



# Cherry Tree Primary School and Speech and Language Unit

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 114815  
**Local Authority** ESSEX  
**Inspection number** 290042  
**Inspection dates** 15–16 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Jill Bavin

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Holt Drive
<b>School category</b>	Community		Mersea Road
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Mersea Road CO2 0BG
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01206 575224
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	170	<b>Fax number</b>	01206 769142
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Anne Bullock
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Stephen Hanscombe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 May 2002		

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4–11	15–16 January 2007	290042

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

## Description of the school

The school is of average size with 20 places for pupils with speech and language difficulties. These pupils spend some time in separate classes and sometime alongside their peers in the main school. This contributes to the very high proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs, which is greater at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds or have English as an additional language. Most children join the school with skills and understanding well below those expected of their age. More pupils than usual join or leave the school at times other than normal. The school is receiving support from the Local Authority to help raise standards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Sound leadership and management ensure that the school gives satisfactory value for money. The headteacher, staff and governors are very welcoming of all pupils regardless of the severity or complexity of their learning or emotional needs. The school works closely and successfully with outside professionals enabling, for example, continuing attendance and successful progress for pupils with emotional difficulties. Better systems for checking how well the school is doing, including effective systems for assessing each pupil's progress, provide an accurate view of the school's performance and have led to significant improvements. The school's recent success in working with the Local Authority to reach challenging but realistic targets illustrates its satisfactory capacity for improvement. School leaders are clear and confident about what to do next for further improvement. Nevertheless, action to address weaknesses in writing in Year 1 and to improve progress in the Foundation Stage and for higher attaining pupils has been slower. Subject leaders are at an early stage of initiating developments in their subjects and evaluating the impact of school priorities. They have made a satisfactory start to supporting senior colleagues in checking each pupil's rate of progress and determining who needs extra help.

Overall pupils make satisfactory progress but this is improving, especially in Years 2 and 6. Last year pupils in Year 6 made good progress. A suitable curriculum and satisfactory teaching mean that achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. By the time children join Year 1 attainment is still well below average. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Test results at the end of Year 2 in 2006 were well below average with particular weaknesses in writing. However, better progress is currently evident in Year 2, so standards are beginning to rise and the school expects standards to be closer to national averages in 2007. Inspection evidence supports this view. In Key Stage 2, the starting point of the majority of pupils is below average and recent work to accelerate achievement is showing early signs of improvement. Test results for pupils in Year 6 in 2006 improved but were still below average in English and science, and broadly average in mathematics. Inspection evidence shows continued improvement this year.

Teaching is satisfactory. Pupils are soundly prepared for the next stage of their schooling and their future economic well-being. There is some improvement in teaching as a result of recent developments in increasingly, but not consistently, using information about pupils' prior attainment to meet different needs. High expectations of all pupils are not consistent across the school.

Pupils' personal development is effective. They enjoy school and mostly feel safe when there. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is good, but some parents and their children are rightly concerned about the behaviour of a few pupils with difficulties in controlling their own behaviour. Pupils enjoy a satisfactory variety of activities, and appreciate special projects, such as the 'Playground Partnership' competition raising money for school developments. The care, guidance and support of pupils are good.

In the speech and language classes, relationships between adults and pupils are strong and help learning.

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

- Accelerate learning, especially in the Foundation Stage and Year 1, by raising staff expectations, the pace of learning and challenge for all children, especially the most able.
- Ensure that throughout the school lessons are always planned well to challenge all pupils, especially the potentially higher attaining pupils.
- Raise teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting, spelling and presentation of work.
- Ensure that all identified areas for improvement are tackled with urgency and subject managers become increasingly involved in the evaluation of the school's work and planning for future development.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory. In Years 2 and 6 it is improving because the school's better use of information about what pupils can already do means they are setting increasingly challenging targets for these pupils. Pupils are on track to reach close to average results at the end of Year 2 in 2007. The school has already successfully raised standards and achievement for pupils in Year 6; this is set to continue in 2007. Developments are too recent to have raised standards and improved progress consistently throughout the school. There are still weaknesses in teaching in the reception class and Year 1, when work does not always match children's needs effectively. Consequently, standards at the end of reception and in Year 1 are well below average. Pupils in the speech and language classes are beginning to make good progress because of good teaching and skilled communication.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils from the speech and language classes work comfortably alongside others in individually structured programmes to suit their needs. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils have responded well to the schools' recent focus on 'Respect'. Good attendance reflects pupils' enjoyment of school. They are polite, mostly behave well, and work and play together sensibly. A small minority of pupils find difficulty in managing their own behaviour. Most pupils have a mature understanding of those with learning difficulties. As one pupil said, 'Some children have special needs and we volunteer to help them'. Pupils respond well to encouragement to help others through raising funds for charities. The good programme of personal, social and health education helps pupils to stay safe and understand how to live a healthy lifestyle. Pupils

