

# Pear tree Spring Infant School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117206
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326549
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Georgina Beasley

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	255
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Nicola Spacey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Julie Legg
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Hydean Way Stevenage Hertfordshire SG2 9GG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01438 233900
<b>Fax number</b>	01438 233901

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–7
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 January 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	326549

---

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized school serving a community which has some areas of social and economic deprivation. There are more boys than girls. A higher than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is a very small number of looked after children. About two thirds of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The remaining third are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. All but a few speak English fluently. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has three Reception classes. Pupils start in Reception with below average skills. The school offers a Nurture group to pupils with particular social and emotional needs. The school hosts a breakfast club for 50 pupils from the infant and junior schools. The school has achieved the ICT Mark and Healthy Schools Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The school has strengthened its effectiveness since the previous inspection to sustain its outstanding performance. Starting from a below average baseline on entry to Reception, pupils reach exceptionally high standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2. The school's strategies for helping boys reach the same high standards as girls in reading and writing are starting to show success. Excellent provision and care for pupils in the Reception classes ensure that they develop extremely positive attitudes and excellent behaviour, helping them to become ready to learn in a very short time. The quality of teaching throughout the school is outstanding. Teachers give considerable thought as to how to make learning relevant and fun. Very carefully planned activities engage pupils' interests and motivate them as learners. Excellent support and guidance for academic and personal development help pupils know how well they are achieving and what they need to do next to improve. The curriculum is extremely well planned to make sure learning builds on pupils' experiences and previous achievement. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used particularly well in lessons to support learning in a number of subjects.

Pupils enjoy school greatly and behaviour in all year groups is exemplary because they respond very well to adults' consistently positive encouragement and high expectations. They grow tall when praised for their 'good looking, good sitting, good listening, good walking and good learning'. Older pupils lead by example and so younger pupils very quickly understand what these terms mean. All pupils carry out their responsibilities conscientiously, whether this is being a helping hand, or a reading or community partner. Pupils' understanding of keeping healthy and safe is impressive. Along with high achievement and excellent progress, pupils are extremely well prepared for future life challenges. Excellent relationships with parents ensure very good support for the school overall.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a strong partnership that is totally dedicated to ensuring the best provision for all pupils. Along with a strong team of teachers, support staff and governors, they have established the excellent cooperative and collaborative teamwork that is an integral part of the school's culture. Comprehensive mentoring and training programs ensure all new staff and governors rapidly become effective in sustaining the quality of provision and high standards. The school's capacity to strive for exemplary practice and learning is exceptional.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Children enter the Reception classes with attainment that is below that expected for their age. Adults soon have an excellent knowledge of each child's needs and respond to them accordingly. Consequently, children settle very quickly. Adults organise an excellent and varied range of activities that they lead themselves or for the children to choose to practise specific skills and to promote successful independent learning. Children have outstanding attitudes to learning, and those who have been in school since September sustain their concentration on tasks well. The caring environment and structured routines support children's confidence and personal development outstandingly well. Parents say that they are very pleased with the induction procedures and are encouraged to be fully involved in their children's learning and welfare. Consequently, children's progress in personal and social skills is outstanding. Progress is always at least good in all other areas of learning. It is excellent during small group activities because

of focused and high quality interactive teaching and learning. A rich variety of learning activities to engage boys more in reading and writing is beginning to pay off. By the end of the Reception Year, children attain standards that are close to those expected nationally. The Foundation Stage leader works very effectively with the whole team of adults and has a clear understanding of the strengths and improvements to be made. The recently redeveloped outside area is an excellent learning space that is thoughtfully set out and resourced to complement and extend classroom activities.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Embed the school's strategies for helping the boys achieve the same high standards as the girls in reading and writing.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills when they start in Reception are below average, especially in reading and writing. Boys' skills are not as high as those of the girls on entry. All pupils make excellent progress to reach broadly average standards in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception Year. This is particularly impressive as some children are in school for only two terms before moving to Year 1.

All pupils in Years 1 and 2 make excellent progress, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. This includes pupils who speak English as an additional language, higher achievers, looked after children and pupils who need extra support to learn. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics continue to be exceptionally high by the end of Year 2. Girls continue to achieve higher standards than boys in reading and writing, especially the youngest boys in each year group. Pupils in the nurture group make excellent progress because of the care and support given to their personal as well as their academic development. This helps them to 'learn to learn' effectively. Displays of pupils' work in ICT and art and design technology are of high quality.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils behave outstandingly well. They have exceptionally good attitudes towards their work and they all want to achieve high standards. Extremely good relationships between pupils and adults ensure pupils enjoy school and are confident to take risks in their learning. Pupils have an excellent awareness of how to stay safe and say that they can talk to someone in school if they have a problem. Pupils are very self-confident and respond extremely well to opportunities to work independently and cooperatively with others. They show great consideration for each other and a strong commitment to the school community when carrying out their roles and responsibilities. The way Year 2 pupils act as friendship leaders in the playground and reading partners with younger pupils is impressive. The School Council is currently investigating ways to save water to support the school's attempts to make all pupils ecologically aware. Most parents respond well to the numerous incentives that encourage good attendance and bring their children to school nearly every day. However, very small numbers of pupils are still absent too often. Pupils are very enthusiastic about taking part in physical exercise and know the importance of eating healthily. Breakfast club and lunch menus promote this aspect extremely well. Pupils make excellent progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through well-considered lessons, and the extensive program of visits and visitors, pupils gain

