

# Tanners Wood Junior Mixed and Infant School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117178
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326544
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Roger Brown

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.

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	351
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Tim Denyer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Michael Lansdown
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 June 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Hazelwood Lane Abbots Langley Hertfordshire WD5 0LG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01923 262229

---

<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 May 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	326544

**Fax number**

01923 269631

**Age group** 3-11

---

**Inspection date** 21 May 2009

---

**Inspection number** 326544

---

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- The quality of the care, guidance and support that pupils receive, looking in particular at the academic guidance and support provided by the school's assessment systems
- The effectiveness of leadership and management in sustaining the work and quality of the school through a period of staff changes

Inspectors gathered evidence from:

- lesson observations
- scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and records
- discussions with pupils, governors, the headteacher and staff
- scrutiny of school policies and documentation
- an analysis of parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its revised self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school serves the town of Abbots Langley and the surrounding area. It is larger than the average primary school. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage in the term before their fourth birthday. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds, although there are small numbers from a range of other backgrounds. A small number speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with statements. A smaller than average number of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school holds a Healthy Schools award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils are keen to work and in which they are motivated to do well. The great majority of parents expressed their wholehearted support for the school. In the words of one that were typical of many of the responses submitted to the inspection team, 'Tanners Wood is a happy school where there is a good balance between academic achievement and having fun.' The headteacher has successfully steered the school through an extremely unsettling period of staffing changes. The newly formed leadership team use the strengths of all staff well. They have worked hard and succeeded in not allowing standards to slip.

Pupils' achievements are good. Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, with a level of skills broadly similar to those expected for their age. They make steady progress overall. Pupils maintain this impetus in Key Stage 1, reaching standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 that have been in line with those expected. At present, however, the initial assessments for the current Year 2 show that the targeted support for reading and writing is bringing about improved results. Pupils' progress accelerates in Key Stage 2, so that by the end of Year 6, pupils' overall attainment in the end of year assessments is higher than that found nationally. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress in relation to their starting points. This is because of the good quality support they receive in addressing their individual needs. Staff take great care to monitor and track the progress that all pupils make. Several parents who have children who need extra support and guidance wrote to praise the staff for the successful integration of their children into the life of the school. They are particularly pleased by the success they achieve. The improved assessment systems now in place in the school have alerted staff to small, but important discrepancies in the achievement of boys compared to the slightly greater success achieved by girls. Action is being taken to address this in a number of different ways. Some of the new books for the library have been chosen to focus more on boys' interests and staff have started to revise curriculum topics to ensure that they engage boy's interests.

Teaching and learning are good overall. The consistently good quality of the teaching in Key Stage 2 is the major factor which contributes to the pupils' accelerating progress. Lessons are lively, with well behaved pupils thoughtfully engaged by their work. They are active participants in the learning process, discussing ideas, asking questions, and enthusiastically sharing their ideas and understanding. The teachers and teaching assistants throughout the school are very positive, and have good relationships with the pupils. However, there has been disruption to learning, caused by staffing changes, which has had most impact at Key Stage 1. The situation is being stabilised and there are early signs of improved progress for the pupils. In part, the slower rate of progress at this key stage has been due to teachers' expectations of what the pupils can achieve being too low. Also, at times, the rate of learning is reduced because lessons proceed at too slow pace.

The curriculum and the associated activities meet pupils' needs and interests well. Their essential skills of literacy and numeracy are good. Pupils particularly enjoy using the improving provision for information and communication technology (ICT) to research their work and solve problems. Much of the improved provision has been put in place as a result of parental fundraising, but staff recognise they still need to commit more resources to sustain and extend the impact of this work. There are a wide range of extra-curricular activities including clubs, visits and visitors. Pupils are very enthusiastic about these and enjoy the good opportunities they have to work with local partner organisations in and around their local community. The school's commitment

to work in its local community is good, but it has not developed the national and global elements to the same extent, meaning that its overall contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory.

Pupils' good quality personal development and well-being has been sustained since the last inspection. It is encouraged by their good attendance. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is reflected in the way they conduct themselves around school as well as in their attitudes to each other and to adults. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and say they have no hesitation in turning to an adult for help. They are proud of their involvement in the school council; this is well established and actively engaged in developing aspects of the school. Pupils continue to have a good understanding of keeping healthy and the importance of eating a balanced diet. The good development of pupils' essential skills helps to prepare them well for the next stage in their education.