participate well in sporting activities. School and class councils help pupils to make a positive contribution to life in school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Throughout the school teachers and teaching assistants work well together and manage pupils' behaviour very effectively so inappropriate behaviour is minimised. Clear communication, including signing, for pupils with speech and language difficulties increases their interest and readiness to learn. In some lessons teaching is good, because work is modified to match pupils' needs and learning maintains a quick pace. Teachers are becoming far more consistent in sharing learning intentions with pupils and helping them to judge the level of their success. As a result pupils are attentive, work hard and make good progress in these lessons. Sometimes, while satisfactory, the pace of lessons is not brisk and teachers do not match every activity closely to pupils' needs, particularly in the Foundation Stage. Consequently, pupils' interest wanes and progress slows. Teachers do not always expect high enough standards of work and presentation which is especially detrimental to raising standards in writing and for the progress of the most able.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school provides a satisfactory range of activities and makes good use of specialist teachers in music, French, drama and sports to help pupils learn effectively in these subjects. Teachers have begun to plan for developing literacy and information and communication technology through different subjects but this has not yet affected standards. Activities for children in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory; they are suitable for their age but not always sufficiently stimulating. The school provides a good range of support groups to help pupils who find learning difficult. In the speech and language classes recent developments mean that activities are planned well to meet pupils' needs. Pupils appreciate the good range of clubs. Their interest and enjoyment is enriched with visitors and visits, including an annual residential trip for older pupils.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

This aspect is good and pastoral care is particularly strong. Until last year there were limited systems to check pupils' academic progress. These are now in place and pupils know their targets. There are examples of skilled and sensitive support for pupils through experiences such as bereavement, ensuring they are successfully included in school life and continue to learn. The school makes very effective use of teaching assistants and outside agencies to support the most vulnerable pupils. Arrangements

for safeguarding pupils are robust and as a result pupils feel secure in school. A significant minority of parents have concerns about pupils' safety as they leave the school but staff go out of their way to ensure pupils' safety.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

In partnership with the Local Authority the headteacher and governors are successfully steering staff through several changes, focused clearly on raising achievement and increasing staff accountability. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy and the chair of governors, has accomplished much improvement over the last eighteen months without losing staff morale. The results of their efforts are just beginning to show in the results of national assessment tests. Subject leaders have made a satisfactory start to fulfilling their monitoring roles. Analysing the impact of the school's action and initiating development is less well established and so less consistent among subject leaders. While senior staff and governors have identified areas to make the satisfactory provision in the Foundation Stage even better, action has not yet taken place. Governance is satisfactory. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through sound systems for monitoring and evaluating performance.





## Inspection judgements

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

17 January 2007

Dear Pupils

Cherry Tree Primary School and Speech and Language Unit, Holt Drive, Mersea Road, Colchester, Essex, CO2 0BG

Thank you for being so helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you, talking with you and seeing your work. It was really good to see you using your interesting playground equipment so energetically and taking so much exercise!

These are the best things about your school

- You work hard, behave well and treat each other and your teachers with respect.
- You tell us that you enjoy school and although a few children's behaviour sometimes worries you, you understand that they need extra help with learning or with their behaviour.
- The adults in your school care about you all a great deal, and work hard to keep you safe.
- Your teachers, teaching assistants, Mr Hanscombe, Mrs Wilcox and the governors are working together to try to make your school even better.
- They keep a close check on how well you are getting on.

We know that Mr. Hanscombe, Mrs Wilcox and the governors want the school to be even better. We have asked them to help teachers to plan lessons that always really push everyone to do their very best all the time. This should help the younger children to learn faster and make sure that those children who find learning a bit easier make more progress. Even though you often work hard with your writing and write a lot, quite often your work is rather messy. We have asked the teachers to keep reminding you to do neat and tidy work and to remind you about your spellings more often. You could help by remembering to take extra care with your writing.

Thank you again for being so friendly and willing to talk to us, we wish you lots of luck in the future,

Jill Bavin Lead Inspector Cecelia Davies Team Inspector