



# Kirkham Pear Tree School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 119887  
**LEA** Lancashire  
**Inspection number** 280680  
**Inspection dates** 29 March 2006 to 30 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Andrew Margerison

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	29 Station Road
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Kirkham
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 19		Preston, Lancashire PR4 2HA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 683609
<b>Number on roll</b>	66	<b>Fax number</b>	01772 681553
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Anne Fielding
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 January 2001	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lesley Koller

<b>Age group</b> 2 to 19	<b>Inspection dates</b> 29 March 2006 - 30 March 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 280680
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Pear Tree School is situated near the centre of Kirkham. The pupils have severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties. A few have autistic spectrum disorders. All the pupils are brought to school. They come mainly from the local area, with a few from a neighbouring local authority. Most pupils are of white-British origin, but a very small minority are of Asian backgrounds or have English as an additional language. When they are admitted, pupils' physical, personal and academic skills are well below average for their age, some at the lowest point that can be measured.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Inspection evidence confirms the school's view that this is a good school with some outstanding features. It provides good value for money and has made good progress since the last inspection. The dynamic leadership of the headteacher has created a culture of change and innovation by giving staff at all levels the opportunity to develop their skills and aptitudes. This has brought important changes to the way that the school is led and pupils' skills are developed. Teaching and learning are good, with some outstanding features such as the teamwork between teachers and support staff and the very strong emphasis on developing pupils' communication skills. As a result, pupils achieve well as they move through the school. Their personal development is outstanding. They love being at school and their behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent.

Although pupils are given increasing opportunities to take responsibility and to work on their own, they have relatively few opportunities to express formally their views on how they feel they are doing. In other respects, they are very well prepared for moving on to the next phase of education or work. The curriculum, including the provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage, is good. Standards of care and personal support for pupils are outstanding. Procedures to assess pupils' attainment in core subjects are very rigorous and teachers use the information well to set annual targets for pupils' learning. However, the procedures to track the progress of pupils through the year are not refined enough both to make it easy for teachers and managers to check whether individuals are making the progress expected of them, and to give a clear overview of achievement across the school. Parents receive very detailed information on what their children have learnt and have extremely positive views of the school. The school is in a strong position to move forward.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

Inspection evidence confirms the school's view that the provision for pupils in the sixth form is good. It is well led and well managed. Teachers' main focus is to prepare all pupils for leaving school by providing a practical and community-based curriculum. As a result, pupils' attendance is very good and they achieve good basic skills in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and communication. All pupils gain externally accredited qualifications and take part in college placements and work experience. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for moving on to the next phase of their lives.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the procedures to track learners' progress towards annual targets, so that teachers and managers can better ensure that pupils make the progress expected of them and gain a clear overview of pupils' progress.

