

Cherry Tree Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 105187 |
| Local Authority | Bolton |
| Inspection number | 307253 |
| Inspection dates | 20–21 June 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | John Coleman HMI |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 383 |
| Appropriate authority | The local authority |
| Headteacher | Ms Anthea Michel |
| Date of previous school inspection | 7 March 2006 |
| School address | Highfield Road Farnworth Bolton Lancashire BL4 0NS |
| Telephone number | 01204 333033 |
| Fax number | 01204 333034 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Cherry Tree is a larger than average primary school, it serves an area with some significant social disadvantage. The school was inspected in March 2006 and given a notice to improve. A high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). An above average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are White British.

The headteacher joined the school two years ago just as the local authority agreed to relocate Cherry Tree together with two local schools, one Special school and one Nursery School. The schools have federated and there is a single governing body responsible for all three schools. A new building was begun in November 2006 on the Cherry Tree School's sports field and is planned for completion in January 2008. The school is part of the Intensifying Support Programme, which is a national initiative aimed at raising standards. The current headteacher is to leave in August 2007, and the local authority and governing body have seconded a local headteacher and deputy headteacher. They will be in post from September 2007 to manage the transition period to the new site until Easter 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Cherry Tree Primary provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. At the previous inspection the school was given a notice to improve due to the inadequate achievement of pupils linked to weak teaching and poor levels of attendance. The local authority and governing body acted quickly to support the headteacher and a good action plan is bringing about significant improvement. Pupils' attendance, whilst still below average, is consistently improving due to the close attention paid to absences by the school staff, this includes the use of home visits and in some cases external agencies.

Many pupils enter the Foundation Stage with skills that are well below those found nationally. In Key Stage 1, where results in national assessments had been very low for over five years, pupils attained the schools' highest scores in 2006. Whilst attainment is still below average pupils' progress is improving and is now satisfactory. By age 11 pupils attain standards which are below average in English, and a little below average in mathematics and science. Overall, given the very low starting point for most pupils, their achievement is satisfactory. This is due to teaching that is now satisfactory, reflecting the success of the headteacher in bringing about improvement. There is no inadequate teaching. Good training, mentoring and support, means that the weaker teaching is improving. There is however, considerable variation in the quality of teaching. In the Foundation Stage, where provision is good and children make good progress, teachers succeed in making learning fun which excites and engages the children's interest. Although the school has effective systems to assess how well pupils are achieving, the use of the assessments to inform the next steps in pupil's learning is inconsistent. The marking of pupils' work does not consistently provide useful feedback so that pupils know how to improve. The curriculum is satisfactory. The quality of pupils' writing, seen as weak at the last inspection, is improving due to a greater emphasis on these key skills in all areas of the curriculum. Language and communication skills are rightly given high profile, for pupils have considerable ground to make up.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provides a strong steer to the school. The process of self-evaluation is satisfactory, but the involvement of all stakeholders is inconsistent. The structure of senior management results in an overlap of roles and responsibilities, this hinders its impact on improving the school's provision. The governing body is working hard to manage the huge building programme and the associated financial considerations. Consequently, it has paid less attention to the agenda for raising standards, preferring to delegate this to a working party and the headteacher. Recent improvements in teaching combined with rising standards and the staff's shared commitment to school improvement, show it has satisfactory capacity to improve.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils make very good use of the limited outdoor space during break times, they play cooperatively and sensibly and their social development is good. Staff are very caring about all pupils. The school works closely with a wide range of external agencies and support staff to help its many vulnerable pupils. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory rather than

good, however, because academic support for pupils is not as effective as it could be. Pupils do not always have targets to help them improve their work.

What the school should do to improve further

What the school should do to improve further

-Raise standards in English across the school.

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team.
- Increase the involvement of governors in the strategies to raise standards.
- Ensure the results of assessments inform the next steps in pupil's learning.
- Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Most pupils enter Nursery with skills which are very low in comparison to those in the majority of other schools. In the Nursery and Reception classes, pupils make good progress in their learning due to consistently good teaching. They quickly develop their speaking and listening skills and their social development progresses well. By the time pupils enter Year 1 they have made up much ground in acquiring basic skills, so that standards are only slightly below those seen in most schools. During Key Stage 1 pupils make satisfactory progress and reach standards by age 7 which are a little below average. Standards in the most recent national assessments support this judgement and demonstrate the first improvement for several years. Inspectors' observations in classes confirm the improvement. In Key Stage 2 progress is satisfactory but is inconsistent and this correlates with the quality of teaching which pupils receive. Results in national tests for the last three years show significant pupil progress in mathematics and science, albeit from a low starting point, so that standards are a little below average but improving. English results have been static and below average. In classes and pupils' work, standards are higher than shown by the test results due to the success of the school's strategies to improve teaching and to focus upon improving pupil's writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory and improving progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory with some good features. They are attentive in lessons and try their best, when asked they say they find school enjoyable. There are good systems in place to tackle poor attendance by some pupils. The school council is very active. There were a large number of pupils applying for the post of playground leader in March as well as for the positions of head boy and girl. A good example of pupils' increased responsibility is shown by the way they have helped to introduce healthy snacks at break times and better quality lunches. Pupils are aware of the expectations all adults have of their behaviour and they do not disappoint. Pupils agree that bullying and racist incidents are tackled speedily. Observations during lunchtimes and playtimes showed pupils who played harmoniously together. Despite the poor facilities in the grounds of the school, pupils' involvement in physical activities is good.