The pastoral care of pupils is good and sustained through a strong commitment to the teaching and development of personal, social and health education. Staff are regularly trained and updated on child protection procedures and arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements. Pupils' academic guidance is also good. Their work is marked regularly, and they are frequently encouraged to assess their own understanding of how well they are achieving. The older pupils in particular have a good understanding of their targets and are certain that the guidance they get from teachers and teaching assistants is very effective in helping them to learn. School-wide procedures for checking and tracking pupils' progress are developing and evolving well. The assessment coordinator provides good support for staff in using the systems, allowing them to plan strategic interventions at an individual and group level in order to raise pupils' attainment to higher levels.

Leadership and management are good overall. The three years since the last inspection have seen many changes to the staff team and in particular to the leadership team. Nevertheless, the issues that were identified at the last inspection have been addressed, and although standards have only just started to rise, significantly, they have not been allowed to fall. This has been a period when the leadership has been under considerable pressure. However, governors have provided good support and helped to sustain the school through this time, working with the staff as true critical friends. It has been difficult to introduce new initiatives, but staff have pulled together well, bolstered in no small part by parental commitment to the school. The foundations for a new leadership team are now in place and there is a tangible sense of a new commitment to moving forward once more. Therefore, the school has a good capacity for future improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

Children's attainment when they start in Nursery is broadly average, although there are some weaknesses in personal, social and communication skills which impact on their ability to learn. The staff work hard to rectify this, using a range of strategies to close the gaps in children's early learning skills. Children's independence is promoted well; for example, during snack times there is a high expectation that children will try to do things for themselves. There are good opportunities for children to adapt activities and find things out for themselves through child-initiated play. Effective teaching ensures that children make satisfactory progress in developing basic literacy and numeracy skills. They develop into very confident and friendly individuals who work extremely well together and have good attitudes to learning. Children enter Year 1 with attainment that is broadly in line with that expected in all areas of learning.

Children's safety and well-being are promoted strongly and parents are very pleased with the level of care provided for their children. Activities are well planned so that children's individual needs and interests are increasingly taken into account. There is a good balance of activities led by an adult and those that the children choose themselves. Adults assess children's skills and knowledge regularly, maintaining appropriate records so that activities can be adapted to provide greater challenge, or ensure that extra support is given. Inclusion of children who are more able or who experience difficulties with their learning is good. Communication with parents and carers is good and they are kept well informed of their child's welfare and the progress they make.

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has been less effective than other aspects of the school's work. It is now focused and enabling the provision to develop further. This is because the newly appointed Foundation Stage leader demonstrates a good understanding of child development and has a clear vision of what now needs to be done. Nevertheless throughout an unsettled period, staff have continued to work well as a team and to focus on a good quality and continuous curriculum which has minimised any negative impact on children's learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Set pupils in Years 1 and 2 more challenging targets which are geared to promoting faster progress.
- Provide support for the new Early Years Foundation Stage leader to enable her to build on existing good practice and extend this across all areas.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

### 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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### 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?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

---

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

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

22 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tanners Wood Junior Mixed and Infant School,  
Abbots Langley WD5 0LG

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you about your work and everything that goes on in school. We were impressed by your good behaviour in lessons and by your confidence in asking questions and joining in discussions. You care well for each other and respect what other people say. These strengths prepare you well for when you move on to your next schools.

You go to a good school. You quickly get down to your tasks in lessons and the work you were doing during the inspection was of above average quality. We liked the way your teachers listen to your opinions and work hard to take account of your interests when providing new materials and planning the work that you do. When we looked at your books and work we could see that the staff have a good understanding of what you need to do next to improve your work. I was especially pleased by those of you in Year 6 who explained to me how you use your targets to assess your own achievements. Well done. I could see that this is one reason why you make good progress in the Key Stage 2 classes.

However, we would like your teachers to continue to work with you to provide a similar level of challenge and support to those of you in Years 1 and 2. This is because we think that it will allow your teachers to accelerate your progress at a greater rate than at present.

We would also like your headteacher and other staff to provide support for the new Foundation Stage leader. A lot of staff changes have disrupted some of the smooth running of the school. Now this appears to be settling down we hope that the staff will be able to concentrate on getting all of you off to a really good start in your school.

Our best wishes for your future.

Yours faithfully

Roger Brown

Lead inspector