

Yew Tree Primary School

Birchfield Way, Yew Tree Estate, Walsall, WS5 4DX

Inspection dates 4–5 December 2014

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Early years provision | | Outstanding | 1 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children get off to an excellent start in Nursery and Reception classes. Their achievement is outstanding.
- Good and outstanding teaching throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 enables all groups of pupils to achieve well from their different starting points.
- Strong and highly focused leadership by the acting headteacher and deputy has made sure that the good quality of education has been sustained and further improved through the current period of transition.
- Rigorous checking on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, and prompt attention paid to any concerns, ensure the quality of teaching remains at least good, despite the high number of staff changes.
- Pupils behave well in and around school. They find lessons interesting and they enjoy learning.
- Safeguarding of pupils is outstanding. They are kept exceptionally safe in school. The support provided for children and their families is exceptional.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and supports pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to school and each other.
- The new curriculum enables pupils to develop good learning skills, use them to extend their knowledge well and to see a purpose in what they are doing.
- The school uses computers exceptionally well to support pupils' learning both in school and at home.
- Governors support the acting headteacher very well. They have good levels of involvement with the school. They challenge senior leaders effectively in order to provide a good education for all pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not always show confidence in making their own decisions to move onto more difficult work.
- Small group and one-to-one support is often taken by learning support practitioners (LSP) so class teachers do not always have direct oversight of the progress of some pupil groups.
- Checking of the work of LSP and setting targets for their improvement is not as rigorous as the process for teachers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 20 lessons. Twelve observations were carried out jointly with the acting headteacher or the acting deputy headteacher. In addition inspectors completed 'learning walk' observations to get an overview of Key Stage 1 and of one-to-one and small group support for focus groups of pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's own judgements on its strengths and weaknesses, and the data it collects on pupils' progress. Documents detailing the school's arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed and discussed.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders and pupils. A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Questionnaire responses from 43 members of staff were analysed.
- Inspectors took account of 17 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors considered the results of the school's own recent parents' questionnaire. An inspector talked to parents bringing their children to school. An inspector took a phone call from one parent to discuss her views of the school.

Inspection team

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| David Speakman, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Louise Brown | Additional Inspector |
| Terence Payne | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are mostly taught in single age classes but there are mixed-age classes for some pupils in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 and 4. Year 5 pupils are taught in ability groups for mathematics and for English and mathematics in Year 6. Children attend Nursery part-time.
- The majority of pupils are White British. Other pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. A few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority), at 50%, is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average at 20%.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There is an acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher. A new headteacher has been appointed and will join the school at the beginning of the summer term 2015. There is currently a high rate of staff mobility, with a high number of staff on maternity leave.
- A breakfast club is run by the school and was included in this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching more consistently outstanding to raise further pupils' achievement by:
 - encouraging pupils to move onto more challenging work unaided when they feel ready
 - using teachers and learning support practitioners (LSP) more flexibly to deliver one-to-one and small group support across all ability groups
- Improve the rigour for checking the work of LSP's, setting targets for improvement and providing training so that the process matches that of teachers.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Staff are exceptionally well led by the acting headteacher and senior leaders. They have worked very effectively on team building, which has had a positive impact on maintaining the quality of education through a period of transition.
- Checks on the quality of teaching are effective. Through regular observations and supportive feedback, teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers are held to account for the progress of their pupils in regular review meetings.
- Subject leaders are effective in their work. They closely check the quality and standards and support staff. Robust checks on pupils' progress enable leaders to intervene promptly if pupils are not on track to achieve their challenging targets. Subject leaders have contributed significantly to the development and implementation of the new curriculum.
- The school ensures equality of opportunity for all pupils. Pupil premium funding is spent wisely to help close the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others, and to ensure equality of opportunity. It is used to employ staff to ensure the well-being of qualifying pupils and ensure they attend school regularly. Small group and one-to-one tuition helps pupils catch up. Qualifying pupils are supported to take advantage of curriculum enrichment activities. Use of the pupil premium funding enables all pupils to experience all activities through funding trips and visits when necessary. All Key Stage 2 pupils have their own computer 'tablet' provided by the school so no-one is disadvantaged by not having access to computers at home.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well. Through responsibility, pupils' social awareness is developed. Good social and moral development is shown by the way pupils get on well, by their good behaviour and their positive attitudes towards diversity. They develop a sense of fairness and appreciate achievement through sports activities. The school celebrates a range of cultures to encourage respect for pupils from different backgrounds and prepare them well for life outside of school. Pupils learn about social and democratic processes through curriculum topics.
- The local authority judges the school to be good and therefore has only a moderate level of intervention. The local authority completes three focused reviews each year and provides a detailed report. Because the school has an acting headteacher, support is available on request.
- The school has made effective arrangements for spending the primary sports funding to improve and widen sporting opportunities. Qualified sports coaches work alongside teachers and support staff during physical education lessons. There are sports competitions, including at lunchtimes, to widen pupils' opportunities to take part in sports and games. Pupils from Years 5 and 6 train to become sports leaders, who organise and lead sports activities during break and lunch times and deal with minor conflicts.
- Leaders set targets for the work of all adults in the school. These have been effective in improving teachers' work and in ensuring that temporary teachers do not fall below the expected quality of teaching.
- Leadership is not yet outstanding because it has not ensured that the ongoing improvement of learning support practitioners and their training is robust. Leaders have not made sure that these support staff have the skills to take on supporting a wider range of pupils, enabling teachers to carefully check the progress of all pupils first-hand.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well and they have an important role in making carefully considered decisions about key aspects of the school's work, such as future leadership.
 - Governors have supported the acting headteacher very well through the period of transition. They systematically challenge senior leaders over school effectiveness. They are knowledgeable and ask searching questions to hold staff accountable.

