

Tennyson Road Infant School

Highfield Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire NN10 9QD

Inspection dates

13–14 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' and governors' view of the school's performance is too positive. Their plans for improvement are too general.
- Leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school.
- Leaders' plans for spending the additional pupil premium funding are not precise enough. Disadvantaged pupils typically attain less well than other pupils nationally and their peers in school.
- The teaching of writing is not as strong as in mathematics and reading. Pupils' attainment in writing at the end of Year 2 declined in 2018.
- Teachers' expectations for the quality of pupils' handwriting, and the presentation of pupils' work, are not consistently high.
- Sometimes, teachers do not give clear instructions, or set work that is well matched to ability. When that happens, pupils lose focus and their attitudes to learning deteriorate.
- Leadership and teaching in the early years are not securely good. In 2018, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development was well below that which is typical for their age.

The school has the following strengths

- The effective teaching of phonics enables pupils to make a good start in reading.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils, staff and parents agree that the school is safe.
- Pupils' conduct around school is orderly. Their personal development and welfare are well promoted at lunchtimes and playtimes.
- Leaders and staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management and secure sustained improvement by ensuring that leaders:
 - use the outcomes of their monitoring checks to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good throughout the school
 - sharpen their plans for improvement and improve the accuracy of information provided to governors, so that governors can effectively hold leaders to account for the school's performance
 - raise standards for disadvantaged pupils through establishing clear and precisely targeted plans for spending the additional funding for pupil premium.
- Eliminate the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers' expectations for the presentation of pupils' work and the quality of pupils' handwriting are consistently high throughout the school
 - teachers give clear instructions so that pupils understand what is expected of them and make best use of the time in lessons
 - teachers use assessment and planning effectively to set work that is well matched to pupils' abilities, especially in writing.
- Improve standards of attainment in writing at the end of key stage 1 to be at least in line with the national average.
- Ensure that standards of behaviour in lessons, and pupils' attitudes to learning, are consistently high in all classes.
- Improve leadership and teaching in the early years by ensuring that:
 - the early years leader establishes an effective system for analysing the progress that children make, so that she and her team can adapt the curriculum to cater for children's stages of development
 - staff provide more frequent activities to promote children's writing and mathematical development.

An external review of the use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management should be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have an overgenerous view of the school's performance. They have not used the outcomes of their monitoring checks to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good across the school.
- Leaders' plans for improvement do not contain sharply focused, measurable actions to address the appropriate priority areas. As a result, leaders and governors do not have an up-to-date and accurate overview of the school's performance.
- Leaders have not made sure that the additional funds made available by the government to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are used effectively. Leaders do not precisely analyse the impact of previous actions to establish sharply targeted plans for the year ahead. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 is typically below that of other pupils nationally and of their peers in school.
- The coordinator for the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is new to the role. She does not have an accurate overview of the demands of the role, or how well pupils with SEND learn and progress as a group within the school. However, the impact of previous leadership has ensured that effective support for pupils is in place, so that they typically make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have successfully addressed some of the actions from the previous inspections. They put effective measures in place to improve the teaching of phonics. As a result, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 improved in 2018 to be above the national average for the first time.
- The quality of middle leadership has improved since the last inspection. The newly appointed leaders for English and mathematics have made an effective start in their roles. They have both established positive links beyond the school to enable them to improve their subject knowledge and leadership skills. They have used the outcomes of recent training to begin to create appropriate plans for improvement.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced. There is a well-thought-out plan in place to ensure the clear progression of knowledge and skill across a broad range of subjects, flowing from the early years to the end of key stage 1. For example, the 'arts curriculum' and the 'life skills curriculum' documents show how pupils' core learning is enriched by a wide range of activities such as participation in sports, music, drama and other opportunities such as British Science Week.
- Leaders and staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, evidence from around the school shows that pupils reflect upon issues such as, 'What makes our school a happy place?' and 'healthy body, healthy mind'. Pupils receive teaching about a range of faiths and there is an obvious culture of respect and tolerance throughout the school. The existence of the school and class councils help pupils to develop a growing understanding of fundamental British values.

