

Cherry Tree Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111150
Local Authority	Warrington
Inspection number	288873
Inspection date	16 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Mark Madeley

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 on roll	
School	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr S Woodyatt MBE
Headteacher	Mrs H Graham
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2003
School address	Hardy Road Lymm Cheshire WA13 0NX
Telephone number	01925 755885
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school is very popular with parents, as indicated by the large numbers who travel from outside the immediate area to bring their children here. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. There are small numbers of pupils with Indian, Pakistani and Chinese heritage, all of whom speak English. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need. An acting headteacher is managing the school for a term prior to the appointed headteacher taking up post in September. The school has received the following awards in recognition of its work: Basic Skills Quality Mark, Primary Quality Mark, NAACE and Becta awards (for work in information and communication technology), Healthy Schools award and Gold Artsmark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has outstanding features in provision in the Foundation Stage, pupils' personal development and the curriculum. The inspection agrees with many of the school's own judgements, but finds that some are too optimistic. The quality of teaching and learning, leadership and management and overall effectiveness are good rather than outstanding because pupils' progress slows through Key Stage 1. Effective management systems are in place and these have been used well by senior managers to check the work of the school. For example, they recognise the problem in Key Stage 1 and have firm plans in place to improve the situation. There has been significant improvement on the key issue from the last inspection and pupils continue to achieve well by the end of Year 6. Senior managers have already liaised extensively with the new headteacher to ensure a smooth transfer. These factors indicate that the school has good capacity to improve further. It gives good value for money.

The curriculum is of the highest quality. It is varied and stimulating, and provides extensive enrichment activities. These range from an arts week, excellent sports provision, regular drama lessons and extensive opportunities for pupils to use their computer skills in other subjects. The many national awards the school has received reflect this high quality. Pupils enjoy all that their school has to offer and this has contributed to the excellent attendance rates, which have been maintained over many years. They have very good relationships with staff and are secure in the knowledge that they are cared for very well. Pupils who take on tasks such as being play leaders and 'buddies' are well trained to fulfil their roles and do so with pride. The school council is very well organised. They canvass the views of the pupils, make decisions and regularly report back on progress. Pupils have an extensive knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy. Most of them take full advantage of the many after-school clubs to exercise and hone their skills. They are well aware of which foods they should choose and are very clear that smoking, alcohol and substance abuse are very bad. Older pupils explained with great clarity the difference between medicines and drugs. The school has good partnerships with its parents, the local secondary school and the many support agencies that help pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most parents feel that the school is good.

Children start school with above average skills, and from this starting point achieve well by the end of Year 6. High quality provision in the Foundation Stage enables most children to make outstanding progress. Prior to joining Year 1 most children exceed the national expectations for their age. Progress slows in Key Stage 1 and standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. The more able pupils are not extended sufficiently. Progress accelerates in Key Stage 2 and standards are above average by the end of Year 6. Across the school the quality of teaching and learning is good, though there is some variation between key stages. Teachers frequently plan exciting activities for the pupils, and these capture their imagination. In most classes pupils' needs are met well because staff know what pupils have learned and build effectively on that knowledge. Most pupils have a good understanding of how to improve their work although teachers' marking is inconsistent between classes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more challenge for all pupils in Key Stage 1, but particularly the more able, in order to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most children have attended pre-school or Nursery provision and so are well prepared for starting school. High quality teaching in the Foundation Stage continually challenges them and they reach very high standards prior to Year 1, particularly in number, writing and letter sounds. In Key Stage 1 progress slows. Pupils' standards at the end of Year 2 have declined over the last five years. Too few pupils reach the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because they are not given sufficiently demanding work to extend their skills and knowledge to the levels they are capable of. In Year 2 pupils' work is not presented as tidily as in other classes and some pupils often complete few examples, so it is unclear whether or not they have fully understood what has been taught. Pupils' progress through Key Stage 2 is good. Standards in the Year 6 national tests have been above average for five years. Unvalidated results for 2007 indicate that they are very high, with exceptionally high proportions of pupils gaining the higher Level 5. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are promptly identified. Additional programmes or other extra support are put in place to help their learning. Because the support is effective, they make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have a very good awareness of their own and other cultures; for example, they chose a Maori story for the school play. Year 5 pupils have an excellent understanding of how the giving of animals or a water pump so that people can sustain life is more useful than other donations. Pupils' behaviour is good. The vast majority are polite and kind towards each other. Some say that they are occasionally made to feel ill at ease by the behaviour of others, but are confident that staff will deal quickly with any problems. They are well aware of the need for care when using the Internet, crossing the road and when using tools in school. Older pupils are very skilled at planning and leading enterprise schemes to raise funds for the school council. They also have well developed basic skills and a very good understanding of how to use them in a wide range of situations, which is excellent preparation for their next school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers, in most cases, make effective use of assessment information to provide tasks which meet the needs of most pupils. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics class most pupils, some with adult support, successfully divided 'tens and units' numbers by 3. The more able pupils selected a number tile at random and quickly divided it by 6 even though most of their answers had a remainder. Teachers present activities in a stimulating way, which increases pupils' enjoyment of learning. In most classes pupils are encouraged through teachers' marking to present their work very neatly, but this is inconsistent. Resources are used very well to make problems 'real': for example, Year 4 pupils bought items from the shop before adding the 'pounds and pence' prices together. Teaching assistants make a very positive contribution when they are assigned a group to work with. Their skills are not always put to good use in some lessons when the teacher is talking to the whole class. Children

