



Pear Tree School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134106
LEA Cheshire
Inspection number 282456
Inspection dates 22 March 2006 to 23 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Dee Brigstock CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Pear Tree Field
School category	Community		Stapeley
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 7GZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01270 619142
Number on roll	147	Fax number	01270 619140
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr P Tomlinson
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs M Hennessy-Jones

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 22 March 2006 - 23 March 2006	Inspection number 282456
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Pear Tree is a small, new school which opened in 2003. It was built to serve a new housing development and is already over-subscribed. Since it was opened, pupils have been enrolled into each year group, from over 30 other schools. Pupil mobility is very high as more families move in and out of the locality. Most pupils have a white British heritage, with few from other ethnic backgrounds or who are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average but a higher proportion than usual has a statement of special educational need. The local socio-economic conditions are above average. Since opening, the school has been awarded Silver Artsmark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Pear Tree school is correct in judging its current effectiveness as satisfactory, although it already has some of the characteristics of a good school. It provides satisfactory value for money.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children achieve well and attain above average standards. In Years 2 and 6, standards are average, but rising, as teachers make increasingly accurate assessments of pupils' learning. This is far more difficult than usual because pupils have been admitted from over 30 other schools. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress, but those with statements of special educational need achieve well because of the high level of individual support they receive. Relationships between all adults and pupils are good. Pupils are happy, safe, secure and well behaved. Their care, guidance and support and personal development are good. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are promoted extremely well through an outstanding range of residential visits within a good curriculum.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving as teachers share their skills and expertise. The school knows that some teachers could guide pupils better in their marking. The headteacher's work is good but due to changes in staffing, the role of curriculum co-ordinators in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning is underdeveloped. Also, the school's records of pupils' attainment are unwieldy. For these reasons leadership and management are satisfactory rather than good, as the school suggests. The school's evaluation of its performance is accurate in all other aspects of its work. The school's capacity to improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Design and implement a more efficient system to track pupils' attainment and progress.
- Share good practice in giving feedback to pupils, including marking, so that they know more precisely what they have to do to improve.
- Develop middle managers' skills in evaluating and developing the quality of teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Since 2003, pupils have been admitted to Pear Tree School from over 30 different schools. As the information on pupils' standards varied, it was difficult for the school to make secure judgements on pupils' levels of attainment or set accurate targets for improvement. As a result, the targets set last year were not all met.

Currently, standards in the Foundation Stage are above average and children make good progress, particularly in their personal and social development.

In Year 2, standards are average and pupils' progress is satisfactory. A drive to improve reading skills was begun after results in 2005 showed that not enough pupils were attaining above average standards. This has been successful and more pupils are now on course to attain higher standards this year.

In 2005, Year 6 pupils' progress and standards improved compared to 2004, although the school knows that the highest attaining pupils could have done better. Currently standards are average in English, mathematics and science and pupils' progress is satisfactory. Teachers know their pupils better, and the targets set for them are both realistic and challenging. Evidence indicates that pupils will attain higher standards this year, continuing the beginning of an upward trend.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall. Due to specific additional and personal support, pupils with a statement of special educational need make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Attendance is good. Pupils behave well and have good relationships with adults in school. Their personal development is nurtured well, particularly during residential visits. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. A rich range of experiences develops pupils' understanding of themselves and their place in the wider world. This is particularly noticeable in their personal interpretation of work in the arts, including music. The quality of pupils' expression and empathy in singing is spiritually uplifting.

Pupils develop a strong sense of their own well-being. They know the best ways to stay healthy through eating the right foods and taking exercise. They feel safe at school and know about some dangers out of school, such as being careful near building sites. This demonstrates good planning, as an extensive new school building is scheduled to take place soon. Pupils express opinions confidently, think they work hard and take an interested and active role in lessons. Many have special responsibilities around the school, especially at lunchtime, and have a good understanding of contributing to the community. Pupils have good economic awareness for their age; for example, rather than buy single animals to benefit farmers in Africa, they decided to bank the money they raised to accrue interest, so that they could buy a whole farmyard.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but good practice is clearly spreading as teachers share their expertise and talents.

Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage because staff assess children's learning well and plan interesting work. As a result, children make good progress, with particular strengths in their personal development.

Soon after the school was opened there was a turnover of staff, preceded by lengthy staff absence. These issues are resolved. Pupils' confidence and progress in their learning have improved.

Teachers' understanding of the ways in which pupils learn is good, demonstrated through their effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons and the links they make between subjects such as art and geography. However, assessment information is not yet used well enough to plan work designed to plug gaps in pupils' learning. This is particularly important as pupils transfer into school with a wide range of previous experiences. In addition, the quality of teachers' marking is variable and does not always inform pupils of what they have to do to improve.

Teachers, with help from a very well qualified coordinator and well informed support staff, manage the inclusion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities skilfully, and this group makes satisfactory and, on occasion, good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is enriched extremely well; for example, through residential visits from Year 1 onwards. These not only enhance pupils' learning about the wider world but also provide valuable opportunities for pupils to improve their teamwork, independence, relationships and problem solving skills. They are enjoyed by staff and pupils; teachers say that pupils are 'a pleasure to teach'. Another great strength is the school's outstanding provision in art and design. The resulting work makes a very valuable contribution to the learning environment. Geography and ICT provision are also good. The curriculum meets all requirements and successfully meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, because pupils have had different curriculum experiences in other schools, there are gaps in their knowledge, such as learning about shapes in mathematics, that are not analysed accurately enough. In the Foundation Stage, children enjoy a varied, well planned curriculum. Pupils' personal, social and health education programme effectively promotes their knowledge of how to stay healthy and safe. Activities outside lessons, including good provision in music, are wide ranging and much appreciated by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care guidance and support, including child protection and risk assessment procedures for pupils, are good. The school pays careful attention to pupils' health and safety. Procedures for monitoring and celebrating all pupils' personal and academic success are good; for example, the presentation of 'Golden Pears' each week, one of which is nominated by pupils for pupils. Thoughtful actions like these have a positive impact on pupils' personal development and pride in their accomplishments. The school works

very closely with outside agencies to ensure that those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported.

The guidance pupils receive on how to improve further is good in their reports to parents; however, the quality of marking by teachers is variable, some comments are more congratulatory than developmental.

Induction procedures in the Reception class enable children to settle into school routines happily and in Year 6 pupils are well prepared to move onto their next school through a programme of visits.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher leads with drive and enthusiasm; this approach has been conveyed to, and shared by the rest of the staff. Leaders, including the governors, have worked successfully to agree a vision for the school, which is shared by almost all parents. Skilful governors are very supportive of the school and actively monitor its work. The school has been successful in developing a real sense of ownership of the school by staff and pupils despite their varied previous experiences.

Quite a high turnover of staff since the school opened has challenged the staff to work together as a team. Their roles as managers are still developing and currently there is no deputy to assist the headteacher in leading and managing identified improvements, such as setting up and using a clear assessment system.

Over the last two years, the school has accurately identified its main areas for development and put into place effective strategies to achieve their aims. The success criteria to measure the outcome of these actions are not always specific enough, and the impact of the initiatives to improve pupils' progress from satisfactory to good, have yet to take full effect. For this reason, plus the lack of a deputy, leadership and management are satisfactory rather than good as the school suggests. However, the school is accurate in its evaluations of all other aspects of its work.

The school's forward planning, its successful work in including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the development of a rich and varied curriculum, plus improving standards demonstrate its good capacity to improve.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so helpful during my visit, and especially for listening and talking to me. I enjoyed meeting you very much.

These are the things I liked the most:

- the way that you behave in the classrooms, dining hall and in the playground
- that all the adults look after you very well
- your beautiful artwork, especially the chandelier in the foyer, your work in geography and your absolutely fantastic singing
- the healthy school dinners
- the ways that your headteacher, other teachers and governors plan on making your school better
- the way you learn how to help other people
- all the exciting visits and visitors you have.

To make your school even better, I have asked your school to work on these things now:

- keep really clear records of what you know and can do, and be able to use them easily to help you learn more
- make sure your teachers tell you what you need to do next to improve your work
- make sure your teachers watch each other in lessons, so that they can make sure you are all being taught well.