an excellent respect and understanding for other people in the local and world communities. They entertain local residents for lunch, work with pupils from a special school and enjoy learning about pupils in a school in Kadoma, Zimbabwe. This and high achievement in literacy, numeracy and ICT skills prepares them extremely well for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teachers constantly reflect on their teaching and continually look for ways to make learning even more exciting and relevant for pupils. They work closely together to think of the best ways to present learning so that it captures pupils' interests and motivates them in lessons. Not a second is wasted. The use of puppets, drama, magic tricks, talking partners and interactive whiteboards are just a few examples of how teachers keep pupils fully engaged in lessons. As a result, every pupil concentrates extremely well and always tries their best. Teachers use assessment information extremely well to make sure work builds precisely on previous learning to help those who need extra support to learn and to challenge higher achievers. Teachers tailor their teaching to pupils' individual needs. This is particularly effective in guided group work in reading, writing and mathematics lessons. Teaching assistants are highly effective in supporting pupils' individualised learning, teaching guided reading in classrooms, and supporting individuals and groups with targeted work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The school takes great care to plan and deliver an exciting range of activities that meet the learning and personal experiences of all pupils and ensuring continuing excellent progress. Learning in all subjects is linked very effectively to optimise learning time. The school's successful phonics programme gives pupils more confidence to link sounds and letters, increasing their achievement in reading and spelling. New and relevant reading books and a variety of activities motivate boys to read and write and are helping them start to reach the same high standards as the girls. Teachers always put pupils' learning into real-life contexts and so help them to use and apply their reading, mathematics and ICT skills in a purposeful way. The curriculum supports pupils' independent learning extremely well. High quality work on display, including pupils' portraits, paintings, collages and sculptures in art, and designing and making items such as key rings and puppets in design technology reflects a rich curriculum. Pupils take part in an extensive variety of visits, themed days and lunchtime and after school clubs that are very successful in enriching their educational and personal experiences.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

All adults follow assiduously the school's comprehensive procedures for ensuring pupils' safety, health and welfare. All statutory requirements are met. The school has an extensive range of assessments for all subjects that track closely every pupil's achievement and progress. Teachers use the information to identify which pupils will benefit from extra support or need additional challenge to extend learning, either in small group intensive support or home learning activities. 'Tiger's top tips for learning' help pupils to remember independently what they need to do in lessons if they are to achieve their best. Teachers write comments in books or talk to pupils

during focused group tasks to share successes and next-step targets. Pupils start to assess their own work in Reception and so this becomes a habit by Year 2. As a result, pupils know for themselves how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are dedicated to ensuring every pupil receives the highest quality care and teaching and give great attention to ensuring all pupils achieve as well as they can. This is evidenced by the particular focus given to supporting pupils' personal development, raising boys' achievement in reading and writing, and chasing up parents whose children do not attend school as often as they should. Training and induction are extremely well organised and, in particular, ensure that new staff and governors quickly embrace the school's high expectations for every pupil's achievement and progress. As a result, everyone plays an effective part in doing 'their best for the children'. The governing body has very strong procedures in place to ensure they carry out their duties effectively.

Every member of staff is constantly reflecting on their practice and looking for ways to make pupils' learning experiences even more exciting and rewarding. Regular meetings with all teaching assistants and volunteers ensure the ongoing high quality support they give to pupils' learning. Staff and governors are constantly evaluating what the school could do next to improve further. Subject and year leaders meet regularly with their teams and make regular checks on pupils' learning to ensure lessons are of the highest quality. Monitoring information is shared with pupils, staff and at governing body meetings and as a result of this, detailed and challenging targets for improvement are identified. This ensures that school development planning is a fully collaborative process and everyone knows what they must do to effect further improvements. Strong partnerships with a large number of schools, both local and worldwide, organisations and community groups and the school's well thought-out strategy for these, enhance pupils' learning and promote community cohesion extremely well.





## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1
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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

15th January 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Peartree Spring Infant School, Stevenage, SG2 9GG

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school with my two colleagues recently, and for telling me so much about the school. You will be pleased to know that we agree with you that your school is outstanding. This means that you, Miss Legg and all adults who work in your school are doing a fantastic job. You make excellent progress from the minute you start school until the day you leave. This helps you reach high standards and develop excellent skills that will help you as you get older.

We were impressed with many things but these are the ones that immediately spring to mind.

- You are all very polite, behave extremely well and try your best in lessons.
- You know how to keep yourself safe, healthy and fit, and do an excellent job helping the school be a place where everyone can learn really well.
- All adults want you to do your best so they do their best to make every lesson exciting, fun and help every one of you to learn.
- Tiger's top tips for learning and your targets help you know what you can do to learn successfully especially things that you may find hard at first.

We have asked Miss Legg to do this to help you reach even higher standards.

- The school has bought new reading books and thought of new ideas to help the boys reach as high standards as the girls in reading and writing. We want the school to carry on with these. Boys, you have to show the girls that you can do as well as they can in reading and writing just as you do in mathematics.

I wish you all every success for the future. Keep up the good work.

Yours sincerely

Georgie Beasley

Lead inspector