local churches and playgroups and is generous in sharing its equipment and accommodation. Some pupils engage with local business personnel in constructing cars from kits and then drive these in competition against other schools.

The curriculum is broad and includes the teaching of French. Music and drama are particular strengths. Performances to parents develop pupils' confidence from an early age. A high percentage of the pupils learn a musical instrument. Pupils sing well and enthusiastically. The choir sometimes joins in local festivals. Links between subjects are well developed in Years 1 and 2, with scope for further development in Years 3 to 6. A good feature of the work in Years 3 to 6, however, is a focus on problem-solving and these sessions particularly challenge the able pupils. Problem-solving is also a good feature of the mathematics curriculum.

The school is developing well and managing changes effectively. Although some staff have been at the school for a long time, they retain a freshness and want to do their best for the children in their care. This is a school that demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children's attainment on entry is about that expected for their age, but the ability of groups varies from year to year. Good teaching and spacious accommodation support the children's good progress in the Foundation Stage. Staff stimulate children's curiosity well; two very large snails in one class gripped children's attention. Planning is thorough, but sometimes the potential of learning opportunities is not exploited to the full, for example when children use the large wheeled toys outside. Staff update assessments of children's progress regularly and support these with a good bank of evidence for individual children. They provide good opportunities for creative activities and children make a range of models from different materials.

The good blend of child-initiated and teacher-led activities ensures that children learn to work independently as well as develop a good range of basic skills. Currently the vast majority of children are reaching the expectations for the end of the Reception Year and several are working above them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' writing skills throughout the school so that they make better progress

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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?	2
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?	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
How well 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 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?	1

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	2
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tunbury Primary School, Chatham ME5 9HY

Thank you for your warm welcome when I visited your school. Your parents think that you attend a good school and I agree with them. I found you to be very polite and extremely well behaved. You so obviously enjoy school and your attendance is better than in most schools. You are growing up very well as young people. Your personal development is outstanding. You show much respect and concern for others in the school community. You also have a very good awareness of how to live healthily and how you can play your part in looking after the world. The staff take extremely good care of you, know your capabilities very well and plan effectively for your different needs. They work well as a team under Mrs Brown's good leadership and are keen to keep on developing your school to make it even more successful. The governing body plays an effective role in supporting the staff and helping to manage new building projects. You will soon, of course, have even better facilities when the new work is complete.

You have been making good progress in your work and results have been improving. However, your progress in writing has not been as good as in reading and mathematics and I have asked your teachers to make sure that you make even better progress in this aspect of your work. You have a good range of work to do in class and the opportunities after school give you added interests. Many of you join in these and learn new skills. The teaching is good and the staff work hard to prepare your lessons and to make them interesting for you. I know you enjoy them because you told me so.

I hope that you will continue to work hard in your lessons and achieve your ambitions. Thank you once again for all your help when I visited and talking to me about your school.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sudworth Lead Inspector



22 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tunbury Primary School, Chatham ME5 9HY

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Yours sincerely

Peter Sudworth
Lead Inspector