

Yew Tree Community Primary School (with designated special provision)

The Avenue, Halewood, Knowsley, Merseyside, L26 1UU

Inspection dates 17–18 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well across the school.
- Teaching is typically at least good, and an increasing amount is outstanding. Teachers know their pupils well and plan interesting lessons for them.
- Pupils learn to read successfully.
- Pupils in the designated special provision (DSP) classes make good progress because of the intensive specialist support they receive.
- Pupils behave well in school. They feel safe, work hard and want to do well.
- The headteacher, well supported by his senior leadership team, has high expectations of all pupils and staff. School leaders monitor the quality of teaching very carefully.
- Governors know the school well. They both support school leaders and challenge them to improve the school further.
- The school has good relationships with parents, who are very supportive of the school and its leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not yet outstanding. The outdoor area is not a stimulating environment where children in the Early Years Foundation Stage can readily learn by exploring for themselves.
- Pupils do not have many chances to act on the advice they are given in teachers' marking so they can improve their work.
- Teachers do not regularly have the chance to observe the practice of their outstanding colleagues.
- There is some inconsistency by staff in the use of the visual communication system in the DSP classes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 part-lessons, including two which were jointly observed with school leaders. All classes were observed. Inspectors also made a number of shorter visits to see pupils at work and at play.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, staff, governors, two groups of pupils and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the 11 responses they received to the online survey, Parent View, and the results of a larger survey of parents' views carried out by the school in June 2013. They spoke to a small number of parents at the start of the school day. They also took account of 30 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books and at teachers' planning. They looked at documents including the school's plans for improvement and at school information on pupils' progress, as well as at nationally published results. They looked at records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, and at how well the school keeps pupils safe.

Inspection team

Michael Phipps, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Marilyn Massey

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school was formed in September 2011 from the amalgamation of a primary school and a small special school for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties.
- The school has designated special provision (DSP) for pupils with special educational needs. This currently provides for 28 pupils, aged four to 11, who are taught in three classes. They have a range of needs including behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, speech and language difficulties and autistic spectrum conditions.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is lower than average. The proportion who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is around three times higher than the national average.
- The local authority's special educational needs outreach service, which provides support for other local schools, is located in the school.
- More than two thirds of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This is much higher than the national average. (The pupil premium is the additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, the children of service families, and for children in local authority care.)
- The proportion of pupils who join the school at times other than the usual points is around twice as high as the national average.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their home language.
- The school runs a breakfast club in the mornings, which was included in this inspection.
- The school has gained the Inclusion Quality Mark.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - making better use of the outdoor area with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage so they have more chances to learn by exploring and finding out for themselves
 - providing opportunities for pupils to respond to the advice they are given in teachers' marking so they can improve their work
 - sharing more widely the outstanding practice in teaching which is already in the school.
- Make sure that all staff in the designated special provision are trained in the consistent and effective use of the school's chosen visual communication system.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. Children join the school with levels of skills well below those expected for their age, especially in language and their personal and social skills. By the end of Year 6 they have caught up, and their standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average.
- Pupils in the designated special provision (DSP) classes make good progress from their different starting points. This is because of the intensive specialist support they receive in the child-centred environment, and because their lessons are well suited to their varied and complex needs.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start with their learning and personal development. They make good progress, and start to catch up well.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and continue to make up lost ground. However, by Year 2, pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics are still slightly below national levels.
- Pupils learn to read successfully. Their understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters make) by Year 1 is at the expected level. They are encouraged to read regularly, and by Year 6 they are confident readers.
- Pupils' progress is good in Key Stage 2. An above-average proportion of pupils make expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics, with good numbers of those who remain at the school throughout their primary education making better than expected progress.
- Pupils' writing skills are developed well. This is because they write extended pieces regularly, and have chances to write for different purposes and audiences across a number of subjects.
- Pupils develop their mathematical skills well, and enjoy solving practical problems and using these skills in different subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in mainstream classes. This is because they are well supported by specialist staff, and because they receive effective extra help when they need it.
- Pupils who join the school at times other than the usual points make similar good progress to other pupils because they receive prompt and effective help to settle in and to catch up.
- Funds from the pupil premium are spent on extra staff, including support in class and a learning mentor, a range of visits and special events to enrich pupils' learning, and on funding the breakfast club. As a result, pupils eligible for the pupil premium make better progress than other pupils. In 2013, these pupils in Year 6 were around a term and a half behind other pupils in mathematics, and around two terms behind in English. This is smaller than the gap nationally.
- More-able pupils make progress that is at least as good as that of other pupils. However, because of the low starting points of many pupils, the proportion that reaches the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is below average.

The quality of teaching is good

- All teaching is typically at least good, and an increasing amount is outstanding. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good. Pupils value the praise they get from their teachers.
- Teachers know their pupils well so they plan interesting work that closely matches pupils' different abilities. This was seen, for example, in a mathematics lesson in which older pupils in the DSP class made good progress in understanding multiplication and division because the teacher had planned activities at just the right level of difficulty for each pupil in the class.
- Teachers' questions make pupils think for themselves. In an English lesson, for instance, Year 2 pupils developed their writing skills well because the teacher aimed questions at individual pupils

to make sure all were involved and thinking hard.

