

Cherry Tree Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117339
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	363867
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2011
Reporting inspector	David Wynford-Jones

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Chappell
Headteacher	Jessie Bruce
Date of previous school inspection	25 September 2007
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 13 lessons, observing nine teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school development plan. Inspectors analysed 118 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Are systems and structures for monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress securely embedded in the work of the school?
- Do pupils know and understand the next steps to improve their work?
- How effectively does the governing body and middle leaders contribute to the development of the school?

Information about the school

Cherry Tree is similar in size to the average primary school. The majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. However, the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than average. Most are of Asian origin, with smaller numbers from a range of nationalities. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average but only a few are at the early stages of learning to communicate in English. The proportions of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with a statement of special educational needs are similar to the national average. The school has National Healthy School status.

The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a part-time Nursery and one Reception class. From September 2011, there will be two Reception classes. As these children move up the school, there will be two classes in each year group.

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

This is a good school. All pupils are made welcome and settle easily into this inclusive learning environment which provides pupils with a good education. Good relationships with pupils and their parents and carers are quickly established and this contributes effectively to pupils' learning. The level of care is good, especially for the potentially vulnerable. Nearly all parents and carers are happy with their child's experiences at school. One wrote, 'My son loves his school and is always happy and excited to go back after his holidays.'

Children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and good progress in Years 1 to 6. Overall, their achievement is good. The school's emphasis on raising attainment by the end of Year 2 is proving effective. Over the last three years, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen from below average to average. Current Year 2 pupils are on track to attain above the expected levels in reading and writing. Standards at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics are usually similar to the national average but are rising. The outcomes in the 2010 national tests were above average in English and mathematics. Although, current outcomes are not likely to be as high, pupils' are making good progress because their attainment at the end of Year 2 was below average. Current and historic assessment records confirm that pupils consistently make good progress in Key Stage 2. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy school but their progress is not as rapid. This is because assessment procedures are not sufficiently well established and assessments are not consistently used to plan activities that challenge all groups of children. In addition, they do not get sufficient opportunities to practise their early writing and number skills.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and in most lessons, pupils of all abilities are involved and challenged. The vast majority of pupils are attentive, responsive and behave well. Learning proceeds at a quick pace. Teachers use assessment information well to target individuals. Pupils know their targets but do not always understand how to achieve them, especially in mathematics.

The curriculum supports pupils' learning effectively and makes a good contribution to their personal development. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and the vast majority adopt a healthy lifestyle. This has contributed to the school gaining National Healthy School status. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds show respect for each other and get on together well. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to contribute to the wider community or to gain a better understanding of the ways of life, values and beliefs of those beyond the school community.

The senior management team and governing body provide a clear sense of direction. Based on a detailed analysis of outcomes for pupils, the school's overall performance has been correctly evaluated. The appropriate priorities to enhance provision and improve

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outcomes for pupils are identified in the detailed school development plan. Middle managers and teachers are committed but have yet to fully develop their skills in systematically and strategically analysing group and whole-class assessment information to identify potential areas for development. Based on the improving trends in attainment and the shared vision for the school's development, the capacity for improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - giving children more opportunities to practise their early writing and number skills
 - making more effective use of accurate assessment information to ensure children make good progress
 - ensuring that activities are well planned to match the abilities of all groups.
- Raise attainment in mathematics and writing by:
 - refining middle leaders' and teachers' skills in analysing and using assessment information to further accelerate the rate of pupils' progress
 - ensuring that all pupils know and understand their next steps for improvement.
- Improve pupils' understanding of other cultures and lifestyles through the development of wider community links.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge below the levels expected for the age. Their attainment on entry to Year 1 is usually below average. In Years 1 to 6, pupils respond well to challenge and work hard in lessons. Their speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematical skills are developing well. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson, pupils were asked to consider the interaction between a hare and a spider. Pupils worked together well to identify questions to pose to the hare. In a role-play situation which followed, pupils responded enthusiastically and offered a wide range of answers to the diverse questions. They communicated clearly, demonstrated that they could use appropriate language and showed empathy towards others. In the written activity that followed, they worked with sustained concentration. Similarly, in a mathematics lesson in Year 1, pupils were very focused and used subject-specific terminology well as they discussed partitioning of numbers. They demonstrated that they clearly understood the respective value of tens and units. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who find school challenging make similar progress to their peers. Pupils respond well to additional support provided in lessons and are engaged in their learning. Although there are some minor differences in attainment and progress between groups from different minority ethnic backgrounds, there is no particular pattern over time.

Pupils enjoy school and the opportunities to work together. They speak highly of their teachers and support staff. One said, 'We listen to our teachers, to each other and work as a team.' Others agreed. Pupils say they feel safe and demonstrate a good awareness of safety issues, including e-safety. Pupils want to take responsibility and undertake voluntary tasks. They contribute appropriately to the school as members of the school council and others undertake responsibilities around the school. Pupils take part in local

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events but have yet to become fully involved in activities beyond the school. The vast majority of pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. Their ability to reflect on others' feelings is developing satisfactorily. Pupils' knowledge of cultures other than their own is limited. Pupils' average attainment in English and mathematics and the strengths in their personal development ensure that they have a sound basis for the next stage in their education and later life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

In nearly all lessons, teachers identify a good range of activities that capture the interest of the pupils. They share the purpose of the lesson so that pupils are clear about the intended outcomes. Measures by which the outcomes can be evaluated are identified and discussed with the pupils. However, pupils do not consistently contribute to the formulation of the criteria. In most lessons, questioning strategies are used effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and to consolidate learning. There is a good balance between teacher's and pupils' contributions. Lessons proceed at a quick pace and the sharing of ideas with a 'talk partner' is a regular feature. This helps pupils to develop their social skills and their ability to communicate with others. Teaching assistants are well deployed and provide good support to individuals and groups. Teachers use assessments effectively to plan their lessons and pupils' work. There are some examples of good developmental

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marking especially in the English books. However, not all marking provides pupils with sufficient guidance to improve their work.

