

# Kirkham Pear Tree School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119887
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327144
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mel Blackband

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	73
Sixth form	22
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 Anne Fielding
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lesley Koller
<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>	29 Station Road Kirkham Preston Lancashire PR4 2HA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 683609

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<b>Age group</b>	2–19
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 October 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	327144

**Fax number**

01772 681553

<b>Age group</b>	2-19
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13-14 October 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The school provides for pupils with severe learning difficulties and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties. A small minority of pupils have been identified as having autistic spectrum conditions. There are slightly more boys than girls. The majority of pupils are White British but a very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school manages a childrens' centre for pre-school children and their families from the local area. The school is seeking specialist status for its work in the physical and sensory curriculum.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Pear Tree has become an outstandingly successful school, which continually strives to improve the provision for all its learners. Because of their learning difficulties, the standards reached by pupils in most cases, are exceptionally low, but all pupils do exceptionally well in their studies and make outstanding progress, especially in the basic skills of communication, literacy and numeracy.

The quality of teaching is excellent. The pupils enjoy their lessons and respond by trying their best. Teachers plan the pupils' activities very effectively so that they and the well trained teaching assistants are able to give high quality intensive support to each pupil. This has a tremendous impact on the pupils' learning. The school's monitoring and tracking of pupils' overall achievement are extremely thorough and accurate and this represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. School leaders, however, are determined to revise and strengthen the system even further. The curriculum is outstanding because the excellent quality of their assessment of the pupils' progress enables teachers to tailor activities accurately to each pupil's learning needs. There is well organised and effective provision to support pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and to support the pupils with autistic spectrum conditions. The school is particularly successful in helping all the pupils to develop their communication and has established a local reputation as a centre of good practice.

The pupils feel very safe and well supported. They make excellent gains in their personal development because of the high level of support and attention they are given and because of the outstanding teaching and curriculum provision in personal, health and social education (PHSE). They learn to remain healthy, to keep safe and to behave well. The pupils love coming to school. One parent stated that, 'Both our children are desperate to get to school every day'. Pupils value the school and this is evident through the excellent relationships they have with staff, their very good attendance, and the pride they all display in greeting visitors. Parents are very happy for their children to attend, knowing that staff will look after them very well, that they enjoy their lessons and that the school has high expectations of their progress. One parent's comment was typical: 'This school is all I could wish for my child'. Locally the school is held in high regard. It offers a valuable support service to mainstream schools. The school will shortly be assessed for the award of specialist school status.

Exceptional leadership and management drive all this. The headteacher's work and that of the deputy headteacher are outstanding in maintaining and improving standards. A very able senior team supports them and this team has been extremely effective in leading staff in the drive to improve pupils' achievements further. The school monitors and evaluates its work exceptionally well and this has played a vital part in the school's improvement since the previous inspection. The governing body is supportive and also monitors aspects of the school's work robustly. The school has consolidated and improved its high standards of performance since the previous inspection and has an outstanding capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

### Grade: 1

Provision in the post-16 part of the school is good. Students make excellent progress in their personal development because of well planned procedures to help them to gain the necessary self-confidence and independence to make their own choices and to prepare for adult life.

Excellent teaching results in many pupils continuing to make outstanding progress in literacy and numeracy, in their life skills, and in their grasp of work-related learning. The school has developed productive links with local schools and colleges and almost all students leave for further education courses. The students are able to achieve their potential through a range of accredited qualifications, although the school is aware that there is a need to extend the range of courses to provide better for students of all abilities. The leadership and management of the provision, by a newly appointed coordinator, are developing well.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Children make exceptional progress because the staff know the children very well and demonstrate this by the excellent standards of planning and teaching, tailored to the needs of each individual. Foundation Stage children quickly settle into the school through excellent teaching and care. The children are continually encouraged to develop their communication skills. For instance, the pupils play and socialise each day with mainstream pre-school children who visit the Foundation Stage classroom. The children receive a high level of individual attention from caring and competent support staff. As a result, the children make excellent progress in their personal development. This provides a very good basis for their future success in the school. The department is very well led and managed.

