

# Yew Tree Primary School

Wherretts Well Lane, Solihull, B91 2SD

**Inspection dates** 6–7 March 2013

<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 varies too much across the school. There is not enough good teaching to enable pupils to make rapid progress and achieve well throughout Years 1 to 6.
- Attainment in Year 6 has remained broadly average since the last inspection. In 2012, pupils in Year 6 made inadequate progress.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is not as rapid as it is in English. The school's improvement plan identifies this as an area for development.
- Targets set for pupils are not all challenging enough and teachers' marking does not always show what pupils need to do to achieve them.
- Attendance is below average but has improved slightly since the last inspection. Some of the pupils who are persistently absent do not make the progress that they should.
- Leaders do not take enough account of pupils' learning when they judge the quality of teaching. They do not identify all the areas that need improving when they observe lessons.
- School self-evaluation is not always linked to the school's plans for development, which are too wide-ranging.
- Leaders do not analyse all the available data to measure the success of the actions they have taken to improve the school.

### The school has the following strengths

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress and achieve well.
- By providing a safe and caring environment, the school successfully encourages pupils' personal development.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- Additional funding to help pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is used successfully to boost their progress
- Systems for encouraging positive behaviour have improved. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good.
- Pupils, parents and staff are very positive about the school. The majority of parents would recommend the school to others.

## Information about this inspection

- Two inspectors visited all the classes in the school and observed nine lessons. Six of these were jointly observed with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors saw eight different teachers.
- To evaluate the progress of pupils currently in the school, a higher-than-usual proportion of inspectors' time was spent analysing the school's assessment data and scrutinising pupils' work in English, mathematics, history, geography and science.
- An inspector carried out short visits to classes with the headteacher and deputy headteacher to collect and evaluate evidence of how the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject leaders for English and mathematics. Meetings were held with three members of the governing body and the local authority's adviser for the school.
- Inspectors talked informally to pupils during lessons and met with a group of pupils. They heard pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- Informal discussions were held with several parents as they brought their children to school. Inspectors took account of the responses of 12 parents and carers on the Parent View website as well as a parental survey conducted by the governing body in December 2012. Completed questionnaires from 20 staff were analysed.
- Inspectors reviewed a number of documents including several policies, records of incidents, checks carried out on staff, samples of governors' minutes and case studies of pupils.

## Inspection team

Susan Aldridge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Taylor

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Yew Tree is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased since the last inspection and is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs pupils who are supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for extra government funding (the pupil premium) to support some students, including those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, is average this year but was well above average last year.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual time of year.
- An increase in social housing in the local area has contributed to a rise in the school's roll since the last inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The governing body manages a before- and after-school club on the school's site.

