

Tuffley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115602
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	326229
Inspection date	7 May 2009
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	131
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Lugg
Headteacher	Nuala Woollorton
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Evenlode Road Tuffley Gloucester GL4 0JY
Telephone number	01452 526442
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Tuffley Primary School is smaller than average. It has fewer than average pupils from minority ethnic groups and almost all speak English as their first language. Over half of the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and this is well above average. Most of these pupils have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or are on the autistic spectrum. The school includes the Communication and Interaction Centre that supports fifteen pupils who have statements of educational needs. The school has a small Early Years Foundation Stage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Tuffley Primary School provides an outstanding education. The school's modest assessment of its performance is an indication of the high expectations that set the tone for staff and pupils, alike. All staff display great commitment to improving the life chances for every child. Pupils quickly progress from having well below expected skills and understanding when they join the Reception class, to above average standards by the end of Year 6. This constitutes excellent achievement.

Almost all parents wholeheartedly express support for the school and very few have any concerns. They particularly value the happy atmosphere and the most effective support given to pupils with learning difficulties and /or disabilities. One typical comment was, 'Tuffley is a fantastic school. My children are very happy, I can see it every day – a big smile on their faces.'

Children starting in the Reception class have particularly low standards in communication, language and literacy. They benefit from excellent teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and across the school. Informed by thorough assessment, teachers know pupils' requirements well and plan so that the individual needs of each one are addressed. Developing literacy skills is a constant focus of lessons. In consequence, barriers to learning are quickly broken down. Lessons are interesting and challenging and all staff work closely with pupils, encouraging and enabling them to progress. The new curriculum has had a very positive impact on pupils' learning. It incorporates engaging topics, and pupils report that these are very interesting, encouraging them to produce good quality work.

The Communication and Interaction Centre provides excellent support for the group of statemented pupils who attend. Throughout the school, pupils receive excellent care. The school's systems for safeguarding are robust and pupils know that they can confidently turn to any adult, should they need help or advice. They receive clear constructive guidance to help them meet their academic goals. Pupils' personal development is also outstanding. They enjoy school enormously and regard it as a haven of calm and warm relationships. One boy reported, 'It's like our second family.'

The headteacher provides strong committed leadership for the school. She is powerfully supported by her senior colleagues and all staff work hard to meet the school's stated aim of 'encouraging children to do their very best'. The school's self-evaluation is perceptive and identifies appropriate priorities for improvement. The school's restless quest for improvement has led to stronger teaching and assessment and an increasingly rigorous focus on meeting pupils' needs. Improvement since the last inspection is excellent, and leadership and management are outstanding. The school's capacity for improvement in the future is also outstanding. Governors are keen to support the school, but do not currently have sufficient information to consistently challenge it.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides children with an exceptional start to school life. From very low starting points, children make outstanding progress. The school places great store by improving children's very limited communication, language and literacy skills. By the time they move into Year 1, many of the language barriers that face these pupils are well on

the way to being overcome. Children develop an early love of school and good learning routines and these attributes prove valuable throughout their education.

Teaching and learning are excellent. Lessons are very well planned, but not taught to a formula. They are organised and delivered to address individual needs and provide the most suitable balance between teacher-led and pupil-initiated activities. There are plentiful opportunities for children to learn and explore, both indoors and out. Children follow a well-planned, attractive curriculum that meets all requirements. Classrooms are happy and orderly places where teaching assistants play a full part in helping to provide a calm, caring ethos. Children's welfare is paramount. Positive, constructive relationships with parents ensure a smooth transition into the Reception class and happy learning experiences for children.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding. Monitoring, particularly through regular formal and informal assessment, ensures that all children's needs are known and met. The Reception classroom is spacious and benefits from a pleasant well-equipped outside area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that governors have more detailed knowledge of the school so that they can challenge as well as support the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils enter Year 1 with standards that are a little below those expected for their age. They have low standards in literacy and many are reluctant, hesitant speakers. The school has very good assessment and record-keeping procedures so holds a clear record of each pupil's strengths and weaknesses. This ensures that all pupils are correctly supported and challenged as they grow and learn. Intervention programmes for those experiencing difficulties are most effective.

Pupils' standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are close to average and, by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2, they are above average. This is highly commendable, particularly given the very high proportion of pupils at the school who have statements of special educational needs. Standards in Year 6 have risen steadily in recent years and there are no significant variations between subjects. These strong outcomes for pupils mean that achievement is outstanding. The excellent teaching in the Communication and Interaction Centre ensures that the achievement of pupils who experience significant barriers to learning, such as those on the autistic spectrum, is also outstanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy coming to school greatly and say that 'teachers help us learn'. This satisfaction is reflected in their excellent achievement. Attendance is above the average for similar schools. Pupils say they feel the school is safe and are fully aware of the need to act responsibly and safely on the playground and around school. They know who to go to with any problems, saying that staff deal with any behavioural incidents very well. Pupils regard the daily 'wake and shake' exercise sessions as an enjoyable way to 'get us ready for work' as well as helping to keep them fit and healthy. They have an excellent understanding of the need for a healthy diet and can talk about what this entails.

