

Pershore, Cherry Orchard First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116717
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	312379
Inspection date	29 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Lois Furness

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	102
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bradley Bennett
Headteacher	Sarah Bitcon
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2003
School address	Cherry Orchard Pershore WR10 1ET
Telephone number	01386 552515
Fax number	01386 550132

Age group	4-9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

In this small school, most pupils are White British. A small number of pupils come from a nearby Gypsy/Roma community. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and within the school, there is an eight-place Able Autism Base. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2006. The school has Healthy School status and sport Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Pershore Cherry Orchard is a satisfactory school, with strengths in pupils' personal development. This is a result of good quality pastoral care, which parents greatly appreciate. One parent summarised the views of many by saying, 'The school offers a friendly, caring environment where staff are always ready to listen.' Consequently, pupils feel safe and secure and enjoy school. Behaviour is good and positive attitudes are evident as pupils eagerly take part in lessons. They willingly answer questions and say knowing the aim of the lesson helps them to do better with their work. They also say teachers provide them with helpful advice about how to improve, particularly in writing. They enjoy using the interactive whiteboards, as was seen by the enthusiastic response of Year 4 pupils as they practised their multiplication tables.

In the Reception class, progress is satisfactory, and by the time children enter Year 1, the majority of them are working within the goals expected for their age. By Year 4, standards are broadly average. Achievement is satisfactory and pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of education. However, progress is uneven through Years 1 to 4. The above-average standards attained by the end of Year 2 in mathematics have not in the past been maintained in Years 3 and 4. Writing standards have not been high enough throughout the school. Although this is now improving as a result of strategies implemented, pupils have too few opportunities to practice their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects of the curriculum. Use of assessment is good in some cases, but it is not used well enough to ensure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. In the Able Autism Base, pupils are given activities that are matched well to their learning needs and, consequently, they make good progress when working there.

The interesting curriculum is a key contributory factor to pupils' enjoyment of school. It is enriched well through visits and visitors which help to make learning more meaningful to them. The extensive opportunities available for sport during the school day and at after-school clubs enable pupils to take regular exercise. Pupils know how to eat sensibly, and the school council has been active in encouraging pupils to bring healthy snacks to school. Pupils know how to keep safe and speak confidently about road safety issues and using the Internet with care. Responsibility is welcomed and members of the eco-committee are keen to save the environment by, for example, planting trees. Pupils willingly raise funds for different charities as they recognise the importance of helping others less fortunate than themselves.

The new headteacher is clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and self-evaluation is satisfactory. Monitoring, however, does not always focus sufficiently on how well pupils are learning, and subject leaders and governors have not been sufficiently involved in monitoring and evaluation activities. Through training, this is improving, but there is still a way to go before all are contributing effectively towards ensuring pupils' achievement improves to good. Improvement since the previous inspection has been uneven, although satisfactory overall. The school's successful work over the last year, since the appointment of the new headteacher, shows its satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

On entry to the Reception class, the majority of children are working at levels broadly in line with those expected, with weaknesses in aspects of communication, language and literacy.

Progress is satisfactory and, by the time they enter Year 1, the majority are working within the goals expected for their age. In the past, there have been weaknesses in children's understanding of linking letters and sounds, and in writing. This is improving because of better teaching in these areas. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given priority. This means children settle quickly into school, are happy and enjoy learning. Although there is a very good outdoor area available, children do not have enough opportunities to use this resource. In addition, too many activities are adult led and this limits children's independent learning skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure assessment information is used carefully to plan activities that meet the needs of all pupils.
- Raise standards in mathematics in Years 3 and 4, and writing throughout the school, by giving pupils more opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects.
- Develop a rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluation that focuses clearly on pupils' learning and involves all with leadership responsibility.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and pupils generally attain broadly average standards by the end of Year 4. However, there has been considerable variation in achievement between classes and between different subjects. Assessment information shows that some pupils in Years 3 and 4 have not been making the progress of which they are capable, especially in mathematics. Also, throughout the school, writing standards are lower than those in reading and mathematics. This picture is improving but there is still more to do to maximise pupils' progress.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall. Support, though sometimes good, is not consistently well planned to meet their needs. Nevertheless, the extent to which those pupils working within the Able Autism Base are supported is good. As a result, they play a full part in activities and make good progress. Those pupils of Gypsy/Roma origin make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy, cheerful and polite. They know how to keep safe and the school is a calm, orderly community where behaviour is good. Pupils confidently say there is little bullying, and that when it does occur it is sorted out quickly. Because of good relationships, pupils know they are valued and have positive attitudes towards learning. However, attendance is only broadly average because some parents take their children on holiday during term time. Statistics are also adversely affected by the erratic attendance of some Gypsy/Roma pupils.

