

Pear Tree School

Pear Tree Field, Stapeley, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 7GZ

Inspection dates 5–6 March 2014

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.

- Pupil achievement is good across the school. Children get off to a good start in Reception from starting points which are broadly expected for their age. They make good progress and leave Year 6 having reached standards in English and mathematics which are above national expectations.
- The standards reached by the end of Key Stage 1 have improved year on year with pupils making at least good and occasionally outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Pupils describe learning as 'fun'. Relationships are strong and pupils show good attitudes to their learning, sharing ideas with good levels of maturity.
- Pear Tree is a very happy school where pupils are well-behaved and feel safe. They care for one another and are justifiably proud of their school.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities, particularly in sport, art and music. Cross curricular topic books and art work are of a particularly high standard.
- The headteacher provides effective leadership and is well supported by senior leaders and governors. This has resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching and achievement, and particularly the quality of pupils' writing.
- Governors are well-informed and are able to use their skills to both support and challenge the school well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet enough outstanding teaching to accelerate pupils' progress even more.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills in real-life contexts.
- Pupils do not always have the opportunity to respond to the guidance they are given about how to improve their work.
- The school recognises the need for teachers to have more opportunities to share outstanding practice.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors listened to pupils from five different year groups reading, and talked with them and other groups of pupils about their lessons and school life.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils’ progress and to school management, including the arrangements to ensure safeguarding.
- The inspectors spoke to a group of parents and took account of the 61 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View). They also took account of the 14 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Vanessa MacDonald, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Adrian Martin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Pear Tree School is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and a small proportion is from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There is a privately run breakfast and after-school club which is inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more of it is outstanding in order to raise achievement further, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in real life contexts
 - ensuring that pupils consistently have opportunities to reflect on the guidance given to improve their work
 - providing teachers with continued opportunities to share outstanding practice across school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter Reception with skills which are broadly at levels expected for their age, though these do vary year on year. Their skills in reading, writing and number are usually lower than this. They make good progress because teaching over time is consistently good and the activities organised for children interest them. For example, as part of the pirate topic children were developing their own treasure maps, using both paper and computers to create these. Other groups were reading the 'ship's log' to talk about what had happened on board the pirate ship whilst others were searching for treasure outside in the sand.
- Pupils start Year 1 with skills which are above those expected. They continue to make good progress across both Key Stage 1 and 2 and leave Year 6 with results which are consistently above average and were well above average in writing in 2013.
- The standards reached by pupils in Key Stage 1, in reading, writing and mathematics, have risen over the last three years. The vast majority of pupils reach the level expected by the end of Year 2 and the proportion reaching levels higher than this has increased in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils show an awareness of how to develop their skills from an early age and talk about which 'learning powers' they need to use in different lessons.
- Outcomes for the phonics check in Year 1 have been above national figures for the last two years. Teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is good and pupils in Key Stage 1 use these skills well to break down words they are unfamiliar with. Pupils enjoy reading and read well. Pupils who are proficient readers read books with expression, tackling more difficult words with confidence.
- By the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils make progress which is expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics, with the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress being above national in reading and writing. Across the school, pupils make good progress and sometimes accelerated progress, especially in writing. Progress in mathematics is good but it is not as even across school as it is in reading and writing, particularly in the proportions making more than expected progress. Although pupils learn the skills needed to solve problems they are not given enough opportunities to apply these in real-life contexts which would accelerate their progress further.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their different starting points. Some have very specific needs and very careful tracking ensures that the additional support is well matched in all aspects of their learning. Teaching assistants provide focused support in both small groups and on a one-to-one basis. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic heritages make good progress in line with their peers.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support the small number of pupils who are eligible. The detailed checking of these pupils by school shows that the attainment of those who are eligible for free school meals is about half a term behind other pupils in the school and that they make progress which is at least in line with their peers. This has narrowed the attainment gap over time. This exemplifies the school's strong commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- The most able pupils make good progress in line with their peers. Additional workshops, which have provided pupils with opportunities to develop their skills, has further accelerated their learning. This has had a positive impact on the numbers making better than expected progress, particularly in reading and writing.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching over time is good and there are examples of outstanding practice across school. The work in books illustrates that the majority of pupils make good and sometimes better progress because of this good teaching.

