

Yew Tree Primary School

Wherretts Well Lane, Solihull, B91 2SD

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The new headteacher has quickly established a strong team spirit and drive for improvement. Effective plans, based on an accurate evaluation of the school, are being successfully implemented to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment throughout the school.
- Parents are pleased with the improvements and staff are enthusiastic about their work. Governors are passionate about their roles and provide a suitable balance of strong support and challenge.
- The quality of teaching is improving and is consistently at least good. Teachers manage their classes well and plan engaging activities. Pupils are expected to do their best and act upon the clear guidance given to improve the quality of their work.
- Provision in the early years is well managed and promotes children's rapid progress. Staff have created a safe and caring atmosphere where children quickly develop their social skills and learn how to share and take turns.
- Children have good opportunities to learn skills in literacy and numeracy. Those who start school in Reception with little pre-school experience soon catch up with their classmates due to good teaching.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy their lessons and learning. They get on well with their teachers and with each other. Older pupils often help younger ones. Pupils know they are valued and feel safe and secure. Behaviour is good and attendance is improving.
- Pupils' attainment is rising. They make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards in these subjects in line with national averages and are suitably prepared for secondary school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive well-targeted extra support and make good progress. Disadvantaged pupils are helped to take full advantage of all opportunities in school. The school ensures that effective extra support enables them to catch up with their classmates.
- The school offers a broad range of subjects, enriched with exciting activities and trips. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, and activities about values and citizenship prepare pupils well for life in Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always provide enough activities that stretch the most-able pupils.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is not as good as it is in reading and writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors, together with senior school leaders, observed pupils of all ages engaged in a range of activities in different subjects. They looked at pupils' written work in all years and records of children's learning in classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other school leaders, a representative of the local authority, and the Chair of the Governing Body together with three other governors.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of pupils and, informally, with other pupils in lessons and around the school. An inspector listened to pupils reading and spoke to them about their reading habits.
- Inspectors examined several of the school's documents. These included the school's own evaluation of its performance and its improvement plan, information about pupils' progress and attainment, evidence about the quality of teaching, and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 28 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the views expressed by parents as they arrived at school. The 28 questionnaires returned by staff were analysed.

