

Tavistock Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116044
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326314
Inspection dates	1-2 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Jane Chesterfield

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

Type of School	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Stocks
Headteacher	Mrs B Eagle
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2006
School address	Broadacres Calthorpe Park Fleet GU51 4EB
Telephone number	01252 616778
Fax number	01252 614345

Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below the national average and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties is in line with the national average. These difficulties are mainly in speech, language and communication, and in behaviour. The proportion with statements of special educational needs is above average. The school has gained a number of awards, including the Unicef Rights Respecting School Award and the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Mark. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is available in the school's Reception classes. Privately run childcare provision is also available on the school site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Tavistock Infants is an outstanding school where pupils make an excellent start to their education. They thrive in supportive surroundings, where the school's ethos of rights, respect and responsibility underpins its work, and they flourish academically. Parents are rightly appreciative of the school. Typical comments from parents include, 'I cannot recommend this school highly enough', and 'I couldn't have wished for a better school for my children to begin their education'.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding and they make excellent progress during their time at the school. From broadly average starting points they reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are consistently well above average by the time they move to junior school. Standards are rising constantly, and pupils in the current Year 1 and Year 2 cohorts have made exceptional progress from their starting points. Pupils who have learning difficulties receive excellent support so that they make similar progress to their classmates. Those who have behavioural difficulties are particularly well supported in class, so that they do not disrupt others and learn well themselves.

Outstanding teaching and an excellent curriculum are the reasons why pupils achieve exceptionally well. A key strength is the quality of teachers' use of questioning, both spoken and written, which challenges pupils of all abilities and makes them think hard about what is expected of them. Marking and academic guidance are equally strong, encouraging pupils to assess their own performance and helping them make the next steps to improve their work. The curriculum is exciting and vibrant, providing pupils with many memorable experiences. Activities during the inspection to celebrate national sports week, for example, inspired work across the curriculum as pupils designed their own golf courses and did calculations linked to athletics.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent, thanks to the outstanding pastoral care and the excellent support offered by the school. Parents say that, 'it is a very caring and child-centred school', and that 'the staff are warm and encouraging'. Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is exceptionally good. They are developing very good skills as independent learners, who cooperate very well with one another and are happy to work together. One parent commented on pupils' 'outstanding engagement and interest in class'. Pupils enjoy school very much, and this is reflected in their good levels of attendance. They say that school is fun. They particularly like their weekly enrichment afternoon when they have the chance to discover new talents and skills, such as making music in the school canteen or making a newspaper about sports week in the ICT suite.

The school achieves excellent outcomes and provision because its leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher and senior staff give the school excellent direction and are always striving for improvement. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are outstanding. This means that teachers can very accurately target pupils of all abilities who need additional help to make more rapid progress. The school has found very successful ways of spreading leadership experience and expertise by using teams to work on improving teaching and learning and on raising standards. Achievement and standards are rising steadily as a result. The school is very well supported and challenged by the excellent work of the governors, who have a thorough understanding of its strengths and areas for development. It has an outstanding capacity for future improvement. As one parent commented, 'I don't think I could ask for more in a school'.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join the Reception classes with a wide range of skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress in Reception and, by the time they transfer to Year 1, most achieve, and several exceed, expectations for children of this age. This good level of achievement is down to the good support and interaction from staff. They help children to converse, to be independent, and to choose from a wide range of activities and resources. Children's personal development and behaviour are excellent, thanks to the very good attention given to their welfare, which is of paramount importance to staff.

There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, both indoors and outside, covering all the areas of learning. During the inspection, for example, adults developed children's problem-solving skills by setting them the task of finding a way to bring 'Super Ted' down from a spot near the ceiling, and working with them to do this. Meanwhile, independent activities included the opportunity to see how change occurs as ice melts. When adults are working with children, they extend children's thinking well and offer them increasing levels of challenge. However, when children are involved in self-chosen tasks, there is not always enough challenge for them, especially the more able children, to develop their ideas in different ways.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. There are clear systems for staff to observe and assess the learning that is taking place. The provision is organised well to enable children to learn through play, in accordance with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff work well in partnership with parents, though a few parents have had concerns about changes in the Reception classes this year. The newly appointed leader has clear ideas on how to develop and improve the provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the level of challenge in planning for learning and development in self-chosen tasks in the Early Years Foundation Stage, in order to improve achievement still further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

