

Cambridge Education  
Demeter House  
Station Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 01223 578500  
Direct F 01223 578501  
Email - risp.inspections@camb-ed.com



7 December 2007

Mrs Maddie Oldershaw  
Headteacher  
Pear Tree Junior School  
Pear Tree Street  
Derby  
DE23 8PN

Dear Mrs Oldershaw

### SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF PEAR TREE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Following my visit with Brian Downes, Additional Inspector, to your school on 26 and 27 November 2007, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in March 2006. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education for Derby.

Yours sincerely

Pat Cox  
Additional Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF PEAR TREE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection: November 28, 2007

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, groups of pupils, the chair of governors, the senior management team, all teachers, the executive headteacher and held discussions with a representative from the LA.

### Context

The executive headteacher has continued to work with the school but has reduced her involvement this term. She will have completed her appointed term in December but will maintain her link with this school. Pear Tree now has a full complement of permanent teaching staff, and the new English subject leader has taken up her post. Although the turnover of pupils continues to have a considerable impact on the work of the school, the stability of staffing has had a positive effect on the ethos of the school.

### Achievement and standards

Pupils in most classes make adequate progress in the core subjects but there is still a legacy of underachievement that is not being eliminated rapidly enough. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily in mathematics and reading, although standards are still exceptionally low. Several appropriate initiatives have recently been put in place to raise standards in writing, and the introduction of phonics-based teaching is particularly valuable, especially for pupils from overseas whose pronunciation is not yet accurate. Nevertheless, writing standards are unlikely to rise significantly until pupils' speaking and listening skills improve more rapidly. There is a renewed focus on science, through the work of the new team whose role it is to bring about change. Pupils are undertaking more scientific enquiry and improving their skills in predicting and measuring, although they are not yet sufficiently involved in planning investigations. In addition, pupils are making better progress in information and communication technology (ICT) because the banks of laptops are being used regularly and more consistently.

In general, the test data suggests that some groups of pupils make better progress than others. For example, the gap between the girls and boys is consistently wider than the national picture, particularly in English and science. Groups who achieve better include the White British and those from Asian backgrounds, when compared with the White pupils from other countries. The progress of those who have learning difficulties and disabilities is better than those who do not. Many of these differences are linked to the arrangements for teaching, particularly for the pupils with little English. The school has a good bank of data that has the potential to demonstrate in more detail how each group of pupils achieves. However it is not always presented in the most consistent way, particularly in measuring the attainment and progress of those who are at an early stage in learning English.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in March 2006:

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by improving the quality and consistency of teaching and ensuring that all pupils are appropriately challenged; satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being.

Pupils' personal development remains satisfactory. There is a high level of personal care for pupils. The school makes a satisfactory contribution overall to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are strengths in the provision for moral and social development. Assemblies and displays around the school contribute soundly to cultural development. Behaviour in classes and around the school is satisfactory and many pupils behave well, although a substantial minority of pupils finds it difficult to concentrate for any length of time. Where teaching is most effective, pupils pay attention better and behave well. Attendance remains below average and is adversely affected by families who keep children at home for long periods. Pupils who are in the early stages of learning English are quickly assimilated into the school community and play an increasing part in school activities. Pupils feel safe in school. The school's dining room is not a pleasant environment for a quiet meal and a talk with friends and pupils and adults are often shouting at one another to make themselves heard. The school yard is also a fairly barren environment which would benefit from some development, and from fencing the cars in.

Quality of provision

The majority of lessons observed were satisfactory, and a third were good. There is greater enthusiasm and energy than has been evident on previous visits, and many staff spoke positively about the changes that have been made. There is consistency in the informative classroom and corridor displays and in the way that teachers mark pupils' work; in addition, more personalised comments are appearing in their books. There are common expectations about presentation and behaviour in class. The interactive whiteboards are being used with more confidence, especially to support pupils' learning as well as the teaching. Many teachers are being more adventurous in the strategies and resources they are using and this is improving pupils' interest. There was greater evidence of the use of paired discussion and time for pupils to think. In the better lessons, and some of the satisfactory ones, teachers ensured that pupils understood what they were to learn and referred back to these objectives during the lesson. They encouraged pupils to evaluate their own work, and occasionally that of others. Tasks were challenging for all and planned at the appropriate level for the different groups in the classroom. The pace was maintained, and the teacher intervened with groups or the whole class to reinforce learning. In many classes, the teacher's expectations are high and this has been transmitted to the pupils, who show more eagerness to learn.

