

Pear Tree Mead Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 114994 |
| Local Authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 378976 |
| Inspection dates | 15–16 September 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Ronald Hall |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 302 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Michelle Hardie |
| Headteacher | Christine Thurgood |
| Date of previous school inspection | 10 December 2008 |
| School address | Trotters Road Harlow CM18 7BY |
| Telephone number | 01279 836 181 |
| Fax number | 01279 423 504 |
| Email address | admin@peartreemead.essex.sch.uk |

| | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Registered childcare provision | Pear Tree Mead Breakfast Club |
| Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision | 6 |
| Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision | December 2008 |

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Age group | 3–11 |
| Inspection date(s) | 15–16 September 2011 |
| Inspection number | 378976 |

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Eighteen lessons were observed taught by 12 teachers. Meetings and discussions were held with members of staff, members of the governing body, and pupils. Inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including policies, school development plans, local authority review documents, assessment data and curriculum plans. Questionnaires from 79 parents and carers were scrutinised as well as others from 99 pupils and 13 staff.

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

- To what extent does the provision provided bring about rapid improvement in standards, particularly in mathematics?
- What is the school doing to ensure that teaching is consistently good or better, providing appropriate challenge for all pupils and making sure the pupils know how to improve their work?
- How has the school ensured a range of opportunities for cultural development to enable pupils to mix with children from different backgrounds?

Information about the school

Pear Tree Mead Primary and Nursery School is a larger-than-average sized primary school. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is average, as is the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school has Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children from the age of three years and it provides a breakfast club also. The school has both the Healthy Schools Award and the Sport England Active Mark.

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

Pear Tree Mead Primary and Nursery School has made good progress in addressing all the areas identified as requiring improvement at the last inspection and strengthened many other aspects of its provision. Outcomes for pupils are rising significantly. The school's overall effectiveness is good. Improvements to teaching and to the curriculum have had a marked impact on enthusing pupils and accelerating their progress. As a result, the most recent national assessments for the end of Key Stage 2 show marked improvement. The gap between English and mathematics is closing rapidly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well. Those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals often outperform their peers due to the successful support they receive. While not all pupils across the school are yet attaining at the level expected for their age, almost every pupil has made at least good progress in the last four terms. Pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work have also improved. However, the pace of improvement has been slower in writing because pupils do not always have sufficient opportunity to write for a range of purposes. There continue to be weaknesses in pupils' spelling.

The teaching is good. Weaknesses in teaching have mostly been eradicated, but there is still some inconsistency in ensuring that work is matched accurately to the needs of all pupils. Occasionally, the introduction to lessons is too long. The school has developed rigorous procedures for assessing pupils and tracking their progress systematically. They are understood by all staff, who are now more confident to use the information to plan their teaching and to provide support. The curriculum has undergone considerable change and is now interesting and relevant to all pupils, who acknowledge they enjoy their lessons. The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. There is a range of well-planned opportunities for learning both inside and outside; children are motivated to choose activities and initiate their own learning.

Attendance is improving across the school and is broadly average. Pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school. They are well behaved, both in lessons and around school, and care for their friends and younger pupils. They take responsibility for their own learning willingly and participate in schemes through which they support others. While the social and moral development of the pupils are well established, their spiritual and cultural development have improved rapidly. All pupils benefit from good-quality care, guidance and support.

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The leaders and managers of the school at all levels have a clear, single and robust vision for school improvement. That has resulted in the school's positive transformation. The headteacher and the leadership team are supported by an effective governing body, which is now better informed and holds the school to account by providing rigorous challenge. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and its strategic direction is clear. The school has used its partnerships and links with other agencies positively to provide support and guidance to assist in its drive to improve. It has good capacity to sustain improvement, which has been demonstrated in overcoming the weaknesses in teaching and learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all lessons have an effective balance of teaching and activity and that the tasks the teachers set accurately meet the needs of all groups of pupils.
- Raise attainment in writing by:
 - providing greater opportunity for pupils to write for a wide range of purposes
 - improving pupils' spelling.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The pupils are making good progress in lessons, although not as rapidly in writing as in reading and mathematics. Nevertheless, progress in writing is increasing. For example, in a good literacy lesson, pupils were exploring adjectives eagerly related to a poem and were using their knowledge of the wider world effectively to present a wide range of ideas. In another lesson, staff used a range of resources and techniques to develop pupils' understanding of punctuation.

