

Cherry Fold Community Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 133622 |
| Local Authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 316171 |
| Inspection dates | 3–4 July 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Nigel Cromey-Hawke |

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 | 287 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Pat Brown |
| Headteacher | Ms Wendy Tracey |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 May 2005 |
| School address | Cog Lane Burnley Lancashire BB11 5JS |
| Telephone number | 01282 426630 |
| Fax number | 01282 832302 |

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|--------------------------|---------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school formed by the merger of four schools four years ago. Most pupils are of White British heritage and very nearly all speak English as their first language. The school serves an area of acute social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above the national average, as is the number entitled to free school meals. There are very high levels of pupil movement in and out of school, between joining in Nursery and leaving in Year 6. The school has Healthy Schools status and Activemark awards and operates extended services such as a breakfast club and parenting classes.

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

This is a satisfactory school. It has some good features. In particular, outstanding levels of pastoral care and support for its pupils ensure their personal development is good although the school's academic guidance for pupils is less effective. The parents that returned the survey were fully in support of the way the school is led and managed and one, reflecting a typical view, commented that 'I cannot thank this school enough for what they have done for my girls and myself.'

Children enter the Nursery with knowledge, understanding and skills that are exceptionally low compared to those typical for their age. They make good progress as a result of the good levels of support and teaching in the Foundation Stage but

enter Key Stage 1 with skill levels that are well below those expected at this age. Although pupils make satisfactory progress from Year 1 to Year 6, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are still well below average in English, mathematics and science. Overall achievement is satisfactory although there are signs of improving progress in lessons and the school's tracking data. Very high numbers of pupils join and leave the school throughout the year and this makes it difficult to sustain pupils' continuity of learning. The very high numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress and the school works tirelessly to meet their often complex needs.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but variable. Some good and outstanding teaching ensures that pupils are interested, engage with carefully chosen and well resourced activities and they are challenged to make progress. Other teaching is too teacher-led at times and less challenging. Progress in these lessons is satisfactory but slower than in the better lessons. Work is in progress to extend the use of pupils' targets, successfully established in English and mathematics, across other areas of the school. Assessment practices that help pupils to understand what level they are working at and what they need to do in order to make progress, are underdeveloped. As a result, pupils' ability to work independently is sometimes limited.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and available to all. It includes high quality support for literacy and numeracy and a wide range of activities, visits and themed days to help pupils build their understanding of the wider world. These contribute well to their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Pupils clearly enjoy their learning at Cherry Fold and feel safe and well supported by the wide range of effective and committed adult helpers. Behaviour is good and attendance has improved dramatically over the last year from low levels, as a result of concerted action by the school and the pupils' positive attitudes to learning.

Leadership and management in the school are satisfactory and have some good features. The headteacher has led the amalgamation of four schools onto one site very well and has successfully overseen the creation of a new identity. She has vision, is inspirational and has built around her a team of staff who are working effectively together within extremely challenging circumstances. The school monitors and evaluates what it is doing well and is taking the right action to make improvements. It has a comprehensive programme for improving the consistency of teaching and learning and is challenged by the well-informed governing body. Although the impact upon standards has been limited, the improved tracking of current pupils confirms that a secure start to the process has begun.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Despite good progress being made in the Nursery, children enter the Reception class with skills still well below those typical for this age especially in reading, writing, linking letters and sounds and calculations. The curriculum is organised so that it helps the children develop their literacy, numeracy, personal and social skills. Outdoor learning is effective in supporting and extending children's spontaneous play and physical skills. This good provision and teaching in the Foundation Stage Unit enables all children to make good progress, but the majority still leave the Foundation Stage with skills well below national expectations.

Staff work hard and devote a great deal of their time to helping children to learn in a safe and caring environment. Activities are carefully planned and include a balance between activities led by adults and those chosen by the children. Children approach their activities confidently and enthusiastically. Staff encourage them to take responsibility, for example, by putting out their own drinks and food at lunchtime. The Foundation Stage coordinator leads and manages her team well, has good relations with parents and is well supported by them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Raise the quality of all teaching and learning to that of the best, particularly in relation to the level of challenge for pupils.
- Develop the use of assessment in lessons so that pupils have a better understanding of what they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

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 in the school is satisfactory overall, but standards at the end of Year 6 remain significantly below national averages. From exceptionally low starting points, children make good progress in the Foundation Stage, but their skills are still well below the expected levels by the time they enter Key Stage 1. Pupils make satisfactory overall progress through Key Stages 1 and 2. The recently introduced good assessment and tracking systems confirm that pupils' current achievements and their progress towards their targets are improving. However, the school's results in national tests and assessments are limited by the high numbers of pupils joining and leaving the school, often with gaps in their prior learning. The school also has a very high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Although these pupils are cared for and supported very well, making satisfactory progress, their standards of attainment are often low.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say that they really enjoy school and the vast majority of parents who returned the inspection questionnaire indicated their agreement with this sentiment. Pupils' descriptions of life at the school include 'kind teachers', 'friendly children' and 'enjoyable playtime'. Pupils'