- The school has taken effective action since the last inspection to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills. In many lessons seen by inspectors pupils were asked to discuss their learning with a partner. This happened, for example, in a mathematics lesson for Reception-aged children, in which they developed both their mathematical understanding and their communication skills.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported by teachers and other adults. In an English lesson, for example, pupils who needed extra help were very well supported by teaching assistants, so they made good progress in learning how to join sentences with conjunctions.
- The quality of teaching is not yet outstanding. Although teachers' marking is frequent and detailed, pupils do not have many chances to act on the advice that teachers give in their marking so that they can improve their work.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage the outdoor area does not provide children with a stimulating environment in which they can readily learn by exploring and finding out for themselves.
- There is some inconsistency in staff members' use of the visual communication system in the DSP classes. This was seen in a lesson with younger pupils in which adults sometimes used the wrong signs to indicate objects. This slowed the progress of some pupils.
- Teachers whose teaching is not yet typically outstanding do not have regular chances to observe the outstanding practice of their colleagues.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour around school is good. They are friendly and polite, and treat adults and each other with respect.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are good. They work hard, want to do well and understand why this is important. They enjoy answering questions and contributing to lessons. Pupils work well together in lessons. Interruptions to learning caused by poor behaviour are rare.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and are taught how to keep themselves safe. They understand, for example, the potential dangers of the internet. Pupils understand different types of bullying, and say that bullying at this school is rare. School records confirm this. Pupils are confident that if they told an adult, any bullying would stop.
- Racist incidents are very rare. Exclusions are rare, and only used as a last resort.
- Pupils behave well in the designated special provision classes because teachers have high and consistent expectations, and place a strong emphasis on modifying any inappropriate behaviour.
- Parents have no concerns about pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils' attendance is rising, and is now at broadly average levels. The school's procedures for improving attendance are comprehensive and effective.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are not outstanding because, although the overwhelming majority of pupils behave well in lessons, a small number lose concentration when lessons do not fully engage their attention.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders have high expectations of all pupils and staff. They have successfully established a new school in a relatively short time, with a strong emphasis on raising pupils' achievement through improving the quality of teaching.
- School leaders systematically check the quality of teaching. The management of teachers' performance is robust, and is based on pupils' progress. Any weaknesses in teaching are dealt with effectively.

- The progress that pupils make is checked carefully. Teachers are held to account in regular meetings for the progress of the pupils they teach. If any pupils fall behind, prompt and effective help is given.
- The leadership and management of the designated special provision are good. Consistently good teaching leads to good pupil progress in a caring and effective environment.
- Leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Pupils' learning, communication and social skills are developed well through effective teaching, assessment and support.
- Teachers in charge of subjects are making a good contribution to school improvement, and are developing well in their roles as future school leaders.
- The school's curriculum is carefully planned to meet the needs of its pupils. It provides them with an interesting range of topics, lessons, visits and experiences, and gives them the chance to develop their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills across a number of subjects.
- A wide range of after-school clubs and opportunities to take on positions of responsibility contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school plans to spend extra primary sport funds on buying in a specialist physical education teacher to work with pupils and to train staff, and on specialist coaching for pupils in a number of sports. The school has good plans to evaluate the impact of this spending.
- School leaders are committed to equality of opportunity and make sure that discrimination is not tolerated. This is shown, for example, by the school being awarded the Inclusion Quality Mark.
- The school's procedures for keeping its pupils safe are thorough and meet legal requirements.
- The school's breakfast club provides pupils with a safe and stimulating start to the day.
- The school has good relationships with parents, who are very supportive of the school and its leaders. One parent spoke for many in saying, 'I know my children feel safe and secure at Yew Tree and thoroughly enjoy attending the school.'
- The local authority provides an appropriate 'light-touch' level of support, since school leaders have demonstrated that they have strong capacity to improve the school further.
- Leadership and management are not outstanding because they have not yet led to outstanding pupil achievement and quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well and are ambitious for it. They are regular visitors to the school so they are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The special needs governor is based in the school in her role as manager of the local authority's special educational needs outreach service, so the school is able to benefit from her considerable expertise. Governors support school leaders well and challenge them to improve the school further. They have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching, of how good performance is rewarded and of how less effective practice is tackled. Governors have a good understanding of what data on pupils' performance tell them about how well the school is doing. They are not yet closely involved in identifying priorities for improvement, but monitor the impact of the school's plans for improvement well. Governors make sure that the school's finances are managed well, and have a good understanding of how extra funds, for example from the pupil premium, are spent and with what impact. They are keen to improve their skills, and many have undertaken further training.

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	131061
Local authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	430519

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	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Fitzgibbon
Headteacher	Matthew Copping
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2012
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