

The Tyrrells School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 115022 |
| Local Authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 326113 |
| Inspection date | 19 November 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Marianne Harris |

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.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 415 |
| 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 | Mrs Jean Patterson |
| Headteacher | Mrs Lorraine Laudrum |
| Date of previous school inspection | 26 September 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Tavistock Road Springfield Chelmsford Essex CM1 6JN |
| Telephone number | 01245355226 |
| Fax number | 01245 280044 |

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|--------------------------|------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how well pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress, current standards in the school, and how pupils view their personal development. Evidence was gathered from discussions with staff and pupils and analysis of the school's documentation and of pupils' work. 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 self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than usual primary school where most of the pupils come from a White British background. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much lower than usually seen. Their needs vary, but are mainly for speech and communication difficulties. There is access to provision for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English, although the school currently has no pupils who need support. The school has provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). When they join the school, children's abilities are close to those expected for their age. There have been some recent changes in the leadership of the school, and a new headteacher has been appointed for next term.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school where pupils make exceptional progress, whatever their starting points. Pupils' achievement is excellent. When children begin school their skills and abilities are broadly average. Teachers' accurate assessments at the end of Year 2 show that standards are well above average in mathematics and above average in reading and writing. By the time they leave Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are exceptionally high. This has been the trend in the results of national tests over recent years and, from the careful monitoring of pupils' progress, looks set to continue. Leaders use this assessment information to ensure that, if any child falls behind, given well-targeted support they can soon catch up. Standards are also high in other subjects. Pupils are very confident when discussing complex moral dilemmas. Those in Year 6, for example, often discuss issues like 'If you read a magazine in a shop and do not buy it, is that stealing?' Their response is mature and sensible, and many pose other questions for their class to debate at a later date.

Not only do pupils reach very high standards in their academic work, their personal development is also exceptional. Pupils of all ages take a leading role on the school council and learn what it means to be an active citizen. Members have enthusiastically embraced the links with schools overseas and have produced an informative display on areas such as South Africa, Guadeloupe and Australia. This work has just begun and is an exciting development. The school council has clear plans to share their findings with the rest of the school in the near future. Pupils' understanding of how to keep healthy and safe is excellent. They support each other in the playground and make sure that everyone has a friend to play with. Older pupils are trained to help the younger ones and there is a harmonious atmosphere in the school. Parents agree that their children enjoy school. Consequently, attendance is above average. Behaviour across the school is exemplary. Pupils are polite and friendly and very keen to share their work and activities. Some have taken a leading part in appointing the new headteacher, and have felt confident enough to ask probing questions. They are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. They have the basic skills needed, and advanced abilities to debate and reason. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Pupils make excellent progress because teaching and learning are outstanding and they are very keen to learn. Teachers are very clear about the purpose of each lesson and share this thoroughly with pupils. Work is exceptionally well matched to all the ability groups within the class. Pupils with particular needs are supported very effectively, and those who need specific support because they have speech and communication difficulties receive specialist help. Work is challenging for all pupils. For example, in lessons about Shakespearean plays, pupils are actively encouraged to think about the historical context as well as the literary creativity of the works. In younger classes, there are many practical and enjoyable activities that encourage pupils to research information about other countries. These opportunities demonstrate how some aspects of life in Britain are very similar to and how others contrast with, those in other lands. However, this is less evident in older classes. Marking is very good and gives encouragement to individuals as well as pointing out where improvements could be made. Pupils value this and think that teachers 'really help us to get better'.

Teaching is underpinned by an outstanding curriculum. Subjects are linked together effectively and a wide variety of enrichment activities supports learning very well. Drama is used expertly to encourage pupils to explore play texts, whilst visits to the local church engage pupils' imaginations as they are allowed to handle artefacts, such as a helmet dating back 800 years.

Reflection on life and death in past societies supports pupils' spiritual development extremely well and gives them insight into the life and history of their local community. The wide variety of clubs helps pupils of all ages to work and play well together. Pupils value the provision for sport and the gymnastic team is particularly successful.

