

# Tollesbury School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114925
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	338478
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Cheryl Thompson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	207
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Andrew Gilbert
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Milligan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 September 2006
<b>School address</b>	East Street Tollesbury Essex
<b>Telephone number</b>	01621 869242
<b>Fax number</b>	01621 868637
<b>Email address</b>	admin@tollesbury.essex.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The large majority of time was spent looking at learning. All teachers were observed teaching and nearly all teaching assistants working with groups or individual pupils. Twelve lessons were observed and meetings held with groups of pupils, governors, the school's improvement partner and senior staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's safeguarding documentation, pupil progress tracking information and school development planning. One hundred and fourteen questionnaires completed by parents and carers were analysed as well as 112 pupil questionnaires and 27 questionnaires completed by staff. The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

the progress by more able pupils

- progress made in writing
- how much pupils know about cultures other than their own
- the accuracy of assessment of children when they start and leave Reception class
- whether pupils with special educational needs and /or disabilities continue to make good progress.

## Information about the school

Tollesbury is an average-sized primary school serving the local village and beyond. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average with the type of need varying for each individual. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than that usually found. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Reception class. The school has gained Healthy Schools, Sportsmark, Activemark and the Basic Skills Quality Mark awards. A new headteacher took over the school in September 2009.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Tollesbury Primary is a good school. It is improving well and has a number of notable features.

Pupils play and work happily together and enjoy their time in school. They work hard in lessons and make good progress. Learning is motivating and good fun so that pupils reach above average standards. They are well prepared for their next stage of education.

Children start in Reception with levels of skill and knowledge expected for their age. They make a good start and progress well, especially in learning basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Behaviour is excellent. Pupils get on well together and enjoy taking on responsibilities. They have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. Attendance is above average.

The quality of teaching is good overall. Key features of teaching are the excellent relationships within classes and the planning of interesting lessons.

The curriculum is planned well and has a good impact on pupils' enjoyment of learning. The provision of a virtual learning environment (VLE) has a significant impact on pupils' enjoyment and breadth of learning and parents' knowledge of what goes on in school.

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for all pupils. Links with parents are improving at a rapid rate. Partnerships with outside agencies, such as with specialist teachers, have a strong impact on the excellent provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school safeguards pupils well.

The headteacher sets high expectations for staff and pupils. They respond very positively and share his determination to build on the school's good reputation and improve further. The school has clearly raised its aspirations, as seen in the challenging targets set for pupils and the good progress made in meeting these.

The senior team have thorough systems to monitor and evaluate how well the school is doing and how much progress pupils are making. It tackles weaknesses with urgency.

The school promotes community cohesion well. Staff and governors ensure pupils have equal opportunities to succeed in their work.

The headteacher has already instigated changes which are bringing about good improvements, especially in the rate of progress for more able pupils. Standards are rising and since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching for the younger pupils has improved to a consistently good level. There is a good capacity for sustained improvement.

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Two main areas stand out as the key to the school's next stage of successful development.

The organisation for setting pupils according to their ability for English and mathematics is very successful for Years 5 and 6 but less so for Years 3 and 4, where teaching for the lower ability groups is satisfactory. This leads to satisfactory learning rather than the good learning seen in the groups who remain with their class teacher.

An area where good teaching has less impact on pupils' progress and attainment is in writing. Teachers provide well-planned, stimulating ideas for writing but sometimes spend too long on explanations. Consequently, there is not always enough time for pupils to practise their skills and write at length.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise standards further in writing by:
  - making sure there is a good balance between teacher-directed activities and the time allowed for pupils to practise their skills and write at length.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning for the lower ability groups in Years 3 and 4 to a consistently good level by:
  - rigorous and regular monitoring by the senior team
  - using the outcomes of this monitoring to provide support, training and challenge for individuals.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

Attainment in national assessments has risen to above average for Year 2 since the last inspection and remained above average at Year 6. Science results in particular are consistently above average. This is due to the exciting and practical learning experiences provided.

Pupils' attainment in writing, especially in the younger age groups has not been as good as that in reading. Since the greater focus on teaching letter sounds (phonics), pupils' skills in spelling have improved and they have more confidence to write. Attainment in writing is improving at a good rate. Work seen in pupils' books shows good progress over time and above average standards. Standards of handwriting and presentation are good across the school. Attainment in mathematics for Year 2 has improved considerably since the last inspection, it is now above average. Across the school, attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is above average. Pupils make effective use of their ICT skills in a range of subjects.

Pupils of all abilities achieve well and enjoy learning. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress from their starting points and have very good self-esteem. Good progress is made in most lessons because teachers' planning meets the needs of all pupils effectively. Pupils rise enthusiastically to the numerous challenges in lessons and work constructively together. For example, in 'Money Week', classes had worked together to raise money by setting up a 'cinema',

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selling tickets, making popcorn and selling it. Pupils were very clear about the need to make a profit from their activities. Pupils contribute a great deal to the caring ethos of the school and take pride in being class monitors, prefects, members of the eco-group and school council. Older pupils also take responsibility for organising a multi-skills club and fundraising activities for several national charities.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Teachers set high expectations for their pupils to work hard and behave well. Lessons are planned thoroughly to match work to pupils' abilities. Good use is made of the interactive whiteboards and laptop computers to capture pupils' interest. A good feature seen in all classes is that resources are always available to help pupils spell correctly and know their personal targets. Under the guidance of teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator, highly proficient teaching assistants provide excellent support for pupils needing extra help with their learning. Occasionally, there is some satisfactory teaching which results in an inconsistent pace to learning, too much teacher talk and insufficient emphasis on ensuring pupils complete enough work.

