

Cherry Tree Primary School

Highfield Road, Farnworth, Bolton, Lancashire, BL4 0NS

Inspection dates 23–24 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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

- Although leaders have improved teaching, they have not done so sufficiently rapidly to make it consistently good. As a result, pupils' progress is not yet good in all subjects and year groups.
- There are some weaknesses in how well teachers give pupils work at the right level which is neither too easy nor too hard, teach spelling, mark pupils' work and help them to use their writing skills in other subjects. These aspects are strong in some lessons and classes, but weak in others.
- Too few more-able pupils reach the higher levels by the end of the school because of a lack of challenge, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) to help them learn in other subjects.
- Attendance is below average.
- Pupils' books are not monitored systematically or frequently enough to identify and tackle problems at an early stage.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils enjoy school, behave well and feel very safe. They have great confidence in the adults to help them with their work or with any problems they have.
- The proportion of teaching that is good or outstanding has improved in the last year and rates of pupils' progress are more even. Teaching is particularly strong in Year 6.
- The school is very successful in enabling pupils who initially have major emotional or behaviour problems to improve their self-esteem, to conform to accepted standards and to make progress.
- Children get off to a great start in the Reception classes and make good progress.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have successfully improved pupils' progress over the last year. They have accurately identified most of the remaining shortcomings and are working to tackle them.
- Skilled teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' well-being and progress.
- Pupils from a wide range of different backgrounds get on well together.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons and also made shorter visits to several sessions, when pupils received extra help in English or mathematics in groups outside the classroom.
- Formal meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils, and the Chair of the Governing Body. A representative of the local authority spoke to the lead inspector about the school on the telephone. Informal discussions were also held with teachers and with pupils.
- The views of 14 parents who replied to the on-line survey (Parent View) were considered, as were the results of 126 replies to the school’s own parental questionnaire from last term.
- Several younger pupils read to inspectors.
- Inspectors analysed a range of work in pupils’ books, as well as looking at a variety of displays around the school.
- A range of documentation was examined, particularly data on pupils’ achievement, details of their attendance, and paperwork related to keeping them safe. Records of the monitoring of teaching by the school, and anonymous paperwork about the management of staff performance were analysed.

Inspection team

Steven Hill, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Doreen Davenport	Additional Inspector
Sheila Loughlin	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cherry Tree is an above average size primary school which is part of the Orchards, a federation of three schools. Its partners are a nursery school and a special school. The schools share two sites which are about half a mile apart. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage from all three schools share accommodation on one site. Older pupils are taught on the other site.
- The three schools have the same governing body and the same executive headteacher. Each constituent school also has a senior member of staff, designated as 'head of school'. During the inspection, this role was fulfilled at Cherry Tree in an acting capacity by the assistant headteacher, in the absence of a substantive post holder.
- The school no longer has nursery-aged children on roll, a change since the last inspection. Children of this age now all attend the nursery school in the federation.
- The majority of pupils are White British, with a below average proportion coming from a range of different minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be entitled to support from pupil premium funding, because they are entitled to free school meals, are from service families or are looked after by the local authority, is high, at double the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the current government floor targets, which set minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupils' progress through improving the quality of teaching by:
 - making sure that in all lessons tasks are at the right level and are neither too easy nor too hard for pupils of different abilities
 - raising the level of challenge for more-able pupils, particularly in mathematics
 - ensuring that a good pace to learning is maintained throughout lessons
 - making sure that the marking of pupils' work consistently corrects errors, and provides guidance on how pupils can improve their work
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English
 - devising a more systematic approach to teaching spelling
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to use their ICT skills to support their learning in other subjects.
- Raise attendance by extending the good support given to the families of pupils whose attendance is poor and to help those pupils whose attendance, while better, is still lower than it should be.
- Ensure that leaders accelerate the pace of improvements by:
 - checking the quality of work and marking in pupils' books more frequently so any issues can be tackled rapidly
 - making close checks on the impact of new curriculum planning arrangements and making any required changes accordingly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress varies considerably between different year groups, classes and between different subjects from year to year. The school's records show that, although the pupils in many classes make good progress over the course of a year, in others progress is weak in one or more subjects.
- The pattern of progress was better and more even last year than previously but still had too many inconsistencies, so that it required improvement overall. Progress has been strongest in the Year 6 classes, where teaching has been most consistent.
- Too few pupils, in comparison to national figures, make more than the expected progress over the course of Key Stage 2. This is particularly true of more-able pupils in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make better progress than such pupils nationally. This is particularly notable for those pupils who have behavioural and emotional difficulties, who receive extremely good support to help them overcome their problems and achieve well, taking their starting points into account.
- Pupils who are eligible for support from pupil premium funding, including those eligible for free school meals, generally make the same progress as that of their classmates, and in some cases outdo them, closing previous gaps in their attainment. Boys and girls make broadly the same progress in most classes. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, do as well as others, and include some of those with the highest attainment in the school.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 had risen in 2010 and 2011 and, although below average, was not significantly so. Attainment was lower in 2012, because this group of pupils had particularly weak attainment at the start of the key stage.
- Children start this school with skills that are well below those expected for their age. They make good progress in Reception, but their achievement is still below average when they move into Year 1.
- These younger children make a very good start to learning phonics (how letters in words link to the sounds they represent) because the provision is organised extremely well. A strong emphasis on reading across the school is helping raise progress, and by Year 6 pupils are enthusiastic readers with decided preferences.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is uneven. There are many aspects which are strengths in most lessons but which require improvement in others.
- Teachers routinely plan different tasks for pupils with different abilities. This is successful in most lessons, but at other times work is not set at the right level which means some pupils get work that is too easy or too hard for them. In some classes, this is a particular issue in mathematics, especially when more-able pupils are given work at too low a level.
- Teachers make good use of the ICT suite to develop pupils' basic skills in the subject. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use these skills to support their learning in other subjects. There is little suitable equipment available outside the suite, and full use is not always made of the computers that are available.
- Teachers often give pupils interesting writing tasks in English lessons that stimulate their imagination, but not all give pupils enough opportunities to write at length in other subjects.
- Spelling is not taught systematically across the school and, too often, teachers do not correct pupils' misspelling of common words, although this is done rigorously in some classes. This exemplifies the variability in the quality of marking which includes excellent practice in showing pupils exactly what they have done well and how to improve their work. In one class, the pupils'

