

# Cherry Tree Primary School and Speech and Language Unit

Holt Drive, Mersea Road, Colchester, CO2 0BG

## Inspection dates

3–4 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching requires improvement. It is not consistently good enough to move learning forward rapidly and ensure that pupils achieve well in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in reading.
- Leadership and management require improvement. Staff departures have meant that too much responsibility falls to the headteacher.
- Teaching and learning are getting better, but the training for staff provided by the headteacher has not yet led to sufficiently rapid improvements.
- The governors are not involved enough in checking the school's performance or the strategic planning for its improvement.

### The school has the following strengths

- Rigorous checking by the headteacher has led to good plans to eliminate weaknesses in teaching.
- Underachievement is being rapidly resolved, so pupils' progress is accelerating and attainment starting to rise.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved considerably.
- Topic work that links subjects together and a wide range of clubs make learning enjoyable for the pupils.
- Behaviour is now much better because adults make their expectations clear and consistent.
- Pupils enjoy school and are keen to do well, as reflected in their improving attendance.
- Pupils understand clearly how well they are doing and the steps needed to meet their targets.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, they made a number of other short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, parents and the Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone discussion took place between the lead inspector and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 24 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and held informal discussions with parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including the school's own data on the pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Lawley

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the majority of primary schools.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium is well above average.
- Many more pupils than in other schools join or leave partway through their primary school education.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well below average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is high.
- This is because the school has specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. It caters for 20 pupils with speech and language difficulties, although at the time of the inspection only nine places were taken up.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class.
- The school has undergone significant staff and leadership changes since its last inspection. The headteacher was appointed in January 2012, having previously been the deputy headteacher. Three newly qualified teachers started in September 2012, and senior leadership is to be bolstered by appointments for January 2013.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better across the school by:
  - developing the questioning skills of teachers and support staff
  - bringing greater clarity and brevity to teachers' explanations at the start of lessons
  - ensuring closer liaison between teachers and support staff when providing additional help and guidance for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Increase the pupils' progress in reading by:
  - bringing greater urgency to the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds)
  - giving greater purpose to sessions to develop higher-order reading skills.
- Strengthen the capacity of leadership and management to secure sustained improvement by:
  - ensuring that priorities in the school improvement plan are linked to clear targets for raising the pupils' achievement
  - developing a structure for senior and subject leadership with clearly defined roles and responsibilities
  - ensuring that governors hold the school more closely to account for the pupils' achievement and the use of funding provided to support specific groups of pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The pupils' rate of progress is rising but still requires further improvement. Pupils make good progress in some lessons but not in others because of variations in teaching quality. The drive to improve teaching is having an impact, although pupils still have to make up for lost ground as their past progress has been uneven through the school.
- Children enter the school with skills and understanding at the levels expected nationally for their age. Steady progress means that by the end of Reception and Year 6 attainment is average.
- Reading is the weakest of the pupils' key skills, and pupils do not read as widely as they might. Younger pupils take too long to develop a secure understanding of letters and sounds because sessions to develop these skills are slow paced. Pupils also develop more advanced reading skills slowly because activities in lessons to teach these skills often lack a clear purpose.
- Year 6 test results rose in 2012 in all subjects. They were slightly below average and weakest in reading. The sharpest improvement was in mathematics, which is no longer the subject of most concern that it was in the past. There is no significant pattern to any variation in pupils' achievement by ability or background, partly because numbers are small in each year group.
- Tackling underachievement in mathematics was one of the headteacher's first priorities. Pupils are now making better progress and many more are reaching levels expected for their age. This is because of the attention paid to improving teaching and providing opportunities for pupils to apply their skills by solving puzzles and real-life problems.
- Writing is promoted well and progress is accelerating. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their skills within topics.
- The rate of progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those with speech and language difficulties, is similar to that of other groups. Good relationships between staff and these pupils underpin their good development of social and personal skills. The judicious mix of small group work and opportunities to integrate with their peers aids their learning.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted well so no groups are falling behind in recent improvements. The regular checking of assessment data enables successful action to be undertaken if potential underachievement emerges for a pupil or group. As a result, pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, the many who join late and those new to learning English are all making accelerated progress.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The headteacher's actions are having a positive impact on teaching. All teaching takes place in very orderly classrooms, where 'working walls' help pupils to see how their work is developing in each subject or topic. However, several teachers who are new to the school and to the profession this term have not yet fully established themselves.
- There are some key reasons why a minority of lessons do not promote good learning. In these, teachers' explanations at the start of lessons typically last too long and are unclear. Their questions do not engage pupils sufficiently, check their understanding or extend their thinking.

The result is that pupils sometimes start to lose concentration or be unsure about the purpose of work they are given.