learn language skills quickly in the Foundation Stage because there is a dual emphasis on mastering the letter sounds and on encouraging children to 'put pencil to paper' at every opportunity so that they become confident writers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum meets the needs of the pupils and underpins their personal development and well-being exceptionally well. This is because it is varied and stimulating and gives everyone the chance to find something that they can succeed at. The school offers pupils very good opportunities to use their basic skills in other subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils confidently researched British coastlines on the Internet before writing and presenting their findings using presentation software. The school teaches three foreign languages. Pupils' artistic skills are promoted exceptionally well through drama, art, dance and music lessons, extra clubs and 'arts week' activities with visiting artists and dance groups. The very good range of visitors who support the health programme, such as the dental nurse, encourages pupils to look after themselves. An extensive range of sports clubs is offered and many pupils attend. The school welcomes an extensive range of visitors and takes pupils on a good range of visits, but none is more fondly remembered than the Years 5 and 6 residential visit, when pupils challenge themselves to try activities like caving.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There are very good and trusting relationships between staff and pupils because adults treat the pupils with respect. Safeguarding procedures are in place and staff are well aware of them. The transition into Reception class is very well managed. Staff visit the main Nursery sites and Year 5 pupils help by befriending new arrivals so that they know somebody at their new school. The parents of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are kept informed of additional support and their children's learning targets so that they can help too. Most parents feel the good quality school reports and open access to class teachers keep them well informed about their children's learning. An excellent feature is that the pupils write and draw their own reports. Year 6 pupils demonstrated that they had a clear idea of how to improve their work from the teachers' good quality marking. In some other classes pupils were less clear because the marking is not so helpful.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Staff and governors work well together because they have a shared view of the school's future. Senior leaders have effectively maintained the quality of education provided. They have already started consulting with the appointed headteacher in order to plan for the future. This joint planning is based on a realistic view of where the school is now and agrees fully with all the inspection judgements. Senior Leaders are developing a good understanding of the quality of teaching and learning from their checking procedures. Pupils' progress is carefully checked and reviewed annually, but management recognises the need for a system which provides a more long-term view of pupils' progress. Subject coordinators are consulted and involved in the review process which leads to future planning. They also write good future plans for their own subjects, which are aimed at improving pupils' standards. Governance is good. The governors

fully support the school, check their allocated subjects conscientiously and welcome the input of subject coordinators when they speak at meetings. They are less experienced at holding the school to account, relying on a few key people to question senior managers.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I really enjoyed my visit to your school and was delighted by the welcome I received. You talked to me about your school and I used your views when arriving at my judgements. I find that yours is a good school which helps you develop and mature in an exceptional way. You make good progress in English, mathematics and science because teachers make learning interesting. You also like school because lessons are fun and there are so many extra activities on offer. I think that the curriculum offered by your school is outstanding. You are very keen to learn and the way that you support each other, for example through the school council and the buddy system, are excellent. I recognise that a few of you had concerns about 'name calling' but are happy that the staff would sort out the problems. Here are a few more very good things about your school:

- you know a great deal about staying fit and healthy
- all staff in school care for you very well
- test results in English, mathematics and science for the current Year 6 pupils are very high
- outstanding teaching in the Foundation Stage gives all the young children a very good start to school
- the attendance of the vast majority of you is excellent
- most of you have a good understanding of how to improve your work
- the short pieces I saw of your school play were wonderful.

Even in such a good school there is room for improvement. I have asked your acting headteacher to do one thing which will improve your school further:

- to give the children in Key Stage 1 more challenging work so that their learning in reading, writing and mathematics improve.

You can play your part in improving your school by ensuring that in every class your work is presented as neatly as it can be, by continuing to work hard and enjoy school to the full and by continuing to be such helpful, kind and friendly young people. I hope that you are proud of this report and the part you played in it. I wish you and the school well for the future.