Pupils' work and assessments of their attainment demonstrate improvements in pupils' progress across the school. The results of tests taken by Year 6 pupils in 2011 are above average and a significant improvement over previous years. The current Year 6 pupils' assessments indicate clearly that the pupils are on track to reach the expected level. That is very positive given the legacy of underachievement at the school and pupils' very low starting points. Across the school, pupils' achievement has increased, although some pupils still have some ground to make up. High expectations, clear targets for pupils, identification of gaps in learning and effective support ensure that pupils' progress continues to improve.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good, and at times better, progress due to the skilful support provided by both teachers and teaching assistants. The inclusion manager monitors the progress of every pupil robustly in order to ensure their needs are met fully. That is supported further by a drive to include the pupils' parents and carers in their education and this is having a positive impact on their learning.

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Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for in school. They say also that they are enthusiastic about and more engaged in their learning than they used to be. They are thriving on the higher expectations placed upon them and the responsibilities they hold for their own learning and for their roles in the school community. Their strong sense of social and moral duty is reflected in their willingness to support their peers personally and academically and in the consistently good behaviour in lessons and around the school. The school council, playground buddies and the other roles they undertake all contribute well to the good outcomes for all pupils. The pupils understand the importance of eating healthy snacks and making appropriate choices of food at mealtimes. Their work in pairs and groups engenders a sense of teamwork.

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 | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

Teaching has shown considerable term-by-term improvement and is good overall. Thorough planning and the effective use of assessment information ensure that, generally, work is matched well to pupils' needs. However, there are still some inconsistencies across the school. Pupils understand their targets and are finding individual targets in writing and mathematics particularly helpful. Teachers' good subject knowledge, thorough preparation and interesting delivery, motivate pupils. The pace of lessons and balance of listening and working actively are usually appropriate, although occasionally the introductions to lessons are too long. Rigorous assessment continues to identify gaps in learning. Teachers and pupils are becoming

¹ 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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more skilled in assessing their work and identifying successful features, but occasionally teachers do not adapt their lessons sufficiently well in the light of ongoing assessment.

The curriculum engages the pupils. It is generally, but not always, matched well to the pupils’ learning needs and interests. Staff increasingly link areas of the curriculum to give the work they set for pupils a greater purpose. Project work is used effectively to reinforce reading, mathematical and technological skills, although some opportunities to write in a range of contexts are missed. The school continues to enrich the range of first-hand experiences for pupils, both inside and out of the classroom.

All staff, including the headteacher, inclusion manager and support staff, know the pupils and their families very well and are committed to providing the very best they can for them. The school is targeting its support better and analysing the impact of this support. One-to-one support in reading and literacy has resulted in some outstanding gains in progress, which have been sustained. The school works very closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils' learning, behavioural and emotional needs are dealt with effectively. The breakfast club, which complies with all statutory requirements, provides a welcoming, nutritious and positive start to the pupils’ day.

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?

Dedication and commitment at all levels to addressing the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have turned the school around. Staff have used and responded well to support and advice, refining their teaching methods and assessing pupils' progress accurately. The headteacher has a clear strategic vision for the school, involving others in accurate self-evaluation and identifying further priorities for action. Teachers' increased accountability for school improvement and for the performance of pupils in their classes has been particularly beneficial. Through lesson observations and work scrutiny, they have a clear understanding of the impact of developments in their areas of responsibility.

Well-focused training has increased the rigour with which governing body monitors and challenges the school. As a result, the governing body has a much better understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The engagement of parents

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and carers is good and being worked upon continually to raise pupils’ aspirations and achievement. The special educational needs coordinator and the inclusion manager have been pivotal in involving parents and carers in their children’s education.

The school works very hard to promote equal opportunities and to tackle discrimination. That is demonstrated clearly in the analysis of the progress of different groups and the effective steps taken to improve the progress. There are clear policies and procedures in place to ensure the welfare and safeguarding of all pupils, including those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The curriculum has been tailored specifically to ensure that pupils are aware of potential risks and dangers. The school's risk assessments have been informed appropriately by the views of parents and carers, as well as past events. The school is making an increasingly effective contribution to its local community and is active in developing this further. There are several links with schools both nationally and internationally, which give the pupils an ongoing dialogue with pupils from other cultures and backgrounds.