Inspection team

James McVeigh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

George Huthart

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Yew Tree is smaller than an average-sized primary school. There is one part-time Nursery class and one full-time Reception class. There is one class in the other years from Year 1 to Year 6.
- Almost three-fifths of pupils, below the national average, are White British. The remainder come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds.
- At around 28%, there are more pupils than average who speak English as an additional language.
- Just over a third of pupils, above the national average, are supported by the pupil premium. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Around a fifth of pupils, just above the national average, are disabled or have special educational needs.
- The school hosts breakfast and after-school clubs.
- An acting headteacher took up her role in February 2014 and a new headteacher was appointed in September 2014.
- Significant numbers of pupils start school at points other than at the beginning of Reception.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that the most-able pupils are always set suitably challenging activities.
- Further improve pupils' achievement in mathematics so that it at least matches that in reading and writing by ensuring pupils always understand what they are learning and the tasks they are set.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The recently appointed headteacher, ably supported by the rest of the leadership team, has a clear vision for the school, which is shared by a close-knit staff and a passionate governing body. In a short period, the headteacher has instilled a strong sense of teamwork and ambition into the school. Parents and staff say there have been noticeable improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- The senior leadership team has identified where further improvements need to be made and, with the support of governors and subject leaders, has produced detailed and effective development plans. Information about how well pupils are doing is collected frequently to identify pupils in danger of falling behind and tailored extra help is provided for them. For example, the pupil premium has been used to ensure that the attainment gap between eligible pupils and others is narrowing.
- Additional sports funding for primary schools is well targeted to raise the quality of teaching in physical education and promote greater physical activity amongst pupils. The school offers a wider range of clubs, such as for archery and cheerleading, and more inter-school competitions. More pupils now regularly attend sports clubs.
- Senior leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching, using a wide range of evidence, such as the quality of pupils' work and lesson observations. Appropriate targets are set for teachers, including ones to improve pupils' achievement. The school arranges professional development opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants, for example, visits to outstanding schools and training sessions with other local schools. The quality of teaching is improving, particularly teachers' marking and the value it has in helping pupils to make better progress. Nevertheless, senior leaders know there is more to do to become an outstanding school.
- Aspiring leaders within the staff body are given appropriate support and experience to develop their leadership skills further. They lead training sessions and coach others, and are closely involved in managing continued improvement in their subject areas.
- The school offers a broad and balanced range of subjects to meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum. The curriculum is well matched to the needs of pupils, engaging their interest and promoting good achievement and personal development. A good range of visits and special events enhance pupils' experiences well. Pupils easily remembered World War II day when they dressed as evacuees, ate dishes made from their 'food rations' and drove in a real jeep. They speak animatedly about trips to the botanical gardens and museums and appreciate the wide range of clubs to which they have access.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the core of the school's curriculum and is promoted well. The school celebrates festivals from different religions and pupils visit places of worship. Homework projects include research into Jewish and Sikh traditions. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and pupils are learning what it is to be a good citizen in modern Britain. They have good opportunities to discuss British values and experience democracy in action. For example, the school council has met in the local council chamber with the mayor in attendance and pupils are scheduled to visit the Houses of Parliament.
- The local authority supports the school well and recognises its recent improvements. The authority organises a network of local headteachers for mutual support and has linked the new headteacher with an experienced mentor. Local authority advisers provide training and an objective view of the school's work.
- Parents are key members of the school community. The school provides an open door assembly each week when parents can celebrate their children's work. Regular workshops show teaching in action and give parents tips on helping children learn at home. The Parent Consultation Group gives all parents regular opportunities to share their views of the school's policies and procedures. 'Saplings', a breakfast and after-school club, gives pupils a healthy snack, a chance to socialise with schoolmates and opportunities to take part in educational activities.
- Safety and safeguarding procedures have a high priority. Staff receive regular training and visitors are vetted. All aspects of safeguarding are fully in place.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have been galvanised into action following the last inspection report. Gaps in training and skills have been plugged following an audit so that the governing body now has a good range of relevant skills. Governors are following a programme of further training to maintain their effectiveness.
- Governors work with the headteacher to identify key priorities for improvement. They know and understand the progress pupils are making and the quality of teaching. They are well informed through headteacher's reports, their own visits and discussions with teachers and pupils.
- Governors are passionate in their support of the school but also ask searching questions to keep the school on track. They make sure targets for teachers are challenging and include improving pupils' progress. They check teachers' pay awards are deserved and that underperformance is tackled promptly.
- Governors make sure the school's funds are spent wisely and bring about improvements for pupils, for example, the pupil premium and primary sports funding. Governors are fully aware of their responsibilities and are diligent in carrying them out.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school's focus on the values of trust, responsibility, happiness, friendship, honesty and respect strongly influences pupils' behaviour. Around the school, in lessons and assemblies pupils are polite and demonstrate courtesy and consideration for others. They respond quickly to adults' instructions and often help one another. Pupils are proud of their school and know the importance of good behaviour.
- The number of minor infractions of school rules is low. Pupils' misdemeanours are fully recorded, including sanctions applied and their impact. Pupils understand the 'good to be green' behaviour system, and 'putting it right' activities help pupils to understand the consequences of poor behaviour. Adults work successfully to support the very few pupils who have difficulty in managing their own behaviour. Pupils think their behaviour is good, and staff, parents and governors agree with them.
- Lunch and play times are harmonious and happy occasions. Pupils get along well with each other. Peer mediators take their roles seriously, helping younger pupils in learning or in play. Pupils are proud to take on roles as monitors, for example, helping to organise queuing for lunch, and as representatives on the school council. They often help new arrivals, who do not have good enough English, to settle in.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. They are able to stick to their given tasks and usually present their written work with care. Occasionally, a few pupils take too long to settle or do not concentrate well enough.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and the areas where they play and work are well supervised. The site is secure and visitors are checked and informed about how to behave when pupils are around.
- For their age, pupils are knowledgeable about the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They say that bullying is rare and they know what to do if they ever come across it. Name-calling is uncommon: teachers will not tolerate it.
- Pupils have learned how to stay safe and healthy. For example, they have been taught about using the internet safely and, by the police, about crossing the road. They know they need a balanced diet and regular exercise.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is improving. The school works hard to promote regular attendance and punctuality. Classes and individual pupils are rewarded for good attendance. Absences are thoroughly followed up, and staff and governors are regularly present at the school gate to ensure good punctuality.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour. They have established good relationships with pupils and manage their classes well. Lessons are usually fun and good natured. The strong focus on the attributes of a good learner, such as resilience and questioning, helps pupils take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Pupils have good opportunities for writing in a range of subjects. Teachers often make good use of texts to stimulate ideas and promote sustained writing. Pupils in a Year 5 English lesson showed great empathy with characters in a poem and made excellent progress in writing a diary entry as one of the characters. Their extended writing was well structured and rich in emotive and adventurous language.
- Homework extends classroom activities successfully. As well as regular exercises in literacy and numeracy, pupils enjoy and work on longer term projects involving research and creativity. For example, pupils made model solar systems for science and Saxon houses in history. Pupils regularly challenge themselves to improve their numeracy skills using an on-line mathematics programme at home.
- Teachers check pupils' written work diligently using a colour-coded marking system that pupils fully understand. Pupils are clearly told what they have achieved and what they need to do next to improve. Pupils respond well to marking. They act upon the advice for improvement and say teachers' marking is helping them to do well.
- Teachers often plan activities that involve practical work or exciting experiences for children. For example, history was brought to life when pupils in Year 1 attended a workshop run by a visiting drama group. Pupils were excited and captivated by their experience of 'being' in hospital and tended by 'Florence Nightingale'.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as well as disadvantaged pupils, are given the extra help they need to make as good progress as their classmates. Teaching assistants are well prepared to support pupils in class or to provide tuition in short one-to-one sessions.
- The school is effectively promoting the use of questioning to improve learning. Teachers and teaching assistants frequently question pupils skilfully so that pupils think hard and explain their answers. Wall displays in classrooms, reflecting recent work in literacy and numeracy, are used well by pupils to apply and consolidate their learning.
- Mathematical concepts are usually taught well. A good range of activities, including practical ones, helps pupils to see the relevance of numeracy to everyday life. For example, pupils in Key Stage 2 spoke animatedly about visiting a supermarket and learning about weighing and budgeting.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress frequently, helping them to build on pupils' previous learning more effectively. Generally, activities are planned that will challenge pupils to think more deeply. However, some pupils, particularly the most able, sometimes spend too long on easier tasks rather than on work that really stretches them. Consequently, a few pupils do not always make as much progress as they could.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils made better progress in reading, writing and mathematics in 2014 than in 2013. Work over the last term seen in books shows that pupils are making good progress in all subjects and all year groups. The proportions of pupils in Year 6 making and exceeding expected progress are larger than the national averages for writing and mathematics and similar to the national average for reading.
- The trend of rising attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 has been sustained. In 2014, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was broadly average in reading but higher than the national average in writing and, for the higher Level 3, in mathematics. The attainment of Year 6 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics was in line with national averages.