However, there is still a core of unsatisfactory teaching. This appears to have increased, due to the school's decision to place all those pupils with limited English in two separate classes, one in the upper school and one in the lower. The common weakness throughout the school remains the lack of attention to ensuring that work

matches pupils' needs appropriately and that is particularly apparent in these two classes, where pupils are at varying stages in acquiring the language. Other shortcomings include some lack of subject knowledge in science, or whole class teaching sessions that are too lengthy, and therefore pupils had too little time on task. In many lessons, pupils are given too few opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, and particularly to explain their thinking or working out. Teachers often take answers from those who put their hands up rather than ensuring that all pupils are involved. Nevertheless, the teaching in the mainstream classes is becoming more established and secure.

The school is rightly moving towards a skills-based curriculum, in order to ensure that the pupils build consistently on what they have already learned. In the main, teachers are implementing the new Primary Framework with some confidence. There has been a review and reduction of the time taken on guided reading and this has enabled the school to devote more time to the wider curriculum. Rapid movement has been evident in the use of ICT. It is now timetabled and the resources are used to develop pupils' specific skills, as well as the resources being used as a more regular strategy for teaching other subjects. There is a solid bank of resources, such as sensors, that can enhance the pupils' learning in a range of subjects such as science and geography, although the use of these is at an early stage. The school has rightly stopped teaching French to the pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. However, there are times when pupils are taken out of other lessons, such as personal, social and health education, for additional work in English or mathematics, which deprives them of the full breadth of the curriculum, and particularly the opportunity to learn more that would support their adaptation to life and behaviour in Britain.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in March 2006:

- Improve the quality of teaching and ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged – satisfactory progress.

Leadership and management.

The headteacher and the senior leadership team are now working well as a team. They have a clear view of what needs to be done and how the school should develop in the future. The school has a clear timetable for developments, who should monitor progress and when. However, analysis and evaluation of the impact of some decisions is not as effective as it should be, in ensuring that initiatives actually deliver what they are intended to do. This is evident in the grouping together in two classes the pupils in the early stages of learning English. Because the teachers have not been prepared well enough to take on this role, pupils make inadequate progress and this weakness has not been identified. Occasionally, other aspects of the school's work are in danger of being over-monitored, resulting in the possibility of wasted time and duplication.

The executive headteacher has been instrumental in bringing greater focus and rigour to all aspects of the school's work. Governors are developing a more positive strategic role in supervising the school's development. The chair of governors has

been very effective in this improvement. Subject leadership teams are now in place for English, mathematics, ICT and science. The mathematics team is, at present, the most effective and this is evident in the better progress that pupils are making in the subject. Team leader appointments to English and ICT are more recent, but these teams are also beginning to have a positive impact. The teams are increasingly competent in monitoring and evaluating a range of information and identifying appropriate priorities for improvement. Many of the planned actions are suitable but as yet, these initiatives are at an early stage and have not resulted in a substantial improvement in standards. Nevertheless, a more consistent approach to their work has resulted in more coherence and teamwork among the staff. There is a greater and continued need to focus strongly on, and carefully monitor, what will improve standards and on what classroom strategies enable pupils to learn most effectively. The school sent out parent questionnaires in July 2007. The vast majority of returns were very positive about the school, but a few parents had concerns about behaviour. However, the monitoring visits have not identified problems in this area.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection of March 2006.

- Secure the school's management structure and staff roles and responsibilities to provide a strong direction for improvement at all levels – satisfactory progress.
- Ensure that the quality of self-evaluation is rigorous, inclusive of staff, governors, parents and pupils and is embedded in the school's work-satisfactory progress.

### External support

The local authority has provided satisfactory support, particularly in negotiating with the school the level and type of input needed. It is, appropriately, reducing the level of support to enable the school to take more control of its own strategic planning, while recognising that the school will need further support in the longer term. The executive headteacher has continued to provide good guidance and the strong links with staff in her school are benefiting Pear Tree staff in developing their own expertise.

### Priorities for further improvement

- Thoroughly monitor, evaluate and support the work of the classes for pupils with limited English, so that they make at least satisfactory progress and good progress in their acquisition of English.
- When monitoring lessons, focus on pupils' learning and the progress they are making.
- Focus the monitoring work of the school very precisely on the specific information that is needed most urgently.
- Ensure that the data the school uses to measure progress and achievement is in a consistent form that will allow meaningful comparisons to be made.