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

- Improve teaching in reading, writing and mathematics for all groups of pupils, to accelerate their progress and raise standards, by making sure that:
  - staff always have high expectations of the progress that pupils should make in lessons
  - teachers match the work to the abilities of pupils in each lesson so that lessons proceed at a brisk pace and pupils maximise their learning
  - teachers' questioning challenges pupils at the right level for them throughout each lesson
  - pupils are clear about the steps they need to take in order to reach their targets and respond to teacher's marking of their work
  - teachers consistently develop pupils' skills in assessing their own work and that of others.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that
  - challenging targets are set from the outset for all pupils
  - monitoring of teaching focuses strongly on pupils' learning and always identifies areas for improvement
  - evaluation of achievement takes full account of the progress made by different groups of pupils
  - all available data are used to measure the impact of developments
  - the school improvement plan reflects fully the school's self-evaluation and is sharply focused on raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Increase attendance so that it is at least at the national average by July 2013.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Most pupils make the progress expected nationally but few pupils make more progress than this. Gains in learning are not large enough to make achievement good in all year groups. As a result, standards have remained broadly average in the last three years. Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has been average each year in English and mathematics.
- Pupils in Year 6 last year reached average standards but many underachieved. This was not typical. The class included several pupils with behavioural difficulties who entered the school at a late stage. Despite the support provided by the school for these individual pupils and for the whole class, pupils' learning and progress was not as good as it should have been.
- Progress in mathematics is not as good as that in English and the school has identified mathematics teaching as an area for development in the school's plan. While leaders are also aware that girls' progress in mathematics is not as rapid as boys' progress, they have not included any strategies in the plan for encouraging better progress for girls in mathematics.
- Pupils learn well how to use letters and their sounds (phonics) as they learn to read. Pupils in Year 2 did well in the phonics screening test in 2012. Their scores consistently exceeded national averages.
- In 2012, more pupils underachieved in reading than in either writing or mathematics. The school has identified the need to develop a range of more advanced reading skills that pupils generally acquire later on, such as understanding what is hinted at rather than clearly stated in text. The school's data on the progress made up to December 2012 in Year 6 shows an improved picture in reading. A high proportion of pupils have already made the progress expected by the end of Year 6 and over a third have made more progress than that.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make the progress expected of them. The gap in attainment between those who are eligible for free school meals and those who are more advantaged is closing. In 2011, less than half the pupils eligible for free school meals reached Level 4 or above in English and mathematics; in 2012 this rose to two thirds. In 2012, the attainment of these pupils in Year 6 closely matched that of other pupils.
- Pupils with additional needs, such as disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make expected progress. Case studies show that barriers to learning are identified quickly and suitable support and resources provided. Individual and small group teaching is effective in promoting their progress.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are generally below expected levels. The good provision enables them to make rapid progress so that they achieve well. Since the last inspection, children's overall scores by the end of the Reception year have risen steadily and they now compare favourably with national averages.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is inconsistent. Much of it requires improvement because teachers' planning is not thorough enough. In these lessons, work is not well matched to pupils' abilities for the whole of the lesson. Time is not used efficiently and a slow pace limits pupils' learning or leaves too little time to review what pupils' have learnt.

- Marking does not consistently show pupils the steps they need to take to reach their targets and not all pupils respond to the comments made by teachers. Teachers do not expect enough from the most able pupils. The work in pupils' books shows that too often pupils are set the same tasks, even though there is a wide range of ability in the class.
- Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. The well-organised environment encourages children's independence well. Staff provide a good range of appealing and well-resourced learning activities based around meaningful themes.
- In these classes there is a suitable balance between teacher-led activities and those that children select themselves. The strong emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills meets children's needs well. The lack of space in the outdoor environment offers limited opportunities for children to choose activities that develop physical skills, such as using wheeled toys.
- Assessments are accurate. Training and 'buddying' within school have helped staff to develop their skills and external checks are carried out from time to time. Recently, staff have worked on developing the marking of pupils' work. It is now more regular and thorough, and includes the correction of spellings.
- Pupils know what they need to aim for because they have personal targets at the front of their mathematics and English books. On occasions, teachers remind pupil of these and pupils reflect on the progress they have made towards their targets. However, when teachers are marking pupils work, they miss opportunities to identify the small steps that pupils need to take in order to move closer to their targets.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well because they build good working relationships with them. They encourage pupils' personal development effectively by providing good role models, through their interactions with pupils, and presenting good opportunities for pupils to work independently, in pairs and small groups.
- The skills of teaching assistants are used well during lessons to support pupils who need additional help and to lead learning in small groups of similar ability. Teaching assistants also lead small groups with similar needs during additional (intervention) sessions. Case studies show that these are successful in boosting pupils' progress.

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

- Since the last inspection, the school has revised its procedures for managing pupils' behaviour. The system of red, amber and green tickets is consistently implemented by staff, understood by pupils and appreciated by parents. It has helped to improve behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- In lessons, pupils listen attentively, concentrate on tasks well, and work on their own and in pairs and small groups. They are keen to do well. Most of their written work is well presented, although on occasions it is untidy.
- Disruption to learning is rare, although this was not always the case in the past. The number of exclusions, which was high last year, has now reduced. Those pupils who find it difficult to behave well all the time receive good-quality support that helps them improve their behaviour. Case studies show that this accelerates such pupils' academic progress.
- Behaviour is good in almost all lessons and occasionally outstanding. In the Reception class, for

example, a group of children collaborated very well to tidy up resources after lunch. They cooperated effectively, with one sensibly taking the lead, so that they all played a part in folding a mat to form a box into which resources were placed.