- Pupils acquire good strategies for understanding phonics (the sounds letters make). In 2013 and 2014, more pupils in Year 1 reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check compared to the national average. Pupils who spoke English as an additional language did particularly well.
- Pupils quickly learn to enjoy reading. Events organised by the school, such as Harry Potter workshops, reading challenges for pupils and phonics workshops for parents, ensure pupils learn to read quickly and give reading a high profile. Pupils and families are encouraged to use the school library and parents are encouraged to listen to their children reading at home. Year 6 pupils enjoy their roles as librarians and reading with children in Reception.
- Provision, including extra help, is well planned for disadvantaged pupils and meets their individual needs so they make rapid progress in their learning. In 2014, the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 and others in school had narrowed. In mathematics and in writing, the gap had halved to two terms and, in reading, it had reduced from one to two thirds of a term. The gap with others nationally had also narrowed. It had halved in reading and writing to just under one term and two terms respectively. In mathematics, the gap was down to two terms from two and a half in 2013.
- The school is fully committed to helping all pupils to succeed and have full access to all opportunities. A programme of support, based on their specific needs, operates well and school leaders regularly check that it is bringing about the necessary improvement. Consequently, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress like their classmates. Also, through well-targeted extra support, including specialist support from the local authority, pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress.
- The school provides a range of extra challenges for the most-able pupils. They often work with similar pupils from other local schools and enjoy regular workshops and 'think tanks', for example, to investigate genetics. Generally, the most-able pupils make good progress and written work seen corroborates this.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is not quite as good as it is in reading and writing. Occasionally, teachers' explanations of what needs to be done to be successful are not clear enough.

The early years provision

is good

- Children enter Nursery with skills and abilities that are generally below the levels typical for their age. Children make good progress across all areas of learning. By the time they finish the early years, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is higher than the national average.
- Good leadership and management of the early years are evident. Staff work in close partnership with parents to ease children into the school setting and to gather information about children's achievements at home. Adults maintain a happy and caring atmosphere where children feel safe and confident. Adults check on children's progress and keep full, clear records of their developing skills and abilities. Safeguarding procedures are securely in place.
- Adults model and praise expected behaviour regularly so that children quickly settle into school routines and behave well. Children learn how to get on with others, taking turns and sharing fairly. They are expected to learn how to do things for themselves and soon develop self-confidence. Adults make good use of conversation with children to encourage them to talk, and extend their vocabulary and the accuracy of their speech. Their skilful questioning helps to make children think harder.
- Through skilled teaching, children learn rapidly. The significant number of children who start school in Reception with no pre-school experience are helped to make rapid progress to catch up with the others. Lively and stimulating activities engage pupils' imagination and curiosity so that they persevere. For example, Nursery children worked excitedly and happily with their teacher to spot the missing number on a clothes line of numbers and write out or model that number in plasticine. Reception children were really stretched trying to show half past the hour by moving the hands on a clock, but persevered well.
- The learning environments, inside and outside, are colourful and vibrant and well-organised to build on children's previous learning. There are abundant opportunities for children to count and to start writing, and to develop their motor skills on slides and scooters.

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	104058
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	453520

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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	George Wood
Headteacher	Rachael Poole
Date of previous school inspection	06 March 2013
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