

Cherry Orchard Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103178
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	308240
Inspection dates	13–14 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	451
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clifford Fryer
Headteacher	Sue Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 0001
School address	Cherry Orchard Road Handsworth Wood Birmingham B20 2LB
Telephone number	01215 540862
Fax number	01215 544162

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much larger than most primary schools and an increasing number of pupils come from beyond the local community. Pupils are from a wide range of heritages but groups with the highest proportions are from Indian, Caribbean or Pakistani backgrounds. A high proportion of pupils are from families where English is not the first language. Few pupils are in the early stages of learning English, although that proportion is increasing. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly similar to the national average but varies widely between year groups. The headteacher has recently been involved in supporting other schools on both a national and local level. The school has won many awards, including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Healthy Schools Award and national recognition for its assessment procedures.

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 where pupils really enjoy learning because of an outstanding curriculum and very high standards of care. The school works very well in partnership with a wide range of external providers to ensure that the curriculum is both innovative and exciting and is closely matched to pupils' needs. Pupils find out about each other's cultures by taking part in activities such as Black History week and they learn to value their differences. As a result, there is an atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect where relationships are excellent. Pupils are very keen to contribute to the school and wider communities through the school council, the Green Group and the Research Group. They talk confidently about the environment and sustainability and have very strong morals. The very good programme for personal, social and health education ensures that pupils are exceptionally well informed about how to keep healthy and safe. Children get off to a flying start in the Nursery and Reception classes because of outstanding provision. Although they begin school with skills that are below those expected, a strong focus on speaking and listening and developing social skills means that they quickly catch up. Taking into account pupils' progress from their starting point in Nursery to the end of Year 6, achievement is good. By the end of Year 6, standards are just above average. Lower-attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of good support, particularly through being taught in small groups. The progress of more able pupils is more variable.

Teaching is good overall but can vary between outstanding and satisfactory. This is because there are inconsistencies between teachers' expectations and the amount of pace and challenge in lessons. Pupils are set by ability for some subjects but within the sets, pupils' capabilities still vary. They are sometimes all set the same work, which is not challenging enough for the more able pupils. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Parents feel that staff are extremely caring, typically saying that teachers are 'supportive and helpful'. Thorough assessment procedures successfully identify those pupils at risk of falling behind but do not always identify the slower progress made by a minority of higher-attaining pupils.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides outstanding and charismatic leadership. A parent's typical comment was that 'the headteacher is a wonderful asset to the school'. School leaders have developed the school's curriculum effectively. The analysis of information about pupils' standards and achievement is satisfactory but could be used more effectively to set targets. The school's current target setting procedures are likely to sustain, rather than improve, standards because the targets set for pupils are not always challenging enough. Leadership and management are increasingly effective and this, coupled with good support from the governors, results in the school having a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Very good teaching, combined with interesting activities, ensures that children really enjoy their time in school and learn very effectively. A clear focus on developing children's social skills leads to children making good progress in their personal development. A good phonics programme, combined with a strong emphasis on developing pupils' speech and language, results in children making good progress in linking sounds and letters, reading and writing, although their skills in these areas are still a little below the expected level when they join Year 1. Particularly good attention is paid to meeting children's individual needs by teaching in small groups. Careful assessment of children's skills and secure tracking ensures that the children's