In recent years pupils have reached standards by the end of Year 2 which have been consistently well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. Improvement this year has resulted in standards that are well above average in all three subjects. This is because of an improved focus on challenge for the more able pupils in writing, and on tackling practical tasks and problem solving in mathematics. Tracking of pupils' progress shows that most Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in the current cohorts have made exceptional progress during their time at the school, especially in reading and mathematics. In writing, most have made progress that is at least good and often outstanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They are very aware of the need to treat one another fairly and with respect, in accordance with the school's Unicef status, and they show interest in and respect for the world around them. Year 1 pupils, for example, were fascinated by the emergence of butterflies from pupae kept in their classroom, and were full of wonder and questions about what was happening. Pupils have a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They know that exercise, 'makes you hot and sweaty', as one pupil said, and they love taking part in 'lunch box bingo' where they win points for bringing in different healthy options. They know how to keep themselves safe, for example wearing a hat and suncream in the heat.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school community. School councillors have been instrumental in obtaining more playground equipment to keep everyone busy and active outside. Pupils appreciate the role undertaken by the playground friends, saying that, 'maybe they'll find you someone to play with, or maybe they'll play with you themselves'. Pupils are developing a good range of skills to prepare them for the junior school, especially in using technology in their learning. One parent felt that, thanks to the school, their children had, 'started their own personal journeys of becoming respectful, responsible good citizens'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching is consistently strong across the school. In every class, teachers make excellent use of carefully planned and targeted questioning to keep pupils thinking and learning actively. This is apparent in their whole-class introductions, their support for group work, the resources on the pupils' tables and the guidance written in pupils' books. Teachers create very good opportunities for pupils to work independently and with others, and for pupils to assess regularly the quality of their work and the level of their understanding. Relationships and behaviour management are outstanding, and no time is wasted keeping order.

Work is carefully planned to challenge pupils of all abilities and to help them make rapid progress whatever their starting point. The quality of marking is excellent. Teachers make practical and simple suggestions for improvement and build up a dialogue with pupils to challenge them to move on to the next stage in their learning. One parent felt that, during the time her three children have been at the school, 'the quality of the teaching has just got better and better'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school's curriculum is lively and imaginative, providing a very good balance of activities across all subjects. Work is very carefully planned for pupils of all abilities, building on what has already been learned to give a high level of continuity and progression. Pupils are encouraged to develop a wide range of skills and use them in other subjects. In religious education, for example, pupils use their literacy skills to write thoughtfully about what they have learned from different religions. There are many good opportunities for pupils to use ICT across the curriculum. Very good use is made of the outdoors to help pupils learn about science in a practical, hands-on way and, as a result, they achieve very well.

The curriculum is enhanced with an excellent range of additional activities, including the weekly enrichment afternoon and special events. During 'Dads' Day', for example, pupils worked productively with their fathers to share their knowledge of British geography. Pupils' personal and social education is very well organised, and those pupils who have learning difficulties, or who are gifted and talented, are particularly targeted to make sure they can get the best from their education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides a very nurturing and caring environment where all pupils are valued and encouraged to do their very best. One parent commented that their child tries her hardest and feels a sense of achievement however well she does, because of the confidence instilled in her by the school. Pupils know that they can rely on staff to help and support them. Daily routines run very smoothly. The dining hall is calm and orderly, and the pupils are well looked after in the playground. The school fully meets requirements for safeguarding pupils. Pupils who have additional needs are very well supported in class. Teaching assistants are vigilant in ensuring that these pupils can access the activities provided and make progress at a similar rate to their classmates.

Academic guidance is outstanding. Regular assessments and careful tracking enable teachers to plan very accurately for the needs of individuals and groups and to set very personalised step-by-step targets for different aspects of pupils' learning. Expectations are made very clear to pupils through success criteria in lessons and guidance in their books. Pupils say that teachers are very helpful and give them good advice, so that they know what to do next and how to make their work better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership of the headteacher and senior staff is excellent. Since the last inspection they have worked hard to spread leadership responsibilities throughout the staff, and this has been very successful. Management systems in the school are excellent. Tracking procedures are very efficient, meaning that pupils' progress is constantly under review and support can be given to ensure pupils of all abilities make rapid progress. Monitoring of teaching is also very effective, and has led to the consistency of approach across the classrooms which means pupils learn so well. School development planning is clear and focused on the right priorities. The school sets, meets and exceeds challenging targets for its performance.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Its ethos of rights, respect and responsibilities has been particularly successful in helping pupils to understand their place in their school and local communities, and to respect the rights of others in global communities. Promotion of equal opportunities is excellent, because the school helps all of its pupils to achieve as well as they can. The work of the governors is outstanding. They are clearly focused on improving outcomes and provision for pupils, and are rigorous in holding the school to account for its actions. They are not afraid to make difficult decisions, for example in relation to expenditure.

Neither the governing body nor the senior staff are complacent about the school's success, and they are always ready to embrace change for the good of the school and its pupils.

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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?	2
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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are the children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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

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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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

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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

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 interest 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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

14 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tavistock Infant School, Fleet, GU51 4EB

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you. We found that your school is giving you an excellent education. You are making excellent progress in your lessons, because your teachers know you so well and make your work interesting, lively and challenging. We agree with you that your enrichment afternoons are great fun!

We were very impressed with your outstanding behaviour in class and around the school, and we know that you and your parents are very happy with the school because everyone gets on so well together. The staff take excellent care of you, and this makes you all feel safe and secure.

Your headteacher and her staff run the school exceptionally well. All the staff and governors work very hard to make sure that you all do as well as you possibly can. We have agreed that, in future, those of you in the Reception class are going to enjoy activities you can do on your own that are even more challenging than they are now.

Well done, and best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Jane Chesterfield
Lead Inspector