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

- Extend the range of accreditation in post-16 to provide for the needs of pupils of all abilities.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

All the pupils achieve outstandingly well. Young children in the Foundation Stage come on in leaps and bounds and the pupils maintain this momentum as they progress through the school. The outstanding support for pupils with the most severe impairments ensures these pupils make excellent progress in very small steps. The pupils' acquisition of basic skills is outstanding and this has a significant impact on their achievement throughout the curriculum. Most pupils make excellent progress in meeting challenging targets in their individual education plans (IEP). Pupils in Year 11 through to Year 14 are able to demonstrate their potential through nationally accredited qualifications.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The pupils' excellent progress in personal development reflects the school's motto of 'Achieving the best we can in everything we do'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. For instance, the pupils were consistently observed to provide friendship and warm support to their friends and classmates. They also take great pleasure in welcoming visitors from their own and other countries into their school. All the pupils benefit also from structured opportunities to work and socialise with pupils from mainstream schools. Pupils learn the importance of a healthy lifestyle through the many well organised opportunities for physical activity. All pupils are encouraged and supported where necessary, in making their views known. For example, the pupils were able to influence the design of the newly laid playground. Similarly, older pupils in post-16 acquire valuable life skills through work experience. Pupils feel safe and confident within the school's calm and supportive atmosphere. Parents

feel welcomed by the school as partners in their child's education. One parent commented, 'When our child joined Pear Tree, the whole family joined the school.'

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

There are very good relationships between classroom teams and between staff and pupils. The support staff give high levels of individual tuition. This ensures the pupils enjoy their lessons and try their best. Pupils understand and respond to the clear routines. All classroom staff play a full part in assessing and recording each small step in pupils' progress. As a result, the teachers are able to plan challenging activities for each pupil, so enabling many of them to make outstanding progress. Teachers are skilled in implementing specific programmes, for instance by using symbols, and interactive whiteboards to help individual pupils develop their communication skills.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

Pupils enjoy a carefully constructed curriculum, which is exceptionally well adapted to their individual needs. The excellent levels of support for those with additional difficulties ensure that all pupils have equal access to learning opportunities. The provision for the development of pupils' personal skills has a significant impact on the pupils' achievement. The school's excellent programmes to develop pupils' communication and their basic literacy and numeracy skills are extremely effective in promoting their confidence and access to learning opportunities in other subjects. There is a wide range of activities to take pupils out of the classroom, showing them that new things can be learned in many different situations. This adds substantially to the pupils' social skills, their self-confidence and their interest in learning.

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

#### **Grade: 1**

The safeguarding of pupils is the greatest priority for school staff and standards are exceptionally high. The pupils are proud of their successes and they like the way that staff discuss with them how well they are doing in both their work and personal development and how they can improve their attainments. As a result, pupils have an excellent understanding of how to make their work better and this has a very positive impact on their achievement. Parents receive accurate and comprehensive progress reports and report a high degree of satisfaction with their level of involvement in their children's education. The pupils receive good advice and support as they are about to leave school. There are good links with local colleges which result in almost all pupils taking advantage of further education courses when they leave school.

## **Leadership and management**

#### **Grade: 1**

The headteacher has shown outstanding leadership through her determination to achieve the highest standards in the school. The experience and expertise of the deputy headteacher have enabled her to be equally effective during the headteacher's recent secondment to the local

authority. A strong senior team supports them. One of the school's strengths is in the rigorous and effective way managers monitor, evaluate and improve on every aspect of the school's performance. They are thus able to ensure that all pupils have equal access to learning opportunities and that their targets are both relevant and challenging.

Communication within the school is excellent. Staff feel fully consulted, involved and valued. There are very good procedures to support new staff, to monitor the performance of teachers and support staff and to ensure that all staff take full advantage of professional training. Governors provide outstanding support to the school. They work closely with individual staff and they rigorously monitor the school's strengths and areas for development. The communications between home and school are very well organised and so relationships with parents are extremely good.



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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	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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**Overall effectiveness**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	2

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	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**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1	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	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1	1
The attendance of learners	1	1
The behaviour of learners	1	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	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**

15 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kirkham Pear Tree School, Lancashire, PR4 2HA

Not long ago I came to the school to see how you were getting on and whether I could suggest anything to make the school better. You made me very welcome and I enjoyed meeting some of you in your classrooms and at lunchtime. Thank you and well done. I could see that you all enjoy school very much. I was with you for two days. That was long enough for me to realise that you go to a super school. I liked many things. Here are a few:

- you work hard and make excellent progress in your work and in your personal development
- the many different people at the school look after you very well
- you do a lot of really interesting activities including those that help you become independent, make choices and learn all about different places and customs
- all the adults work really hard to give you as much help as possible and they are very good at recording all the progress you make; this helps them to prepare interesting work for each of you
- your headteacher, Mrs Koller, runs the school very well and everyone, including your parents, gives her really strong support.

I think the school can still improve further by making it possible for each of you to have a better choice of qualifications to aim for, as you get ready to leave school.

You can help too, just by working as hard as you have been doing!

Please thank your parents for all the helpful comments they made on the questionnaires.

Best wishes to you all

Mel Blackband

Lead inspector