

Yew Tree Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104058
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	336226
Inspection dates	14–15 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Linda Rockey HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr George Wood
Headteacher	R J Hawkesford
Date of previous school inspection	7 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, parents and representatives from two partnerships. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies related to the safeguarding of pupils, documents to support the school's self-evaluation and the school's assessment data. The majority of the time was spent observing learning and all classes were visited. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from 33 parents and carers, and looked at responses from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the school's recent approach to successfully improving attainment in science
- the effectiveness of the school's strategy to improve the rates of attendance and reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent
- the quality of teaching to ensure all pupils, and more able pupils in particular, are challenged sufficiently to raise attainment.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average school in a suburban area of Solihull. The majority of pupils are of a White British background. However, there are an increasing number of pupils attending the school from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school has recently been refurbished and a new Early Years Foundation Stage unit was opened in September 2009. A new deputy headteacher and special educational needs leader took up their posts at the start of the autumn term. The school operates a 'wrap around facility' for working parents and a before- and after-school club.

The school has achieved several awards including the Healthy Schools standard and the Activemark for sport.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Most parents are very positive about Yew Tree school. It is a 'family school that we all feel part of,' one parent told the inspectors. Members of the Parents' Consultation Group can cite examples, such as homework, where their voice is heard and acted upon. Both pupils and parents are proud of the school. The newly refurbished classrooms and outdoor area enrich the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The new senior leadership team are fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Since September, specific priorities for improvement have been identified in a clear action plan. Standards in English and mathematics have been average for several years. The school recognises that pupils are capable of more, and that it has not raised standards at a fast enough pace. The improvements already made in science and to rates of attendance provide evidence for the school's capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' learning and progress seen during the inspection were satisfactory overall. That said, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because these pupils are taught well and receive good targeted support. There is not enough good teaching across the school. The school has rightly developed plans to increase the amount of good teaching by increasing the accountability of middle leaders on a regular basis, and providing adequate time and resources for the sharing of effective practice.

There has been a clear improvement in assessment procedures, and marking in some classes is exemplary. Careful planning for individual needs is made clear in the majority of lesson preparation. It is most effective where teaching actually challenges the specific range of abilities in the class, but in practice, pupils in some classes find the work too difficult or too easy. As a result, more able pupils are not always sufficiently stretched to reach the standards they are capable of. In addition, well-planned teaching tends to be undermined because lesson activities are adult-led and instructive rather than providing pupils with exciting opportunities for creativity, based on their identified needs and interests.

The school has put in place a number of strategies to improve a trend of low attendance. Pupil absence is now reducing, although a few pupils continue to attend irregularly. This is an ongoing challenge for the school leadership.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science to above national averages by

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2011 by:

- setting challenging targets for July 2010, based on accurate teacher assessment for individuals and groups of pupils
- holding staff at all levels accountable on a half-termly basis for attainment.
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching by:
 - ensuring the majority of teaching is good by July 2010
 - making sure all work is creative, engaging and well matched to pupils' specific needs
 - sharing good practice across all key stages as often as practicable
 - using external practitioners to model good and outstanding teaching in English and mathematics, coaching staff to improve their practice.
- Improve pupils' attendance to above the national average by July 2010, by rigorously tackling persistent absence in close partnership with parents and pupils.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils of all abilities enjoy Yew Tree school. One pupil wrote a note to the inspectors, saying, 'I hope you enjoyed looking at our school because I love it.' Most pupils of different backgrounds relate well to one another and report little bullying. A few pupils talked to inspectors about some specific incidents and these were thoroughly investigated. Peer mediators are aware of their responsibilities and are keen to support individual pupils. Pupils are confident about whom to approach if they need help. Attitudes and behaviour in lessons are usually good. However, during the inspection exceptional weather conditions prevented pupils having access to outdoor play. There was some silliness evident when pupils were unsupervised by an adult, particularly in some cloakroom areas.

In the majority of lessons observed, the quality of learning was satisfactory. Where assessment is used well and pupils of all abilities are suitably challenged, progress is good, but this is not always the case and more able pupils in particular tend to lose out through lack of challenge. In a good literacy lesson, pupils were using their senses to describe a setting. The teacher provided some interesting and relevant resources to engage the pupils' interest. Good subject knowledge and the effective use of ongoing assessment helped to move the learning on for a large majority of pupils in that lesson, and such pockets of good practice point the way forward for the school.

Over the past three years, national assessments in science show some improvement, and standards seen in lessons and pupils' books in all key subjects were broadly average. This is the result of improvements in the whole-school approach to the teaching of science and a revised curriculum. Assessment data indicate that boys have made less progress than girls in the past. Observations of lessons and a review of pupils'

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work show that boys and girls are now learning at a similar rate.

Pupils regularly raise money for a range of charities which they select. Photographic evidence around the school demonstrates their obvious enjoyment of special events. There are sound links with the local community and pupils benefit from the partnership with the local sports college, whose facilities are appreciated by the pupils.

A whole-school approach to developing positive attitudes to learning is celebrated in displays throughout the school. Principles such as resilience and determination are valued and rewarded. This programme helps to develop pupils' workplace skills for the future. The school has successfully gained the Healthy Schools award as part of its work to promote healthy lifestyles. Almost all parents agree that the school helps their child to be healthy.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have benefited from focused professional development in science and as a result, pupils report they enjoy more practical work. Planned interventions using 'booster groups' and one-to-one support have helped to raise attainment. The majority of

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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teaching seen by inspectors was satisfactory. A few lessons featured more effective pace and challenge. In one such lesson, pupils were captivated by a rapid-fire question and answer session and all made good progress in learning to adapt their writing for different purposes because of the comprehensive planning, explicit success criteria and the reshaping of tasks during the lesson.