- Leaders ensure that the additional physical education and sport funding is used effectively to promote pupils' physical fitness, health and well-being and enhance staff expertise. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their physical education lessons and the school has a track record of success in local sporting events.

Governance of the school

- Governors do not have an accurate overview of the school's performance. Because they accept some of the information that is presented to them without challenge, they are not able to hold leaders to account strongly enough. For example, governors have not questioned leaders deeply enough about the impact of the pupil premium spending on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors are ambitious for pupils and have worked effectively with leaders and staff to ensure that a caring and compassionate ethos is evident across the school.
- Governors are actively involved in the life of the school. They have links with subject leaders and make sure that they are well represented at school events. Governors regularly seek the view of parents, for example through attendance at parent consultation evenings and through surveys. As a result of listening to parents' views, governors and leaders have strengthened home-school communications.
- Governors are mindful of their statutory duties regarding safeguarding. Training is up to date and a governor carries out regular checks on the school's procedures.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have made sure that all employment checks are in place, in line with statutory requirements. Safeguarding records are thorough and well-maintained.
- Leaders have made sure that all teaching and support staff receive regular training and updates regarding safeguarding. They are keenly aware of any particular issues in the local community and how these may impact on pupils and families. This means that they can respond appropriately to any pupil welfare concerns which may occur.
- The school employs an experienced, full-time, family support worker who works effectively alongside leaders to provide support for vulnerable pupils and their families. School staff work diligently, in cooperation with local agencies such as health, social care and the police, to provide a wide range of activities and support. This work is a strength of the school.
- The well-coordinated and thorough approach to safeguarding has resulted in a strong culture of care and vigilance which permeates the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good throughout the school. This was confirmed during the inspection by observing learning in lessons, talking with pupils and by checking the quality of the work in pupils' books.