Pupils have a well developed sense of respect for the feelings of others and show sensitive understanding that everyone can shine at something. They are very enthusiastic fund-raisers, giving large sums of money to charities like the Marie Curie Hospice and the British Legion.

Pupils have started to explore their area of the North West with visits to Manchester theatres and Roman Chester. Multicultural education is satisfactory and is being developed through initiatives such as African drummers visiting the school and puppets being displayed from other cultures. Pupils take part in assemblies, say prayers and give readings and their spiritual development is satisfactory. Their self-esteem and confidence are well developed by staff who regularly praise pupils' efforts.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features, but the quality of provision varies significantly throughout the school. Teaching is consistently good in the Foundation Stage. Good lessons make high expectations of all pupils, provide enjoyment and are driven at a fast pace. They are planned to provide pupils with a variety of challenging, imaginative activities that make learning fun and develop independence. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and provide effective and sensitive support that enables all pupils to make good progress. Pupils' previous learning is reinforced and extended. The Year 4 studies based around a recycling theme was a good example of this, with numeracy, speaking and listening, geography and science all contributing to pupils' experiencing exciting activities, which captured their imagination. In contrast, in the otherwise satisfactory teaching, planning often takes insufficient account of pupils' earlier learning and the needs of different groups of pupils. Consequently, some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Too much time is spent on whole class teaching and pace suffers. Assessment procedures in relation to marking and feedback are not consistently applied. Pupils are not always able to understand where they are in relation to their learning and what is needed next in order to make progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall with good features. The work undertaken to enrich the curriculum, as illustrated by a number of visits and visitors, is still in its infancy, but is beginning to raise standards. These changes are helping to engage the pupils more in their learning. Pupils have satisfactory attitudes towards their learning. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from a range of activities emphasising language and social development. The school is developing the use of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The increased range of out of school activities are very popular and help to promote children's social skills, health and their contribution to the community. Outdoor provision falls short of what is expected and the unattractive environment fails to stimulate learning. The provision for information and communication technology is under-resourced and makes insufficient contribution to pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Both parents and pupils agree that children are looked after well. Careful attention is paid to health and safety issues and child protection.

Induction and transition procedures ensure that pupils settle into new routines. All staff consistently praise pupils' achievements and in turn pupils are very much aware that what they do matters to every adult in the school.

The school has started to unify the assessment and support for all pupils, but especially for those with LDD. Pupils' targets for learning are displayed on table tops and on classroom walls, but not always used to improve their learning. In the good lessons observed the target setting is more advanced, but there is a lack of consistency across the school. Tracking systems are satisfactory, but are still at the developmental stage and need to be further revised and adjusted to meet the needs of the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides strong determined direction and a firm steer which builds team commitment and staff confidence. Strategies put in place to eradicate inadequate teaching reported at the last inspection have been successful. Effective mentoring is in place to support weaker teaching and this is well received. The headteacher and governors have rigorous recruitment procedures which ensure that new staff are well suited to the school's needs. Staff are deployed effectively according to their strengths and expertise.

The governing body is focused on building issues and financial management, as a consequence of the extensive site development currently taking place. The chair is knowledgeable about the issues facing the school. Governors are involved in committees such as that overseeing the school's curriculum and a Collaborative Working Group. This group is made up of staff, governors and local authority advisors: it is responsible for monitoring the school's progress in the areas causing concern in the last inspection report. The group is well informed by regular reports from the local authority and school staff. The full governing body are made aware of these findings. There are no formal links between governors and teachers.

The roles and responsibilities expected of assistant headteachers are unclear. There is duplication of roles. An enthusiastic team of subject leaders effectively manage staff teams in delivering the curriculum. The teams are new and it is too soon to judge their impact on school improvement. The headteacher knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school well through her monitoring of teaching and learning. The monitoring role of other leaders is less well developed.

Since the last inspection standards have risen, particularly in the areas of concern, the quality of teaching is improved and the agenda for school improvement is in place. Consequently, value for money is satisfactory.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| <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

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

Achievement and standards

| | |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ 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

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| 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 | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |

The quality of provision

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

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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 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

Inspection of Cherry Tree Primary School, Bolton, BL4 0NS

Following our visit to your school we would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for talking to us about your experiences. We would like to tell you what we found out about your school.

- Your school is much improved and is no longer causing concern. It provides you with a satisfactory education.
- Pupils and parents told us that Cherry Tree is a caring school and we agree.
- You are well behaved.
- Your headteacher is very good at improving your school.
- You make satisfactory progress and, by the time you are ready for secondary school, you have learned much that will help you.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall.
- You enjoy being at school.
- You told us you feel safe in school and that staff are approachable, caring and helpful. We agree.

We have asked the school to improve by:

- making sure you achieve higher standards in English.
- increasing the number of good lessons
- planning what you are to learn next by building on what you can already do
- making the roles of the senior staff clearer
- ensuring that the governors are more actively involved in all aspects of the school.

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection of your school. We hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Cherry Tree Primary School an even better school.