good progress is carefully checked. The information is used well to make sure that teaching activities fully meet children's needs. Children are very well cared for and parents comment positively on how quickly their children settle in. Good leadership and management has led to an improved curriculum. The development of the outdoor area is making a real difference and is now viewed by children as not just a place to go and play but as a place to go and learn.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good by making sure that lessons move along at a good pace and expectations are always high.
- Increase the challenge of targets, especially for the work of more able pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start the Nursery class with skills that are below national expectations. Their language skills and social and emotional development lag behind those of children in other schools. They make very good progress through the Foundation Stage and by the time they join Year 1, their skills in most areas are very similar to national expectations, but their language and literacy skills are still a little below average. The school is aware that standards at the end of Year 2 have drifted downwards in recent years and were below average in 2007. Although this is associated with some decline in pupils' language and social skills on entry to the school, it is also linked with variations in the quality of teaching because of inconsistent expectations and pace of work. Standards at the end of Year 6 dipped in English in 2006, but these are now recovering well because the school has rigorously addressed issues with writing. The progress made by higher-attaining pupils is inconsistent because they do not always have access to challenging work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is good. As a result of the school's strong focus on personal development, pupils develop confidence combined with responsible and tolerant attitudes. Most pupils enjoy school and really want to do well. Pupils have a great time in the really exciting and challenging lessons but occasionally their enjoyment is limited when the lesson lacks sufficient pace and challenge. Behaviour is usually good in lessons and around school but a few pupils have a tendency to become over-excited. This is managed well. There is a strong commitment to racial and social equality and pupils from very varied backgrounds work and play well together and are confident that there is no bullying. Attendance rates are above average and reflect the way that both pupils and parents value education and the work of the school. There are extensive opportunities for pupils to contribute to decision-making. Pupils are confident that their opinions are listened to. A good focus on developing basic skills, combined with pupils' positive attitudes, ensures that pupils are well prepared for their futures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Most lessons are well planned and enthusiastically delivered. They move on at a good pace and keep pupils thoroughly interested and involved, but occasionally lessons are not as brisk and do not provide all pupils with sufficient challenge. Relationships between teachers and pupils are warm and supportive and help pupils gain confidence. Interactive white boards are used very well to support learning. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to speak, listen and develop their vocabulary and this has a very positive effect on their language development. Most teachers use questions well to extend pupils' understanding and reinforce learning. Activities for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are usually well matched to their needs although those for the more able sometimes lack challenge. The quality of teachers' marking is good, telling pupils clearly how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The outstanding curriculum is carefully planned to make logical links between subjects and emphasise practical experiences. Good attention is paid to developing pupils' basic skills, including those in information and communication technology. The teaching of French enhances the curriculum. The curriculum celebrates the wide range of pupils' cultural and religious backgrounds while continuing to embrace many aspects of British culture, including learning about British history and traditions. Consequently, it makes an important contribution to promoting tolerance and pupils' good sense of shared community. A very good range of clubs, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum and brings learning to life. Focus weeks draw together many cross-curricular themes and pupils have clearly enjoyed these weeks, including the creative arts week.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Outstanding pastoral care contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school and personal development. The school is a very caring community where relationships between adults and pupils are very good indeed. Pupils feel safe and well cared for and say that there is always someone to talk to if they have any problems. Measures that safeguard pupils, including child protection and health and safety procedures, are robust. Vulnerable pupils, as well as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at the early stages of speaking English are extremely well supported. Links with other agencies further enhance this high quality support. The school's systems for checking pupils' progress are very sophisticated but sometimes important issues are lost in the wealth of information. Those who are in danger of falling behind are quickly identified and offered very effective support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's charismatic leadership has been instrumental in ensuring that the school provides a positive supportive environment where pupils and staff can flourish. She has been

pivotal in successfully developing the leadership skills of other members of staff. Teaching is closely monitored through a rigorous schedule of lesson observations and analysis of work. The quality of teaching continues to improve because staff are committed, hardworking and willing to reflect on their practice. Self-evaluation is generally accurate and informs school development planning. The school has focused on improving the fine detail of its provision. This has resulted in the curriculum being outstanding. However, the wider picture of trends in standards and achievement has not always been checked rigorously enough to obtain an accurate prediction of future standards. Consequently, target setting is not challenging enough. The governors provide the school with a good level of support and challenge.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

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?	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

15 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cherry Orchard Primary School, Birmingham B20 2LB

It was a delight and a privilege to visit your school. The inspection team really enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. You go to a good school that has some outstanding features. It's clear that you have a great time at school because of all the fun things you have to do. We enjoyed listening to you talk about the valuable work done by the school council, the Green Group and the Research Group. We were very impressed by how much you know about looking after the environment and sustainability. We also thought you were very well informed about how to keep healthy and safe. Your behaviour is good. You have good manners and make visitors very welcome.

You told us that your teachers look after you well and that they always try to help you. Younger children really enjoy school and are doing well because they are taught well.

You are making good progress and by the end of Year 6, you are reaching standards that are just above those reached by children in other primary schools. Your teachers work very hard. Teaching is good but it is better in some classes than others. We have asked your teachers to make sure that all lessons are challenging and exciting. We noticed that those of you who find schoolwork hard are very well supported and make good progress, but the more able pupils could do even better. We have asked your teachers to make sure that these pupils are not set work that's too easy for them. The managers in your school are doing a good job. They have lots of information about how you are doing at school and we have asked them to look more carefully at some of that information in order to help them manage the school better.

Thank you again for being such good company.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh Lead inspector