- Teachers do not use assessment to plan and set work that is consistently well-matched to pupils' abilities. Also, sometimes teachers do not give clear instructions for what they expect pupils to do. When this happens, pupils lose focus, their behaviour lapses and lessons do not flow smoothly.
- Teachers' expectations for the presentation of pupils' work and the quality of their handwriting are not consistently high across the school.
- The teaching of writing is not as strong as that in reading and mathematics. Evidence from pupils' workbooks shows that too many pupils in Years 1 and 2 are working at a standard below that expected for their age in writing.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved. In response to a recommendation from the last inspection, there is evidence that teachers provide an increased degree of challenge for the most able pupils in mathematics, as seen in their workbooks and during lessons.
- The teaching of reading, including phonics, has improved. As a result, pupils read with increasing confidence and enjoyment. Pupils who read to the inspector showed skill in using their phonic knowledge to read a range of texts. However, pupils do not yet use their improved phonic knowledge as effectively in their writing.
- Where teaching is strong, teachers and teaching assistants use questioning well. This helps pupils to gain confidence as learners and develop positive attitudes to any mistakes they may make. This was seen especially in the teaching of phonics.
- Pupils with SEND, including those with social and emotional needs, receive effective support from teaching assistants. This ensures that pupils can access learning alongside their peers or, when necessary, receive adapted activities more suited to their needs.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school and that it is a friendly place in which to learn. Pupils, staff and parents agree that the school is safe. For example, in discussion, pupils in Years 1 and 2 commented, 'Our friends protect us, the adults look after us and the gates around school keep us safe from strangers.' Pupils say they feel safe from bullying.
- Pupils speak especially warmly about the care they receive at lunchtimes, stating that they have confidence in staff to handle any disagreements kindly and fairly. Evidence from observations during the inspection confirmed that the dining hall has a happy, social atmosphere. The outside spaces are well resourced to promote pupils' social and physical development, having a wide range of activities and equipment available. Pupils were seen to use the spaces well and play together harmoniously.
- Leaders and staff have thoughtfully developed the personal, social and health education curriculum to support pupils' personal development. As part of the 'life skills curriculum' pupils have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of activities throughout the year such as life education workshops and charity fundraising. Pupils' achievements are celebrated through the 'proud wall' displays.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Sometimes, when teaching is less effective, pupils' behaviour in lessons lapses and they lose concentration. When speaking with the inspector, pupils described instances where behaviour in lessons is not as good as it should be, describing how this distracts them from their learning.
- The presentation of work in pupils' books is not consistently good in all classes, showing a lack of pride in their work.
- Pupils move around the school in a calm and orderly manner. There are visible prompts, both inside and outside, to reinforce school and class rules. Pupils heed these prompts and could say, in discussion, that they understand the importance of good behaviour.
- Rates of absence and persistent absence have been typically above the national average over time. There is a small proportion of pupils whose learning and progress are adversely affected by their poor attendance. Leaders have systems in place to analyse patterns of absence and identify those who are persistently absent from school. Senior leaders and the family support worker show perseverance in their efforts to work with parents to improve their children's attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 have been inconsistent over time. Standards have varied from being well below the national averages in all three subjects in 2016, to being well above in 2017.
- The most recent assessment results show that in 2018 attainment in writing at the expected standard declined. Attainment in reading and mathematics, although declining from the previous year, remained above the national average in 2018. The accuracy of these assessments was confirmed during the inspection by observing learning in a wide range of lessons and by checking the quality of pupils' work across the school.
- Standards of attainment at greater depth improved in 2018, in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils typically do less well than other pupils nationally and their peers in school, both at the expected standard and at greater depth. In 2018, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who attained at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics improved.
- The attainment of pupils with SEND is generally below that of other pupils nationally and in school. However, because of the effective support provided for them, pupils make good progress from their starting points, according to the individual targets that are set for them to achieve.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check improved in 2018, from being well below the national average over time to above average.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children enter the early years at a stage in their development which is broadly typical for their age, but with speaking and communication skills which are often below. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development by the end of the year has been broadly typical for their age until 2018, when it declined to well below typical. Those children were not well prepared for the demands of Year 1, especially regarding mathematics and literacy.
- The early years leader does not have a precise overview of the progress children make throughout the year. She is working with advisers from the local authority to develop systems which will improve this aspect of the school's assessment information. This means that, currently, staff do not use the outcomes of their assessments as well as they might to match the curriculum to the needs of the children. There are not enough opportunities for children to practise and develop their early writing and mathematics skills.
- The incorporation of a small Nursery class, from September 2017, has brought benefits to the early years provision. Effective teaching in the Nursery class, combined with more flexibility in grouping the children across the whole early years area, has resulted in children developing good personal and social skills.
- A different approach to the teaching of phonics was introduced in September 2018. Children, including those in the Nursery class, receive structured daily teaching which is targeted to their stages of development. As a result, children of all abilities, and those who speak English as an additional language, are making accelerated progress in reading.
- Children in the early years display consistently positive attitudes to learning. They respond readily to routines and staff expectations. There is a busy, happy atmosphere throughout the provision.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective. Staff receive regular training and have a clear understanding of the school's procedures for reporting welfare concerns. The area is safe and secure, and children are well cared for.
- Parents who spoke with the inspector, and those who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, praised the way in which their children are helped to settle at school. They say the staff are approachable and feel their contributions, as parents, are valued.

School details

Unique reference number	121862
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10053134

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Anniwell
Headteacher	Caroline Hall
Telephone number	01933 314161
Website	www.tennysonrd.org.uk
Email address	bursar@tennysonrd.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 January 2018

Information about this school

- Tennyson Road Infant School is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- From September 2017 a Nursery class was introduced. This class currently contains seven children. There is capacity for this number to increase over time.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is just above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are of White British heritage is just below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in 12 lessons or part lessons, some jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at work across an extensive range of pupils' books and considered the school's assessment information on the progress and standards achieved by current pupils.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and talked with them about their reading.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the senior teacher and leaders with responsibility for English, mathematics, the early years and pupils with SEND. The inspector met with those responsible for aspects such as safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, bullying and exclusions, disadvantaged pupils and the sport premium. The inspector also met with the family support worker, other teachers and support staff.
- The inspector met with the vice chair and two other members of the governing body.
- The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector met with parents at the start of the school day. The inspector considered the seven responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the responses to the online staff and pupil surveys.
- The inspector considered a wide range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation summary, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's current information on pupils' attainment and progress, attendance records, behaviour and bullying logs, external reports on the work of the school, monitoring and evaluation records and a range of documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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