Marking is used effectively in most classes to show pupils how to improve their work. In some classes, the marking observed was exemplary and related closely to the planned learning. Individual targets are usually made clear and most pupils are able to explain what they need to do to improve their work, particularly in English.

Staff have a good understanding of how to support individuals with specific learning needs, and what they do provide is carefully planned and targeted. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make better progress than their peers. Support strategies and interventions are used well. The staff are committed to caring for the most vulnerable pupils. One parent of a child with a medical condition wrote to the inspectors, 'All staff at Yew Tree have been wonderful. I can't thank them enough.'

The school enriches the curriculum by the use of visitors. A local church group regularly take part in school assemblies. Pupils also enjoy educational visits to places of interest and talk enthusiastically about what they have learned. For example, Year 6 visited some local older residents to talk about their experiences of the Second World War. The pupils' take-up of extra-curricular activities shows that many benefit from the after-school clubs available.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and new deputy are committed to improving the school. The recently formed leadership team has already made a significant impact. They work together well and fully understand what the school needs to do to improve. Priorities have been identified accurately and actions to address areas of weakness are beginning to have a positive effect. For example, a recent focus on developing boys' literacy skills to tackle underachievement in boys' reading has had some early signs of success.

There is a regular programme of lesson observations to monitor the quality of teaching. However, there is not enough modelling of the best practice or coaching for those identified in need of more support. School leadership is not shared sufficiently well to allow for the sharing of best practice.

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The headteacher has worked hard with staff to reduce the number of persistent absences and clear procedures are followed which are beginning to have a positive effect. Absence is sensitively followed up and where appropriate, the governors are actively involved with parents to ensure identified pupils attend regularly. Governors are committed to supporting the school and are aware of the areas which require improvement, but have not developed detailed performance measures to help them to hold the school to account.

At the time of the inspection, safeguarding arrangements were met and in line with current government guidance. The school has a suitable equalities policy and actively promotes it, for example by tackling the gap in performance between boys and girls. Community cohesion is appropriately addressed through links with the local community. However, the leadership team are aware that national and global links are underdeveloped and have a suitable plan to tackle this area.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are happy and play well together. They understand their daily routines and on arrival settle well, able to work independently in their chosen zone. Children start in Nursery below the expected stage of development for their age. They enjoy the new, stimulating and spacious learning environment and make satisfactory progress. They are confident to engage adults in conversation and respond well when asked about their learning experiences, such as using a computer program to count and recognise the correct numerals. Personal, social and emotional development is a strength of the setting.

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The children have access to a new covered outside area. The new canopy allows children to make use of the outdoor classroom in all weathers. At the time of the inspection, some children were in the garden busily making a snowman. They were enjoying the opportunity to be creative and keen to explain their choice of a carrot for the nose. Children independently organise their own healthy snacks and have a growing understanding of the importance of fruit in their diet.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has successfully developed the assessment of children's learning and development. Adults guide and support the children's learning well using daily observations, and work hard to ensure all areas of learning are covered. That said, staff are aware that children do not have enough opportunities to take initiative in their learning.

There is a smooth transition into Nursery and Reception because staff make home visits and are committed to good communication with parents. Parents speak highly about the communication between home and school. In addition, links with the 'wrap around facility' on the school site are well developed and provide a seamless transition from one to the other.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Approximately 17% of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. Most of the responses were positive and a very large majority were happy about the work of the school. A few parents and carers raised concerns about the school's communication with them and the way pupils' behaviour is managed. These issues were investigated but inspectors found that links with parents and carers were generally good, and behaviour managed appropriately.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Yew Tree Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 193 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	45	17	52	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	70	8	24	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	15	45	16	48	2	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	30	19	58	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	61	11	33	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	39	17	52	2	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	64	11	33	1	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	13	39	19	58	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	30	20	61	2	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	21	20	61	2	7	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	27	21	64	2	7	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	14	42	15	45	2	7	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	33	10	30	1	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 January 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Yew Tree Primary School, Solihull, B92 2SD

Thank you for making Mr Smith and me so welcome when we visited your school last week. We both enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to you about the school. I am writing to let you know what we found out.

You enjoy school and most of you come to school regularly and on time.

Teaching is satisfactory and you make sound progress in lessons. Those of you with special educational needs make better progress because of the support you receive in class or individually.

Many of you could tell us how to improve your work because of the detailed marking and targets in your books.

You get on well with each other and most of you behave well in lessons. Governors told us that you have a good reputation in your local community for your exemplary behaviour, although you don't always show it around school!

There are some things which we think would improve your school.

Results in statutory assessments are broadly average but we feel you are capable of more. I have asked the teachers to raise standards in English, mathematics and science.

I have asked Mr Hawkesford to ensure that more good teaching helps you to make better progress.

A few of you have too many days off school. This hinders your learning and I have asked the staff to extend work with your parents to make sure that you all attend every day.

Thank you for being so helpful and making our visit so enjoyable. You can do your bit to help by listening to your teachers and working hard every day.

Yours sincerely

Linda Rockey

Her Majesty's Inspector

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