Pupils are keen to take responsibility. For example, they are pleased to be school councilors or members of the eco-committee. They think they do a good job. 'We've planted one hundred trees to help save the environment,' one pupil proudly said. There is a strong commitment to leading a healthy lifestyle, and the sports clubs are attended enthusiastically. Pupils are only satisfactorily prepared for their next stage of education as, although they have positive attitudes

towards learning, their basic literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactory and they do not always have enough opportunities to develop as independent learners.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to interest and involve pupils in their learning. Pupils willingly answer questions because relationships are good. Pupils know the expected learning of the lesson and in writing, in particular, they are clear about how to achieve success in their work. Teaching assistants work sensitively with pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, ensuring they are able to access all activities. In some classes, pupils successfully discuss their ideas in pairs, but, in others, pupils do not have the necessary social skills to carry out this activity.

In the Able Autism Base, the use of assessment is good, making sure pupils have work that interests them and focuses well on their individual learning needs. However, this good use of assessment information is not as established in all other classes. Not all teachers have a good understanding of how to develop pupils' skills in linking letters to sounds.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

An extensive range of well-attended clubs and activities, visits and visitors promotes personal, physical and cultural development well and contributes to pupils' good understanding of how to stay safe, fit and healthy. A strong emphasis is given to ensuring all pupils can swim, and pupils are encouraged to play a musical instrument. The teaching of French adds cultural interest to the curriculum. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to promote learning. Pupils say how much they enjoy using computers, for example, to practice their reading skills. The new National Strategies for teaching English and mathematics have been introduced to support the teaching of literacy and numeracy. However, teachers do not systematically plan opportunities for pupils to practise and develop further their literacy and numeracy skills in the other subjects of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Procedures for safeguarding pupils, including those for child protection, are robust. Good relationships and the warm, friendly, family ethos contribute greatly to pupils' good personal development, safety and well-being. Parents are appreciative of this, with one parent typically describing Pershore Cherry Orchard as 'a small, friendly school where everyone helps each other'. Close working relationships with a range of agencies provide pupils from the Able Autism Base with the support they need to make good progress. These pupils are well integrated into school life.

A detailed tracking and target-setting system has been introduced. Although the assessment information provided is used well in some classes, it is not used consistently well enough throughout the school to ensure all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. However, there is good practice in the marking of pupils' work, particularly in English. In this subject,

pupils are given very clear guidance about what they are doing well and how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has made a good start in evaluating the quality of provision, and systems, such as the detailed tracking and target-setting system, have been implemented to improve pupils' progress and raise standards. However, school leaders know there is also scope to improve teachers' use of this assessment information. Although monitoring and evaluation are satisfactory, they do not focus sufficiently well on pupils' learning. For example, the school improvement plan does not clearly identify how success can be measured against pupils' progress. This limits its effectiveness. Subject leaders and governors are not involved enough in raising standards. However, these leaders are enthusiastic and supportive and, through training, are developing their monitoring and evaluation skills. Virtually all parents have confidence in the school. As one commented, 'We are very lucky to be able to send our children to this school.'

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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?	3
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	2
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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Dear Children

Inspection of Pershore Cherry Orchard First School, Pershore, WR10 1ET

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You were polite and friendly and this helped us to learn a lot about your work. We think your school is providing a satisfactory education. This means that we found some good things but also some things to improve. These are some of the things we found out.

- You enjoy school and your parents and carers like the school very much too. It is good to know you feel safe, and adults will always listen to you.
- You behave sensibly in class and around the school.
- You take part in lots of activities, and particularly enjoy the clubs, sports, visits, visitors, learning French and playing a musical instrument.
- You know a lot about how to stay healthy. Many of you are doing several activities to keep fit. Well done!
- The school council and eco-committee do a good job by reminding you to bring healthy snacks and help save the environment. I was amazed when you told me about planting 100 trees. I expect you were really tired after that activity!

These are the things we have asked the school to do now:

- By Year 4, you are attaining standards in your work that are similar to those in most schools. However, we think you could do better if teachers used information to plan activities that made you all think harder.
- Some of you could do better in mathematics in Years 3 and 4, if you had lots of opportunities to practise your skills in other subjects, for example, using measuring skills in design and technology. We also think writing would improve if you all had more time to practise your writing skills.
- Your headteacher knows what is needed to make things better for you. We have asked the governors and teachers in charge of subjects to help to make sure you are all learning as well as you can.

Thank you again for your help and I hope you continue to work hard and enjoy your time at school.

Yours faithfully

Lois Furness Lead inspector

30 November 2007



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Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You were polite and friendly and this helped us to learn a lot about your work. We think your school is providing a satisfactory education. This means that we found some good things but also some things to improve.

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Lead inspector