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The curriculum provides a good balance of relevant and interesting themes that are planned to motivate pupils and broaden their horizons. Further improvements are planned to ensure that a precise record is kept of the skills pupils develop as they move through the school. Whole school 'art days' and 'enterprise weeks' are thoroughly enjoyed and have a very good impact on pupils' understanding of working as a team and of community effort. Extensive use of the VLE enables the whole school community to access learning activities in school and at home and also provides daily updated information for parents and pupils regarding school events.

Pupils are known very well by all staff; any unhappiness or difficulty in learning is quickly noted and appropriate strategies put in place. Each pupil is well aware of the targets they have agreed with their teacher to help them improve their work. They try hard to achieve them.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The change of leadership in the school has been managed very successfully. Staff morale is high with a corporate desire to provide the best for all pupils and a willingness to pursue this. All staff work very effectively together and take advantage of the increased professional opportunities to enhance their work. Monitoring and development of most teaching and learning by the headteacher are rigorous, and continual improvement is clear. Senior subject leaders are developing their monitoring roles rapidly. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides excellent leadership and management for the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. For example, 'Making a difference' funding is made available for families to ensure their child can attend special music classes.

Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have identified the need to develop their knowledge further of how to interpret school data which show pupils' progress. The school promotes community cohesion within its own and the local community very effectively and is beginning to develop links with schools in other countries. It has evaluated its actions with the result, for example, that links are developing with city schools. It is also aware that there is even more to do to raise pupils' awareness of cultures other than their own. Safeguarding procedures are good, updated regularly and known by all.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children have a good start to school life in the Reception class. All staff work effectively as a team with the two teachers sharing the leadership role. Exciting activities are planned to meet children's needs based on thorough assessments. Consequently, children make good progress in all areas of learning. A particularly good feature is the development of basic literacy and numeracy skills through well taught short daily sessions for letter sounds (phonics) and carefully planned activities to develop knowledge such as counting.

Children make good progress in developing their personal qualities. They play well together and help each other willingly to tidy up at the end of sessions. They enjoy choosing their activities and have good fun, for example when they go on a Gruffalo hunt and then use musical instruments to make the sound of Gruffalo footsteps. Their welfare needs are met well. Induction procedures are good. Staff, children and their parents have met either at pre-school provision or in their home and parents are able to visit the class before their child joins.

Under guidance from the headteacher, there has been significant improvement in assessment processes which now provide staff with a more accurate picture of children's level of knowledge, skills and understanding. On entry, children's levels of skill and knowledge are broadly in line with those expected for their age. At the end of their time in Reception, almost all children attain the levels expected for their age. This year, a good number of children are likely to exceed these. Staff have attended training in the teaching of letter sounds and as a result, the majority of children are making rapid



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progress in this area.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

### **Views of parents and carers**

Almost all parents hold strong and positive views about the school. A very small minority express concerns regarding the progress their children make, the way the school deals with behaviour, the quality of teaching and whether the school takes account of their views and suggestions. Inspectors followed up on parents' concerns and talked with many pupils of all ages about their views on behaviour. Pupils agreed with inspectors that everyone is 'nice and friendly'. Pupils say that there may be poor behaviour on rare occasions but it is dealt with swiftly. Inspectors judged pupils' behaviour to be outstanding. They judged that teaching is good overall although occasionally it is satisfactory and in these lessons pupils do not make good progress. Since September 2009, parents have been invited to complete two questionnaires. The school could readily demonstrate that they have acted on parents' suggestions and concerns.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Tollesbury School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 114 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 205 pupils registered at the school. Questionnaires were sent to 162 families.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	68	60	42	37	3	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	82	72	30	26	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	64	56	42	37	3	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	53	46	40	6	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	65	57	39	34	4	4	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	56	49	51	45	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	70	61	42	37	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	51	45	50	44	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	58	51	45	39	6	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	52	46	46	40	8	7	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	39	57	50	5	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	75	66	33	29	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	69	61	40	35	3	3	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



3 March 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Tollesbury School, Tollesbury, CM9 8QE

Thank you so much for welcoming the inspectors to your school. Like you, we think it is a very friendly place to be and you get on very well together. Our particular thanks to those of you who talked to us and gave presentations at lunchtimes. We found them really interesting and what you had to say very helpful. In return, I now want to share with you our findings.

Tollesbury is a good school. You told us that you enjoy school and we could see why, particularly when we saw the work you had done on the art day and in Money Week. You told us the teachers are nice and everyone is friendly. We agree that teaching is good and all the adults care about you a great deal and work hard on your behalf. We could see that you think carefully about how well you have completed your work and try to reach the targets your teachers set for you. We noted that standards are above average and you are making good progress because teachers keep a close eye on how well you are getting on.

Your headteacher, senior teachers and governors provide good leadership. I have asked them to do two things to make your school even better:

- to make sure that in literacy lessons you have lots of time to do your writing
- to improve the quality of teaching for some of the groups of pupils who go to another classroom for their literacy and mathematics lessons.

Your school is successful, not only because of what the adults bring to it, but also because of your contributions. You are very positive about learning and we were impressed with your good manners and how welcoming you are to visitors.

Thank you again for your help and all good wishes for your continued success.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Thompson

Lead inspector

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