- Provide formal opportunities for pupils to be involved in reviewing their own learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils of all abilities and aptitudes achieve well relative to their starting points. In the Foundation Stage, pupils start school with limited personal, communication and academic skills. They make such good progress that, by the end of reception, they have begun to express their likes and dislikes in different ways and have better understanding in all the areas of learning. In Years 1 to 9, pupils continue to make good progress in learning to read, write and use numbers. The school has introduced a consistent whole-school approach to developing pupils' communication skills. As a result, pupils make very good progress in this aspect of their learning. According to their levels of ability, they use different strategies, such as gesture, eye movement or the spoken word, to communicate so that, by Year 9, all pupils can express their opinions, make choices and contribute to lessons. From Year 10, pupils continue to build on the firm foundations established lower down the school. They make good progress in learning to use these skills in different situations. All pupils gain appropriate externally accredited Awards Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) qualifications in Year 11 and in the sixth form. Most also gain additional college, Young Enterprise and school certificates that recognise other aspects of their learning.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. They have extremely positive attitudes to learning and are very keen to take part in anything the school has to offer. Parents confirm that pupils really enjoy school and want to be there. As a result, their behaviour is outstanding and attendance overall is good. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community through the School Council and also make a very positive contribution to the wider community. They take part in many activities with local mainstream primary and secondary schools, such as Young Enterprise and an art project that has resulted in a stunning, tactile, sensory mural. They have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. As pupils move through the school, they gain an increasingly good understanding of how to be safe in different situations. As a result, the oldest pupils are very clear about potential hazards around them at home, in the community and in work situations. This complements their good basic skills and ability to communicate with their peers and adults. As a result, pupils confidently express their own ideas and opinions and are extremely well prepared to leave school and to contribute to decisions that will affect them in the future.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, with some outstanding features that make particularly important contributions to the progress pupils make. Procedures to assess pupils' progress and to set targets for them in their individual learning plans are very rigorous. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and use these plans well as the basis for their own planning. Consequently, lessons are responsive to the needs of each pupil and tasks reflect the broad range of abilities and difficulties in each class. In many lessons these tasks challenge pupils, not only to learn new skills but also to overcome the physical difficulties many have to deal with. The very close teamwork between teachers and support staff, which underpins everything that takes place in the school, means that pupils have highly effective and sensitive support. As a result, they feel confident and safe enough to tackle these frequently very demanding tasks. The consistent whole-school approach to teaching communication skills means that pupils make good progress in this aspect of their learning. They achieve the confidence to express their ideas and opinions and to make informed choices in ways that are appropriate to them. As a result, all pupils are fully involved in lessons. Teachers use displays very well to celebrate pupils' achievements. Pupils' weekly targets are displayed on classroom walls and are frequently used at the beginning and end of lessons to involve pupils in reviewing their own learning.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and provides pupils with a broad and balanced range of interesting and relevant learning experiences. A key strength of the curriculum is the gradual shift in emphasis as pupils move through the school towards giving them greater independence in their learning. Up to Year 9, the priority is to develop pupils' basic academic and personal skills. The focus then shifts to giving pupils opportunities to learn how to use these skills successfully in different situations, so that they are equipped with the skills they need to be as independent as possible. Very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education pervades the work of the school. The curriculum is very well enhanced by additional activities, visits and visitors to school. Specialist teachers provide pupils with high quality creative and musical experiences. Links with other schools also make a very important contribution to broadening the range of experiences for pupils. For example, pupils have taken part in a citizenship project with pupils from a local secondary school to improve the communal gardens for neighbouring old-age pensioners. The project gave pupils valuable learning experiences and the chance to make a positive contribution to their local community. Overall, pupils of all abilities and aptitudes have the opportunities they need to develop their skills and interests. Although the curriculum is good, the pupils do not have formal opportunities to contribute to the annual review procedures or when new individual learning plans are being written.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

This aspect of the school's work is outstanding. The procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety are very rigorous. Parents are unanimous in their praise for the very high standard of care provided for their children. In lessons and around the school, pupils benefit from excellent support by classroom support staff, specialist care and medical staff and external specialists. Pupils' views are canvassed regularly and they are given clear guidance about their choices when they are preparing to move on from the school. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress over time are effective overall. However, there is scope to refine the existing systems so that teachers and managers can more easily track the progress of pupils towards their individual targets and gain an overview of the achievement of different classes and groups within the school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school is well led and managed, and has made good progress since the last inspection. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and is an excellent role model in her approach to adults, pupils and parents. As a result, they are very confident that the leadership of the school ensures that their children make good progress. Recently the management structure has been revised by involving all staff more widely in school self-evaluation and in carrying out new initiatives. This included establishing a School Improvement Group made up of senior teaching staff and support staff, and creating a team-based structure which gives all staff clear channels by which they can express their ideas and opinions. Pupils' views are canvassed through the School Council, and parents are regularly invited to express their opinions. Governors make a strong contribution to the development of the school and are fully involved in establishing priorities for development. Overall, the school knows itself well and is very well placed to continue to build vigorously on the very firm foundations reported at the last inspection.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	1
The behaviour of learners	1	1
The attendance of learners	2	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	2
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	2
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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Mrs Lesley Koller

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PR4 2HA

29 March 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and helping me during the inspection. I really enjoyed meeting you and joining in your lessons. Although you all made a really important contribution, I would particularly like to thank the School Council for taking the time to talk to me, and to thank Stephanie for showing me what the sixth form have been doing in their Young Enterprise work. I am pleased to report that I agree with you and your parents that you go to a good school.

I was particularly impressed by your enthusiasm for school and how hard you try in lessons, even when the tasks are really difficult. Most of all I was impressed by how well you are prepared for leaving school. I think the most important thing is that you learn to communicate with other people really well, to make choices and explain what you think. This is because you are taught well and the staff look after you really well and make sure you are safe. I have asked Lesley and the governors to give you more opportunities to discuss how well you are doing when the school is making new plans for you, and also to improve the systems they use to check that you are all doing as well as you can.

Thank you again for your help and I hope everything goes well for you in the future.

Yours sincerely

Andy Margerison

(Lead inspector)