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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Improvements in the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage have resulted in better teamwork and good-quality provision. Monitoring and evaluation are rigorous and secure. Children have access to a wide range of high-quality activities and resources inside and outside the classroom. The range of activities includes all areas of learning. The staff are very aware of the potential learning from the activities and the next steps the children need to take. Their knowledge has been improved by training, regular and focused observations of the children at work and play, accurate assessment and effective use of the information

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they gather to adapt and modify their plans. Children's records are accurate and of high quality. As a result of an increased knowledge of children's achievement and progress, staff question, stimulate, and challenge the children skilfully. The children have good opportunities to select activities and initiate their own learning, with staff checking regularly and promoting their understanding. The staff are well aware of the children's individual needs and provide good additional help and support.

From starting points which are well below those expected for their age, children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception Year, so that, by the time they move to Year 1, their attainment is just below that of their peers nationally. Children are developing their social and academic skills well. They are confident speakers and the staff engage them in conversation wherever possible. The staff help the children to understand right from wrong. Consequently, they are well behaved and work and play together purposefully and happily. Partnerships with parents and carers are given a high priority and the result has been increased involvement of parents and carers in the provision.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| 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

The school values parents' and carers' opinions and regularly consults with them and the school's questionnaires mirror the results of those during the inspection. Parents and carers value the school's provision and increasingly feel involved in their children's learning. They feel well supported by leaders and managers and other staff. Parents and carers confirm also that they value the opportunity to stay with their children for a short while when they drop them off in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They acknowledge that the school has improved and that their children are achieving more.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pear Tree Mead Primary and Nursery 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 79 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 302 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 38 | 48 | 39 | 49 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 48 | 61 | 31 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child’s progress | 31 | 39 | 39 | 49 | 7 | 9 | 2 | 3 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 29 | 37 | 38 | 48 | 7 | 9 | 3 | 4 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 31 | 39 | 42 | 53 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| The school helps me to support my child’s learning | 24 | 30 | 49 | 62 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 27 | 34 | 47 | 59 | 4 | 5 | 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) | 23 | 29 | 48 | 61 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| The school meets my child’s particular needs | 26 | 33 | 46 | 58 | 6 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 11 | 14 | 59 | 75 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 21 | 27 | 45 | 57 | 12 | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 17 | 22 | 51 | 65 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 5 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school | 34 | 43 | 36 | 46 | 5 | 6 | 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 | 43 | 47 | 10 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 6 | 46 | 42 | 6 |
| Secondary schools | 14 | 36 | 41 | 9 |
| Sixth forms | 15 | 42 | 41 | 3 |
| Special schools | 30 | 48 | 19 | 3 |
| Pupil referral units | 14 | 50 | 31 | 5 |
| All schools | 10 | 44 | 39 | 6 |

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 08 April 2011 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.



19 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pear Tree Mead Primary and Nursery School, Harlow, CM18 7BY

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school last week. It was lovely to speak with so many of you during your lessons and to meet with those who gave up their lunchtime to speak to us. We are delighted to see how much your school has improved. You are now making good progress. We were so pleased to see you all taking a pride in your work in books and trying much harder to achieve your targets. Things are going well at Pear Tree Mead Primary and Nursery School and it is now a good school. The headteacher, all the staff and members of the governing body have worked hard to improve your school.

These are the main things we found about your school.

- You are working well together and are well behaved.
- You are enjoying your lessons because they are interesting.
- You have challenging targets and are trying hard to reach them.
- Your progress is increasing because you want to know how to improve your work.
- Your school knows where it is going and everyone is pulling together to make it better.
- You have a range of opportunities to understand the multi-ethnic society in which you live.

In order to improve even further, we have asked the school to do the following.

- Make sure the work you are set is neither too easy nor too hard.
- Keep the introductions to lessons short so that you can get on with the tasks set for you.
- Help you to improve your writing skills in order to allow you all to learn better.

You all can help by continuing to take a pride in your work and correcting your spellings.

Yours sincerely

Ronald Hall
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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