The curriculum supports pupils' learning in mathematics and English well. It is modified effectively to meet the needs of pupils who find learning difficult and those learning English as an additional language. Good use is made of information and communication technology to support learning in most subjects. A well-thought-out theme or topic approach enables pupils to make the links in learning between subjects. This contributes to their enjoyment. The curriculum is enhanced by links with external bodies and a good range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to the school. Pupils respond positively to French being taught throughout the school.

Systems and structures to offer support and guidance to pupils are well embedded in the work of the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils know they can turn to staff if they have any concerns and any issues will be followed up. Pupils are encouraged to become independent, respect each other and to take responsibility. Attendance is carefully monitored and analysed. Any unexplained absence is followed up promptly.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leaders work together well to drive school improvement. They accurately evaluate the school's performance and are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Senior leaders have managed on-going staff long-term absences well. They have ensured that progress in Key Stage 1 is accelerating and attainment rising, and pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to make good progress. However, middle leaders and teachers have yet to fully develop their skills in analysing and using assessment information to contribute to the strategic development of the school.

The governing body is working closely with the local authority and plans for the development of the school to become two-form entry are well in hand. Members of the governing body monitor the work of the school effectively and regularly seek information as to how the pupils are progressing. Issues relating to equality of opportunity are monitored well and possible discrepancies in performance between groups of pupils or any discrimination are investigated and action taken. The governing body ensures that the school's safeguarding, checks on staff recruitment and child protection procedures meet requirements and procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe are established in school routines. However, it has not ensured that an appropriate number of staff hold the required current paediatric first aid certificates. The governing body promotes community

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cohesion satisfactorily. Contact with local religious leaders and initial steps to promote understanding between the different cultures have been made. However, pupils have yet to develop a good understanding of cultures not represented within their immediate community. Links with schools in contrasting areas in the United Kingdom and in other countries have not been pursued.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Induction arrangements and relationships with parents and carers are good. Children settle quickly and enjoy learning within a caring environment. Routines are well established. Children follow instructions, develop their social skills and behave well. They enjoy healthy snacks and know the importance of washing their hands before eating. Planning ensures that all areas of children's learning are covered. There is a reasonable balance between activities led by the adults and those that children choose for themselves. A strong emphasis on developing children's skills in working together ensures they quickly grow in confidence. The classrooms are well organised and children's work is celebrated and displayed effectively. Appropriate use is made of the outdoor areas to promote all aspects of learning. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but some assessments are not sufficiently robust. Better use is made of assessment information in the Nursery than the Reception classes to target individuals, to plan work that challenges children and to raise expectations. Children in the Reception class do not get sufficient opportunities to consolidate and extend their early writing and numeracy skills.

The Early Years Foundation Stage team has a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and areas for development. Links between the Nursery and Reception classes are well established. This helps the transition process. Resources are of a good quality and appropriate for the age of the children.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The return rate of questionnaires from parents and carers was higher than in most primary schools. Most respondents were entirely supportive of the school. All stated that their children enjoyed school. Almost all confirmed that the school keeps their children safe and helps them to have a healthy lifestyle. A few parents and carers commented that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour and some felt their children were not making enough progress in school. Inspectors judged that pupils' behaviour is good and any incidents of misbehaviour are dealt with appropriately by staff. Overall, pupils are making good progress but there is the potential for children to make more rapid progress particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cherry Tree Primary 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 118 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 230 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	63	53	55	47	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	76	64	40	34	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	61	52	49	42	7	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	57	48	49	42	11	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	56	47	57	48	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	42	59	50	8	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	61	52	55	47	1	1	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)	35	30	68	58	8	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	36	61	52	8	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	40	52	44	16	14	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	32	72	61	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	49	42	62	53	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	53	49	42	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



16 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cherry Tree Primary School, Watford, WD24 6ST

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school and for completing the questionnaires. We enjoyed our visit and talking to you. You told us that you enjoy school, want to learn and the staff look after you well. We were pleased to find that you have a good understanding of staying safe and most of you are keen to adopt a healthy lifestyle. We saw you behave well and show respect for each other. You make a satisfactory contribution to the school and the wider community. We would have liked to have seen more Year 6 lessons but as you were involved with SATs tests, we looked carefully at your books and your past work.

Overall, your school provides you with a good education. Standards in the school are rising. You get off to a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress in Years 1 to 6. Your attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is similar to the national average.

We have asked the school to do these things to help you reach higher standards and make even better progress:

- to improve outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by making better use of assessment information and giving them more opportunities to practise their writing and number skills
- for middle leaders and teachers to analyse assessment information to pinpoint areas of your learning which are not as strong and to give you more consistent help to reach your targets
- to improve your understanding of other cultures and lifestyles by developing wider community links.

Please remember, to make your school better, you must play your part by always trying your best. Continue to be proud of your school.

Yours sincerely

David Wynford-Jones

Lead inspector

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