are continually given extra mathematics questions to practise aspects of the work they have got wrong, or harder questions when they succeed. However, in other classes, marking often does little more than acknowledge that the teacher has seen the work, and gives few pointers for improvement.

- In the best lessons, there is a good pace so that pupils get through a lot in a short time. Elsewhere, the pace slackens as pupils wait for their next task, or teachers fail to generate any sense of urgency.
- A key strength of almost every lesson is the good management of pupils' behaviour based on clear expectations, very positive role models provided by all adults, and good relationships with pupils.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning through a well-judged mix of support and challenge to individuals and groups and, in particular, their high levels of skill and patience in dealing calmly with pupils who have behavioural or emotional problems.
- Teachers frequently encourage pupils to discuss ideas in depth in pairs or small groups. Pupils have developed good collaborative skills as a result, and such discussion often helps them make good progress in their understanding in a range of subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are happy in school, enjoy learning and are keen to do well. They concentrate attentively in class, work hard and take a pride in their success. They take their responsibilities seriously.
- Boys and girls from a variety of backgrounds get on well together, and are tolerant of each other's foibles and difficulties. Pupils' behaviour is consistently good, both in class and around the school. Pupils are considerate towards others and have a strong sense of community. They include the other schools in the federation in this respect, one group agreeing that these other pupils '...are part of our family as well.'
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and its different forms. They say it is rare in this school and are confident that the adults deal quickly with any behavioural problems that arise. They are positive but realistic about behaviour and relationships, with one saying, 'We are all friends in the class. We have little blips, but who doesn't?'
- Pupils feel very safe in the school and have a good understanding of how they can contribute to their own and each other's safety through sensible behaviour. They have a great trust in all the adults to help them if they have difficulties, either with their work or personally.
- Attendance, having risen in successive years, has levelled out and is still below average. The school has been very successful in using its own resources and a variety of outside support to help the families of pupils who have extremely high levels of absence to improve their attendance. However, absence figures are still high because of too many pupils whose attendance, while not very low, is still weak. The school is considering how it can help these families to improve their children's attendance.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Although leaders have raised achievement and improved the quality of teaching over the last year, there are still inconsistencies which require eradication. The school's accurate view of its own performance means it has clearly identified most of the important issues that need to be tackled, and actions have been taken to do so, but the full impact of these actions is not yet showing throughout the school.
- Good systems are in place to monitor the quality of lessons and the overall progress of pupils. Clear feedback to teachers is improving their practice, and performance management arrangements back this well, through setting clear targets, making sure that monetary rewards are linked to good performance, and providing training to help staff meet their targets. However, the monitoring of pupils' books has not been systematic enough to identify quickly any

weaknesses in progress made by some classes, nor the weaknesses in some teachers' marking.

- Resources are managed well, and good use is made of the pupil premium funding to support the learning of the eligible pupils, as well as to ensure that they can be included fully in all aspects of school life.
- The school has recently introduced a new framework for the curriculum, which links different subjects in a way which interests and engages pupils. However, planning for this is still being trialled and it is not clear yet to what extent standards and progress are being maintained or raised in different subjects. Staff are planning how to evaluate the impact of the changes as the year progresses. Some teachers are still getting to grips with this new way of planning. The marking of pupils' work in their 'topic' books is generally of a lower quality than in English, for example.
- Provision for pupils' social and moral development is very strong. There are missed opportunities, however, to develop their cultural understanding.
- The executive? headteacher and senior managers provide clear direction and are succeeding in moving the school forward, although not as quickly as they would like. They have been hampered by changes to staffing in the last few years. The local authority has provided a good balance of challenge and support to help the school improve.
- The federation is effective in providing a more efficient use of resources, and in sharing expertise between the schools. In particular, the social development of pupils at Cherry Tree has benefitted greatly from their chance to work and play alongside pupils who are very different from them, and to see them as equal members of the same community. The school promotes equal opportunities and tackles any discrimination well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have good systems for learning about data and the school's strengths and weakness and they hold it to account for its performance. They understand the uneven picture in the quality of teaching and in rates of pupils' progress, and support the executive? headteacher well in tackling this issue. They have secure systems to make sure that good teaching and performance are properly rewarded. They have ensured that safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Money is spent wisely and effectively, particularly the pupil premium funding. Resources are used well and plans are already in hand to improve the quality of the ICT equipment.

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

Unique reference number	105187
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	400764

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amanda Collingbourn
Headteacher	Jane Grecic
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2010
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