The active school council gives pupils a clear voice on how to improve the school and on other issues. Changes suggested, such as providing safe surfaces under the climbing apparatus, have been acted on. Pupils take part in fund-raising activities for a wide range of charities, including a Kenyan school project. Pupils' good progress equips them very well for the next stage of their education. They are able to talk about their learning and different strategies that will help them. By Year 6, pupils are well prepared for their move to secondary school.

Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. They appreciate the difference between right and wrong and their behaviour towards each other and to adults in school shows great respect.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers know pupils and their needs very well. Regular assessment enables staff to keep a close eye on each pupil's progress. This information is utilised to plan the correct activities, so that the work each pupil is doing is pitched at the correct degree of difficulty and all those who need extra support receive it. Lesson plans are particularly thorough. They usually contain a range of brief interesting activities and resources that keep pupils interested.

Teachers get on very well with their charges, offering praise where it is deserved, but managing any lapses firmly. As a result, relationships between pupils and with adults are very positive. Behaviour in lessons is usually good or better. Constructive marking and effective verbal feedback do much to motivate pupils to even greater efforts. The school is working very hard to develop the parents' role in their children's learning and this is starting to have a positive effect both on pupils' attitudes and progress.

Teaching assistants play a significant role in learning. They are well briefed and know pupils well. They work effectively to support those pupils who may be struggling as well as take whole-class sessions for topics such as cookery.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The implementation of the new 'creative curriculum' has led to great advances in pupils' and parents' involvement in learning and has boosted achievement. National Curriculum subjects are innovatively linked in topics such as space or the study of Charles Darwin. Pupils are very enthused by these themes and their work is frequently of a high standard. Pupils benefit from a range of trips that are linked to the topic under consideration. Numerous visitors to the school also enrich pupils' experiences. Careful planning has ensured that all curriculum requirements are met.

The school offers an interesting and varied range of after-school clubs and societies. These change with the seasons, and pupils speak warmly about them and attendance is high.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pastoral care for pupils is very strong. The school meets all the statutory requirements for child protection and safeguarding. Thorough risk assessments ensure that the children learn in a safe environment.

The school has developed strong partnerships with parents of pupils with autistic and other learning difficulties. The great expertise of staff in the Communication and Interaction Centre is shared across the school and this is very beneficial to all pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Individual education plans are thorough and promote progress effectively.

In lessons, teachers ensure that work is well matched to children's abilities through personalised targets and guidance. Marking in books supports children by identifying whether they have met their targets and directing them to the next steps in their learning. Older pupils actively set their own targets and assess their own performance and this has a positive impact on their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The excellent leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by a strong leadership team, sets a clear direction for the school. Recent appointments of staff to mentor pupils' achievement and improve behaviour have led to higher standards and better attitudes. The school self-evaluates itself thoroughly. The progress of all pupils is rigorously tracked and such data analysis feeds naturally into the school's effective planning for the future. The very strong support provided for all pupils means that Tuffley is a highly inclusive school.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is good. It is developing strong relationships with parents and carers through its excellent behaviour and learning mentor support. Children gain a wider understanding of the world through their links with the Kenyan school and curriculum topics such as 'Wonderful Wildlife'. However, there are few links with schools in more distant parts of the United Kingdom.

The governing body is well led and some governors play a role in the school's monitoring processes. However, with a number of new members, the body as a whole does not monitor sufficiently to help it fulfil its role as a 'critical friend' to the school.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which 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	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 learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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**

8 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tuffley Primary School, Gloucester GL4 0JY

Thank you very much for your help when the inspectors visited your school recently. We were very pleased to meet you and hear your views. You told us that you love your school and think it is really good. We agree that Tuffley Primary is an excellent school that does a tremendous amount to help you learn and grow.

With the outstanding teaching, pupils in Year 6 reach standards that are better than in most other schools, and achievement is excellent. You play your part with your mature attitudes and good behaviour. Your personal development is also outstanding and it is very good to see so many happy pupils. You are really well cared for and teachers are careful to give you the best possible advice to help you progress as fast as possible.

The subjects and topics you study, known as the curriculum, are excellent and you told us that you find your work very interesting. The school is outstandingly well led and managed and those in charge, including the headteacher, make sure that every one of you gets all the help you need as you develop and learn. Because the school is so good, there is only one thing I have asked it to improve on:

- The governors need to find out more about daily life at the school to help them ask questions about how well the school runs.

Once again, many thanks for all your help. It was great meeting you.

Yours faithfully,

John Carnaghan

Lead Inspector