- Attendance has increased since the last inspection, although it still remains below the national average. The school does a great deal to encourage good attendance but the figure is adversely affected by a small number of persistent absentees.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. Records show that there is little bullying and very few racist incidents. Pupils and the majority of parents agree that the school deals effectively with instances of bullying. Pupils play safely outdoors at school, although there is occasionally boisterous play.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. For instance, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn that if their clothes catch fire they must 'stop, drop and roll' and older pupils know how to avoid cyber bullying and the steps to take so that they are using the internet safely.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- When checking the quality of teaching, leaders too often focus on what the teachers are doing rather than how well pupils are learning. They do not always have a critical enough eye, and so they do not identify clearly all the aspects of a lesson that could be improved. This leads to teaching sometimes being judged as good rather than requiring improvement.
- The school sets individual targets for pupils and checks their progress against these each term. In Year 3, targets are based on the average progress that is expected nationally, and this is not challenging enough to bring about improvement. Recently, targets have been revised for some pupils who are making more rapid progress.
- Senior leaders use data well to evaluate some aspects of the school's work but some of the analysis is not done in sufficient depth. Pupils' progress is not analysed each term to check on the progress of different groups of pupils.
- The school improvement plan identifies a large number of developments for a school of this size with a challenging context. Developments are not all clearly linked to the school's self-evaluation or the analysis of data. For example, although leaders are aware that girls do not do as well as boys in mathematics, this is not an area for improvement in the mathematics development plan.
- The progress of the plan towards its targets is monitored but the success of the action taken is not always measured. For instance, logs showing the extent of pupils' reading have not been used to see how effective the work has been to encourage boys to read more widely. The stronger emphasis on practical mathematics, which started in September, has not been tested yet for its impact on pupils' skills and understanding.
- School leaders are particularly successful in creating a stimulating, caring and harmonious learning environment. Staff are proud to be part of the school, and pupils and parents are very positive about it too. Staff value the opportunities provided to increase their skills, particularly their teaching, and inadequate teaching has been eliminated.
- Leaders make effective use of pupil premium funding. For instance, funds have been used for individual tuition, reading volunteers and additional resources such as laptop computers. This has helped to reduce the gap in attainment between pupils eligible for free school meals and

those who are more advantaged.

- Staff strive to forge partnerships with parents. There is strong support for families who need this, including collaboration with external agencies. Suitable workshops are provided to support parents in encouraging children's learning, and most are well attended. The majority say that they receive valuable information about their child's progress.
- The school provides a broad range of learning experiences. These include a range of extra-curricular clubs, visits and visitors to provide variety and add enjoyment. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop literacy skills in subjects other than English, but numeracy skills are not as often used in lessons on other subjects.
- The school's clear and well thought out policy on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is implemented well. One parent noted that pupils leave school as 'well-rounded' individuals. Good links with secondary schools help pupils from Yew Tree to settle successfully into Year 7 of their new school.
- The local authority provides support for the school, although its impact has been limited. Termly visits check on aspects of the school's work. The school uses local authority services to support pupils and their families, and support from the local authority has contributed to improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance has improved since the last inspection. The governing body has revised its committee structure to keep the school's work under review more effectively. Governors have participated in training to develop their understanding of how to use data to check independently on the school's work. They use a series of key questions to challenge leaders such as 'How do we know this?' and 'Where is the evidence?'. The governing body contributes to decision-making. For instance, it considers the deployment of staff in the light of the school's priorities for development and makes decisions about staff salary increases based on whether their targets have been met. Governors have acted decisively to ensure that the school has constructive support from the local authority. The lack of a detailed analysis of the progress made each term by different groups of pupils means that the governing body's ability to hold the school to account is limited. Governors make use of school data provided annually to check this, but this leaves no time to bring about improvements in that school year. They are aware of the strengths of the school, the challenges it faces and broad areas of its work that need improvement. They independently carried out a survey of parents last December. The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met, such as for safeguarding and reporting on the use of the pupil premium.



## 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>	104058
<b>Local authority</b>	Solihull
<b>Inspection number</b>	400683

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	208
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	George Wood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Robert Hawkesford
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 January 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 704 2067
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