

Town Farm Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125126
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315157
Inspection date	10 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Taylor

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	410
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr G Place
Headteacher	Mrs J Koops
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2003
School address	St Mary's Crescent Stanwell Staines TW19 7HU
Telephone number	01784 254380
Fax number	01784 421915

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues; standards and achievement in the lower school, the extent to which teaching and learning, and the curriculum meet all pupils' needs, and the school's leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from observing lessons, a scrutiny of the school's documentation, including data on pupil progress. The inspector also analysed the parent questionnaires, met with senior leaders, groups of children, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a large school. Its intake is ethnically diverse, but few pupils are at the early stages of learning English. Free school meals entitlement is above average. The proportions of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities, and with statements of special educational need are above average. The school has gained Investors in People and the Healthy Schools Awards. It is part of a federation of primary and secondary schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Town Farm Primary is a good school. It has a very welcoming, family ethos and provides a good standard of education and a good capacity to continue to improve.

The majority of parents and carers are very happy with the school. Almost all rightly believe that the school is well led and managed, that children enjoy school, make good progress and are taught well. Typical comments include; 'I like the way children's needs and thoughts are put first', and, 'I think Town Farm is excellent. It has done wonders for my children.' Although a few parents express concern about some pupils' behaviour, most pupils behave very well. A small number of pupils do have specific behavioural difficulties and the school works very successfully to help them to improve.

A particular strength of the school is the way in which pupils' personal development is promoted. Consequently, pupils are eager to learn, keen to take responsibility and to participate in the many lunchtime and after-school activities on offer. Pupils are considerate and well-mannered and develop increasing levels of maturity. Therefore the school is a harmonious community in which pupils of different ages, abilities and from different ethnic backgrounds form strong friendships. Attendance rates, although improving, remain below average. Most pupils do attend regularly, but despite the school's strident efforts, a small number of families neglect to ensure that their children come to school regularly.

Pupils are safe in school, well-cared for and free from risks and bullying. This is because staff are vigilant, know pupils well, listen to their views and are quick to respond to any concerns. The school works well with external agencies to support the most vulnerable pupils.

From a below average starting point on entry to school, pupils of all abilities achieve well. Standards improve as pupils move through the school so that those in English and mathematics are broadly average by the end of Year 6, while science standards are often above average. Most pupils at least meet the challenging targets set for them, and many exceed these. This was the case at the end of Year 6 in 2007, when although standards as a whole were lower than in previous years, the school nevertheless exceeded its targets in all three subjects. An above average proportion of pupils attending the school have fairly complex learning difficulties and disabilities. Although the standard of their work falls short of age-related expectations, pupils make good progress in relation to their capabilities. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds make good progress and are one of the school's highest attaining groups.

A well-planned curriculum gives good attention to securing pupils' enjoyment and promoting health and fitness. Links between subjects are currently being strengthened. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' basic skills, without unduly narrowing the curriculum. Indeed pupils told the inspector that the wide range of subjects taught and the practical activities that teachers provide for them, are what helps to make lessons particularly interesting. Many intervention programmes are provided. These support pupils who need extra help with reading, writing and mathematics, and extend those capable of reaching standards that are above those expected for their age.

The school's good leadership places a strong focus on developing and improving teaching and learning, and guiding all staff about how they can improve their practice and extend pupils' learning. This ensures teachers have up-to-date knowledge of subjects, share expertise and gain experience in teaching across the age ranges. Well-trained teaching assistants also make

a good contribution; supporting pupils' learning and helping teachers to deliver work that addresses the wide range of attainment within each class.

The headteacher has the confidence of pupils, parents and staff and provides a strong lead to the school. She successfully encourages effective teamwork and ensures that pupils' needs remain at the forefront. Governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, are supportive and involved. The school has a large budget surplus. Governors have recently started to address this by planning improvements to resources and the fabric and maintenance of the building.

The school has an accurate view of its overall performance, successes and effectiveness, although the recording of weaknesses and subsequent written planned action could be sharper. A particular strength in monitoring and evaluation procedures is the way that individual pupils' progress is carefully tracked. Information about pupils' progress is then disseminated among staff and very regularly shared with pupils and their parents. This ensures that all concerned are kept informed about how well pupils are doing, and what they need to learn next.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Foundation Stage provision is good. Contacts with families before children join Nursery helps them to settle quickly into school. At the time of the inspection although some children had only started the school a few days earlier, they were already settled, involved and secure in being separated from their parents. Good teaching and staffing levels, combined with well-planned activities and flexible use of groupings, ensure that children learn well, both indoors and outside. Small group activities enable skills to be taught effectively, and ensure a good level of interaction between adults and children. The improvements made to provision in recent years have been well led. This is helping to improve children's attainments by the end of the foundation stage. Nevertheless teachers' assessments of children's attainments by the end of Reception still need refinement, so as to improve their accuracy.

What the school should do to improve further

- Bring greater precision to the school self-evaluation document and the way it links to the priorities in the school improvement plan.
- Improve the accuracy of Foundation Stage assessments.

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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	3
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	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	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	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	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

21 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Town Farm Primary School, Staines, TW19 7HU

Thank you very much for making me welcome when I visited your school. I agree with your teachers and parents that Town Farm is a good school.

These are the things that work really well in your school.

- You are friendly, well-behaved and polite. You work hard, get on very well together and take good care of each other.
- Your teachers and other staff help you to make good progress, to behave well and develop good attitudes to school and learning.
- You told me that the staff take good care of you. They help the younger children quickly settle into school. They listen to your views and encourage you to do well. They let you and your parents know how you are getting on and what you need to do to improve your work.
- The curriculum in all year groups is good. You told me how much you enjoy lessons and I noticed that you take part in lots of clubs and other activities, during and after school.
- The headteacher and senior leaders lead the school well. This ensures that staff teach you well, have high expectations of you and are always thinking of ways they can improve the school further.

This is what I have asked the school to do next.

- I have asked the staff to improve the way they measure how well the youngest children are doing.
- I have asked the staff to improve the way they plan to make your school even better.

I hope you continue to do well. You can help the staff by continuing to work hard and by making suggestions about what would help to improve your school even more.

With very best wishes,

Kathryn Taylor

Lead Inspector