- Governors visit school regularly to see for themselves how well it is doing. They have a good knowledge of how well teachers are doing their jobs through first-hand experiences and discussions with senior staff.
- Through training, governors have developed their own skills well in order to support and strengthen leadership and management. They understand assessment data and are fully aware of how the achievement of pupils compares with other schools.
- Governors set clear targets in managing the performance of the acting headteacher and staff, making sure that teachers' pay increases link to competence.
- The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most parents who responded to the school's questionnaire and all staff say that behaviour is good. Pupils consider behaviour is good.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes and approach their learning with enthusiasm. They take care over their work, and books are presented in a neat and tidy manner across the full ability range.
- Lessons are rarely interrupted by poor behaviour. Behaviour at break times and on other occasions out of the classrooms is good. Pupils play alongside each other harmoniously. They say they enjoy school and feel free from any form of intimidation.
- Attendance is improving year on year, and is now average. The percentage of pupils regularly away from school has fallen significantly and is now well below average. Pupils arrive on time.
- Pupils feel they are making good progress. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because pupils do not show enough initiative in moving on to more challenging work when they are ready.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in and out of school. They are confident that any issues that worry them will be dealt with promptly and effectively. They are helped to develop a very good understanding of internet safety.
- Pupils are aware of the different forms bullying can take and know what to do if they ever need help. They say bullying is not a worry for them and there is no threatening behaviour in school. They are confident that should bullying ever happen, it would be dealt with effectively.
- Staff training in respect of child protection is up to date and adults are exceptionally vigilant. The pastoral team do an outstanding job in supporting pupils and their families so that pupils develop confidence and positive attitudes to become effective learners. Staff are highly qualified in child protection procedures, have excellent professional contacts and when necessary, make referrals to outside agencies. Parents speak very highly about the support given to them and their children by the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers plan well to ensure that all pupils in single and mixed-age classes make good progress. Teachers are fully aware of each pupil's capability and their previous learning and use this information diligently to plan activities that build on previous learning.
- Literacy is taught well. Children learn how to read from a very early age, learning phonics (letters and the sounds they make) in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This creates a very secure foundation on which to build future learning. Pupils are heard reading regularly and those who struggle are given extra support.
- There is a uniform approach to the teaching of writing across all subjects and for pupils of all abilities. In

Year 6, pupils are organised for literacy and so work is neither too easy nor too hard. Pupils are given opportunities to write in a variety of different styles and for different purposes in a range of subjects.