The excellent care, guidance and support for pupils are of paramount importance to the school. Child-protection systems are robust and risk assessments are thorough, ensuring that pupils are safe both on and off the premises. The tracking of pupils' progress is well established in the school. The information is used extremely effectively to plan lessons that meet the needs of individuals and groups of pupils within each class. Pupils have targets that are regularly reviewed and they report that they know exactly what to do in order to improve their work.

Parents comment favourably on the excellent leadership and management of the school. Some report that the recent changes have been 'seamless' because they have been kept well informed, that their children are still doing very well and are happy to be in school. The retention of parents' confidence at a time of change is due to the staff team who are committed to working with governors and parents to provide the best education possible for all pupils. The quality of teaching is monitored closely so that this remains excellent. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is managed very well so that each child has the support needed to have access to all areas of learning. Excellent links exist with outside agencies and professionals in matters of health so that pupils receive the help they need as quickly as possible. Some parents of pupils who have speech and communication needs commented that they were impressed with the provision and appreciate the very good progress their children make.

The school promotes community cohesion extremely well. The local area is used well for visits, and visitors are always welcomed into school to share their experiences. Parents who are considered hard to reach are specifically invited into school and encouraged to become involved in their children's learning. Lessons in religious education focus on the beliefs and customs of other faiths very effectively so that pupils learn to respect everyone. Governance is very good and has been instrumental in ensuring that as much information as possible has been shared with parents regarding the arrangements for the appointment of the new headteacher. All staff continue to strive to make provision even better since the previous inspection. Much work has been carried out to provide an even more interesting range of learning activities for all pupils. There is excellent capacity to improve further. Staff and governors have a very good understanding of how to take the school forward. Plans are already in place to improve provision further by seeking even more links with a variety of schools overseas.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the EYFS is led and managed extremely well. Staff work together very effectively as a team to provide an outstanding quality of care, and to plan exciting activities for the children. There is an excellent balance of activities that children choose for themselves and those that adults lead. The outside area is used whatever the weather. Children enjoy the freedom to rummage in leaves to see what they can find and watching the water run down the channels whilst trying to stop any leaks. Staff promote early reading and writing skills very well so that children quickly become confident readers and writers. Children make excellent progress in all areas of learning. This is particularly true in their personal development. The firmly established induction routines help children to quickly become accustomed to school and to make friends. Very positive relationships are soon established and named workers take responsibility for groups of children, giving parents a point of contact in this busy unit.

Assessments are thorough. They consist of observations of activities as well as more focused assessments of what children can do and understand. These assessments, supported by local authority data, show that many pupils exceed the expected goals for their learning and a significant number are working within the National Curriculum by the time they enter Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the recent exciting work that promotes an understanding of a sense of community between countries is fully shared across the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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

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|---|---|
| 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

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| How well do learners achieve? | 1 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 1 |
| 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

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| How good are 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 | 1 |
| The extent to which 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 | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| 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

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| 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? | 1 |
| 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 | 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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

20 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Tyrrells School, Chelmsford, CM1 6JN

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school a short while ago. We were very impressed by what we saw and think that yours is an excellent school. We enjoyed speaking to many of you and looking at your work. The way you all work together so well and how friendly and enthusiastic you are is most impressive.

You make excellent progress and reach very high standards because teaching is extremely good and you are very keen to learn. This is because your teachers work very hard to make learning fun for you. We looked at the displays of your work and some books and saw the many subjects you covered. We are sorry to have missed all the work that you did about William Shakespeare, and hope that you enjoy exploring *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Year 6 pupils are very mature when discussing moral dilemmas and listen to each other's ideas and suggestions attentively. I hope that children in the Reception class managed to mend their leaky water channels so that the water did not make rivers in their outside classroom. The display by the school council that shows other areas of the world is particularly interesting. We have asked your headteacher to make sure that all this fascinating information is shared with you all. We hope you enjoy finding out about how children in other parts of the world live.

You take very good care of each other and the adults in school take great care of you. It was impressive to hear that some of you helped to choose your new headteacher and that you were confident enough to ask questions.

Thank you once again for being so welcoming and we wish you good luck in the future.

Best wishes

Marianne Harris

Lead inspector