- Teachers plan work which interests and engages pupils. Attitudes to learning are good and, where these are strongest, pupils are able to make mature choices about how to learn and challenge themselves well. This results in progress which is outstanding.
- The use of topic-based activities, such as a theatre trip to see 'War Horse', to stimulate the development of writing is particularly successful. Examples of high quality and well-presented work in books show at least good and sometimes outstanding progress over time. The use of drama to support writing leads to outstanding learning. For example, role play which enabled pupils to articulate their feelings about going to war led to high quality writing with phrases such as 'I'm frantic with worry' being used.
- Pupils are encouraged to share their ideas and to help each other with improving their work. One example observed was two pupils having a conversation about what other words could be used instead of 'said' in their writing, coming up with good and more adventurous alternatives.
- An innovative use of e-tablets when learning about mathematics enabled pupils to make outstanding progress in their understanding of division. Short teaching videos, set up by the teacher, were used by pupils to allow them to check on the method they were using, ensuring their learning moved forward at a good pace. Pupils in this class also identified where their learning needed to improve and how they could challenge themselves further. The teacher asked pupils questions at different points in their learning so that all pupils in the class quickly became confident in how to use division to solve problems.
- There are some good examples of mathematics being used in real-life contexts, for example in measuring and plotting the size of craters created from dropping an object from different heights. However, the opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in this way are not yet sufficient for progress to be outstanding.
- Marking is regular and teachers often give pupils good suggestions for how to improve their work, especially in writing. There are also examples of teachers showing pupils how to correct their sums in mathematics. However, pupils are not always given time to respond to this guidance on how to improve their work which slows their rate of progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils show respect for each other and the school has a welcoming and happy atmosphere. Older pupils, in their role as 'buddies', care for younger pupils, helping them around school and at lunchtime. Each pupil belongs to one of the 'river families', which supports the strong family feel within the school.
- Pupils say they enjoy school. This is apparent in the consistently high levels of attendance. The school environment is well maintained and attractive; high quality displays and opportunities for pupils to celebrate their work are evident throughout school. Staff and pupils are able to share their ideas on the blackboard in the entrance, for example.
- Uniform is worn with pride and pupils care for their environment, including through the use of the grounds. Pupils learn how to light fires and make dens, understanding about the risks involved. Pupils and staff took part in the 'World Book Day' celebrations swapping their usual uniform for the red and white stripes of the fictional character 'Where's Wally?'
- Pupils take on different responsibilities with high levels of maturity. Librarians, for example, are meticulous in their maintaining of a well organised library. They had organised a 'book in a box' competition, the winners of which were awarded in assembly.
- Very occasionally, some pupils lose concentration when the tasks they are doing do not maintain their interest and they do not always listen attentively to their teacher's instructions which slows their learning.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. Pupils talked about how the recent talks and plays had taught them about being safe on the computer and how to prevent bullying. They knew what the rules to use on the computer were and which websites they were not allowed to use.

- Pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare and that any incidents are quickly dealt with by adults. They commented that issues are sorted out 'fairly and calmly, taking everyone's feelings into account'.
- Parents spoken to were positive about the school and the vast majority of those that responded to the online questionnaire Parent View say their pupils are happy, feel safe and well behaved.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is an effective leader who has a strong vision for the school's future improvement. She has successfully built on the school's previous success with improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- She is supported well by the deputy headteacher, senior leaders and governors. They have an accurate view of the school's areas for improvement and the school's work to develop pupils writing skills have resulted in improvements in the standards reached. Staff morale is high and all staff share the in the drive for continued improvement.
- Regular meetings to look at how well pupils are doing and the detailed analysis of pupils' performance makes sure that any pupils who are in danger of falling behind or not doing as well as they could are quickly identified. The tracking of pupils with specific additional needs is thorough and the additional support is well focused so they make good progress. The school has also rightly identified support for the most able pupils and this has resulted in improvements in the proportions reaching the higher levels, particularly at Key Stage 1.
- Regular checks are made on the quality and effect of teaching to improve pupil progress further. Senior and middle leaders use observations, book scrutiny and information on how well pupils are doing to formulate action plans in their particular areas of responsibility and identify where improvements could be made.
- Staff are set targets as part of the management of teachers' performance, which is clearly linked to pay progression and the career stage of the teacher. This is thorough with staff held to account for the progress of pupils in their class.
- The staff work collaboratively and their practice is developed well through regular meetings and training, including through their partnership with other schools. The school recognises that developing more opportunities for staff to share outstanding practice will continue to improve teaching and pupil achievement.
- The curriculum is rich and provides pupils with a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, such as sports clubs, theatre trips and visits. The creative arts are of a particularly high quality with topic related displays such as a World War trench and a specialist music teacher who has improved pupils' musical skills. Older pupils are also involved in enterprise activities. All of which ensure that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills are well developed.
- The school uses its primary school sports funding effectively to provide specialist coaching and on-going training for staff. The participation of specific pupils in after school clubs has increased and the opportunities for pupils to participate in competitive sports have been extended which is giving them greater opportunities to apply and develop their skills further.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school as it recognises the skills of the senior leaders in its ability to develop and improve the school further.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body are proud of and fully committed to the school and its further improvement. They use their individual skills to support different aspects of school with, for example, safeguarding and child protection arrangements and in ensuring finances are effectively used. The use of pupil premium and school sports funding is carefully considered and its effectiveness is checked regularly. As a result of regular training, including on the use of data, governors are able to hold the school to account well for its performance. Governors understand their statutory responsibilities and ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

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	134106
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	439620

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	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Holden
Headteacher	Mary Hennessy Jones
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2009
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