- The most effective lessons move the pupils' learning forward at a rapid pace. Skilled questioning makes them think hard and teamwork is encouraged through discussion with 'talk partners' or working together on tasks. Well-chosen activities are set at just the right level to consolidate learning and demand extra from the more able. Teaching assistants are deployed well and contribute both to whole-class sessions and supporting pupils on individual activities.
- Teaching for disabled pupils and others identified as having special educational needs requires improvement in mainstream classes and in the specially resourced provision. Well-planned and varied activities, with good modelling of language by adults and the constant reshaping of tasks to make them challenging, build pupils confidence and independence. However, in the weaker lessons, progress is inhibited when the teacher and support staff do not liaise closely enough, and work is not always matched to the pupils' assessed needs.
- Teaching in Reception has some strong features but also needs improvement. The activities provided, both inside and out, are supported by a good range of resources and attract the children, who concentrate on them for long periods. Sessions led by adults move learning forward well, but are not balanced sufficiently with opportunities for children to show initiative by planning their own learning.
- The dialogue teachers have with pupils about how to improve their work is highly effective. Marking gives very clear guidance on what has gone well in a piece of work, and pupils take time to follow up suggestions about how it could be improved. This is enhanced by regular tutorial 'Big Foot' discussions about progress towards meeting their personal targets.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Behaviour has improved significantly since the headteacher's arrival. This is because procedures for maintaining good behaviour are clear, understood by all and consistently implemented. This has led to a considerable reduction in incidents, and a calm and harmonious atmosphere throughout the school.
- Pupils behave well and try to live up to the school's ideals such as of taking responsibility for their actions. The Olympic values have been used well to encourage pupils to persevere and to take pride in their achievements. These values were brought to life during the recent visit of a Paralympics competitor.
- Almost all pupils are keen and want succeed. They respond immediately to their teachers and try hard to fulfil their expectations. Collaborative learning starts in Reception and develops well across the rest of the school. This was typified when Year 4 and 5 pupils constructively evaluated their partner's written work, giving thoughtful reasons for what had gone well and possible improvements.
- Parents, carers and staff agree with the views of their children about how safe they feel in school. Pupils are aware of the different forms bullying can take, and how to deal with specific dangers such as those posed when using the internet. They report, and school records confirm, that incidents of bullying or other inconsiderate behaviour are now very infrequent and dealt with swiftly.
- Attendance has risen sharply over the last year and the number of pupils regularly absent has

fallen. This is because the headteacher works effectively to improve attendance with specific pupils and their families. Other successful strategies include not tolerating holidays during school time and phoning home immediately a pupil is absent to check the reasons.

## **The leadership and management**

## **requires improvement**

- The headteacher's high expectations are reflected in challenging targets, and the action taken where these are not being met. This has already made a significant difference to achievement, teaching, behaviour and attendance. However, recent staff departures mean there are few to share subject and other leadership roles until new appointments can be made. This limits the school's capacity to improve rapidly.
- Additional funding to support pupils at risk of not doing well is used to keep class sizes small. This has supported a general improvement in achievement but has not been focused on the pupils for whom this funding is allocated.
- The leadership of the specially resourced provision is also going through a period of change with the headteacher taking overall responsibility. This has led to similar improvements as in the rest of the school, particularly in the pupils' attendance. Close liaison with speech therapists and other outside agencies to track progress and adjust teaching supports the learning and personal development of pupils with speech and language difficulties.
- Each teacher's performance is continually under the spotlight through rigorous monitoring and clear targets set for improvement. Further training is tailored to meet school and individual needs, including opportunities to learn from experts brought in from other schools.
- The school's engagement with the local authority has been pivotal to its recent improvement. Effective support has helped teachers to improve teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics. The school and the headteacher benefited considerably from working alongside an experienced acting headteacher for one term last year.
- Changing the way subjects are organised has been a key factor in improving behaviour and the pupils' enjoyment of school. Learning is brought to life by linking subjects through well-planned topic themes, supported by activities such as the recent role play 'history off the page' of life in 1666 London. External coaches provide the expertise for the wide range of much-enjoyed and well-attended clubs, particularly for sport and dance.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well. Pupils have many opportunities to use their imagination to respond in their writing to film and pictures. A strong moral code is promoted through assemblies and through stories, art and music from other cultures.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - is improving, but the governing body does not consistently hold the school to account for the performance of the pupils
  - is beginning to monitor the progress of improvement plans, but priorities for action are not clearly linked to measurable improvements in achievement
  - ensures that pupils are kept safe by checking carefully that safeguarding procedures are rigorously implemented.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114815
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	401468

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	132
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Britton-Voss
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ed Constantine
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01206 575224
<b>Fax number</b>	01206 769142
<b>Email address</b>	head@cherrytree.essex.sch.uk



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012