attendance has improved dramatically over the past year, due to a major drive by the school to raise the profile with both children and parents. Attendance is now satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in classrooms and around the school are good, although in some less effective lessons they occasionally lose concentration and progress slows. Members of the school council take their responsibilities very seriously and they enjoy the challenge of writing termly progress reports to, and having coffee breaks with, the governing body. Pupils clearly enjoy the energetic 'wake up, shake up' routine to music which was observed in a Year 3 classroom, and which is being extended to the rest of the school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is enhanced by well-planned and themed assemblies and a range of personal, health and social education lessons, in addition to other subjects of the curriculum. The school makes good use of the local and wider environment to allow children to learn about their own and other cultures, and to develop healthy lifestyles by, for example, being members of BUFFALO – Burnley Food & Fitness Aimed at Lowering Obesity.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall, but with wide variations in quality. In the best lessons, good and some outstanding teaching ensures that good progress is made by pupils, often from very low starting points. Good use is made of questioning and there are high levels of support from the teachers and other adults in the classroom. In such lessons, challenging objectives and activities are well matched to pupils' needs and they clearly enjoy their learning. In other lessons, although teaching is satisfactory, progress is not as rapid. Not enough challenge, too much teacher talk and limited activities mean that the pupils' interest is not consistently engaged and their needs are not so effectively met. Behaviour, however, is good in most lessons and aids learning. The school evaluates its teaching well and this is leading to better approaches. Extensive work has been carried out in the last year to use assessment to guide planning and provide targets for pupils in English and mathematics. Although marking still varies in quality, there are early signs that the use of assessment is having successes in improving pupils' achievement. Learners with difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported through the high quality care systems that the school has in place.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum makes good provision for pupils' personal development and well-being. It fully meets national requirements and, in response to local needs, has a strong emphasis upon healthy living. In response to the very low standards, there is a comprehensive programme of support for pupils' key skills. Some features of the interventions to support reading and writing are outstanding and are showing better achievement for these pupils. As a result, all learners, including those with difficulties and/or disabilities, are able to access a broad and balanced curriculum, including French. The staff have worked hard to create a stimulating learning environment for pupils, particularly with classroom displays, resources and a wide range of visits, visitors, themed learning days and extra activities. As a result, pupils rightly take great pride in their school. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively in classrooms to bring

interesting resources into the learning. The use of computers by pupils is satisfactory but being developed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Child protection arrangements meet requirements and health and safety procedures are in place, including the risk assessments for school visits and premises. A strong aspect of the school's provision is high quality pastoral care and support in which pupils feel safe, highly valued and well looked after. It contributes to pupils' good attitudes to school, their improved attendance and their good behaviour. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with physical disabilities are very effectively supported and are fully included in school life. Individual education plans are tailored well to pupils' needs and reviewed regularly. The school also works especially well with partners and other agencies to support the often complex needs of pupils. The arrangements for pupils' academic guidance are not as strong. An improved assessment system is giving a clearer view of how well pupils are doing and is guiding teachers' planning. Targets have begun to be used in English and mathematics to help raise pupils' expectations and the satisfactory academic guidance is now being developed to enable them to work more independently. However, teachers do not consistently make full use of the information they have to point out what pupils need to do next to reach higher levels.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, with good elements. The headteacher has worked tirelessly to build a caring and inclusive school since the amalgamation onto one site four years ago. She has created a highly committed and hard working team of staff who respond well to the many and often complex needs of the pupils. The school is a lively and happy place in which to learn and the vast majority of parents are highly supportive of the way it is led and managed. The governing body recognise the context within which the school operates and support it well, but they also provide challenge concerning standards. The school's self-evaluation is robust, is shared with all staff and governors and is becoming increasingly effective. It knows what it has to do and has a detailed improvement plan for teaching and learning, which is beginning to see improvements in lessons. It is developing the roles of subject leaders in the use of assessment data to tackle underachievement in lessons. However, such strategies are at an early stage and, although there are improvements in pupils' progress, the impact on standards is not yet discernible. The significant budget deficit has been recovered and effective steps to promote improvement have been taken since the last inspection. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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? | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Achievement and standards

| | |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 4 |
| 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? | 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

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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 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

7 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cherry Fold Community Primary School, Lancashire,

BB11 5JS

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me and my team when we inspected your school. You were very friendly, polite and enthusiastic about what you do. You told us a lot of interesting things about your school and you are clearly very proud of it. We spent a lot of time finding out about how you learn in your lessons, looking at your work and talking to teachers and the headteacher. Cherry Fold Primary School is a satisfactory school with some good features.

Below are the main things we found that are good about your school.

- Your school cares for and looks after you extremely well.
- Your school works very well in partnership with others.
- You have a headteacher who leads the school well and a staff who work very hard to help you in your learning.
- You have an interesting range of subjects and activities at school.
- You have good attitudes to learning, say you feel safe and happy in the school and behave well. Attendance has improved greatly over the last year. This is especially important. Well done.

These are the things that we have suggested to your school, to make it an even better place to learn:

- work with you to raise standards in English, mathematics and science
- make sure that all lessons are as good as the best, so that all of you have work that isn't too easy and really helps you to learn
- show you more clearly what level you are at in lessons and what you have to do in order to improve your learning.

You can help by telling your teachers how you learn best and if you have any difficulties. You can also help by continuing to attend school, behaving well and working hard, especially in your literacy and numeracy.

Nigel Cromey-Hawke

Lead inspector