- Teachers take care to ensure that pupils have secure understanding of number and that they are given good opportunities to use and apply skills. Pupils learn effectively to investigate and solve problems in mathematics.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They ask searching questions and mostly guide pupils to think things out for themselves. Teachers have benefitted from working alongside physical education coaches and teaching in physical education lessons is good, with teachers able to evaluate and comment on pupils' performance.
- Teachers are good at recognising when pupils are ready to move onto the next steps in their learning. There are occasions however, when they do not make arrangements for pupils to make their own choices and challenge themselves to make even greater progress.
- Learning support practitioners (LSP) have a positive impact in supporting disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils. Support is more often than not provided by LSPs. Class teachers do not always have sufficient first-hand knowledge of the progress made by these pupils to ensure work is sufficiently challenging to move them on at a more rapid pace.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with attainment lower than is typical for their age. Weakest areas are literacy, particularly children's ability to understand language. They make excellent progress and by the time they move into Year 1, a large majority attain the Early Learning Goals across all areas of learning.
- Attainment at Key Stage 1 has been steadily improving over recent years and it is now average in reading, writing and above average in mathematics. Achievement from their starting points on entry to Year 1 is good. The school's checks on pupils' progress show that pupils currently make good progress.
- Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening are good. The proportions of all groups of pupils achieving the required level are above the comparable group nationally.
- Pupils achieve well at Key Stage 2. In the past, attainment on entry to Year 3 for this cohort was below average. Pupils therefore make good progress to achieve average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Current progress is good with all year groups making more than expected progress.
- Most-able pupils do well. The percentages of pupils reaching the higher levels are average in reading, writing and mathematics. A greater proportion of pupils reach the higher levels at Key Stage 2 than reached Level 3 at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve well. The small number of pupils who speak English as a second language soon acquire enough English to access the full curriculum. From this point they make good progress and their attainment at least matches that of other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics through effective and targeted support. Last year they made more than expected progress in all subjects, and this rate of progress is evident this year.
- Progress for disadvantaged pupils in 2014 improved. They made similar progress to other pupils overall and in mathematics and reading, but slightly slower progress in writing. Last year, disadvantaged pupils were about two terms behind others and a term and a half behind all pupils nationally in mathematics and writing. In reading they were about a term and a half behind others in school and a term and a half behind all pupils nationally. School data clearly show that the progress made by disadvantaged pupils is

accelerating and they are now closing the gap with all pupils nationally.

The early years provision is outstanding

- Excellent leadership and very close teamwork, including high quality support for new and existing teachers and supporting adults, had led to outstanding teaching, behaviour and safety. Very close checking of children's progress by all adults, and consistently building on previous learning ensures that children make rapid progress and achieve exceptionally well.
- There is an encompassing emphasis on children learning through discovery and exploration. Adults constantly encourage children to follow through their own ideas and interests. They provide an excellent range of high quality resources, both indoors and outside, to support learning across the curriculum.
- When children choose their own activities, adults ask searching questions to encourage children to learn from their own play. Questions are very carefully planned to ensure that children develop curiosity and very quickly extend their learning. As a result, children's speech develops exceptionally well and they become confident when talking to adults and other children.
- During adult-led activities, teaching is often inspirational. Sessions are short but the pace of learning is rapid so children learn a great deal in a short time. Adults have very high expectations of children and move them on to the next steps in learning as soon as they recognise children are ready. Adults respond with a very high level of challenge to the learning shown by each individual child.
- In phonics lessons, work is matched well to children's different stages of development across the Nursery and Reception. During these occasions, children, including the most able and those who struggle, do exceptionally well in developing their early reading and writing skills. This prepares them thoroughly for Key Stage 1 and its effectiveness is reflected in the good Year 1 phonics screening results.
- Children's behaviour in Nursery and Reception is outstanding. They get on really well with each other and work harmoniously in small groups. They very quickly respond to adults' requests; for example, to come together as a group or to clear up the work areas at the end of sessions. They listen politely to adults and to each other. Adults are vigilant in regard to safety; children were totally safe and secure during all activities seen.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 103974 |
| Local authority | Sandwell |
| Inspection number | 448258 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 572 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | John Dearden |
| Acting Headteacher | Rachel Sherwood |
| Date of previous school inspection | 15 October 2009 |
| Telephone number | 01922 626926 |
| Fax number | None |
| Email address | head.teacher@yewtree.sandwell.sch.uk |

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