

Cherry Tree Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105187
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	336442
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Jon Lovgreen

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	388
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Amanda Collingbourn
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Grecic
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2007
School address	Highfield Road Farnworth Bolton BL4 0NS
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They looked at 17 lessons, seeing 16 teachers and a range of support staff at work. Meetings were held with some parents (at their request), the school council, groups of pupils, governors, teachers and senior leaders. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school planning and monitoring documents, teachers' planning, data on pupils' progress, and minutes of governing body meetings. Pupils' work and progress in their English and mathematics books were looked at in detail. Questionnaires returned by 102 parents and carers were scrutinised, as were those completed by staff and pupils.

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

- the overall progress of pupils in Key Stage 2, and of all pupils in mathematics
- whether children get a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage classes
- how effectively senior and middle managers are carrying out their roles and responsibilities
- whether the curriculum balances interesting learning experiences with developing the key skills of literacy and numeracy
- the extent to which care, guidance and support are stronger elements of the school's work.

Information about the school

Cherry Tree is a larger than average size school. It is housed in recently built premises and is federated with a nursery and a special school under the joint name of 'The Orchards'. An executive headteacher coordinates the work of all three schools. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision includes children from all three schools and is on a site nearby. Most pupils are White British and few of the pupils from ethnic minorities are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is twice the national average. An above average number of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the proportion of these with a statement of special educational needs is high. A significant minority of pupils come from vulnerable backgrounds or have behavioural problems. At the time of the inspection, the head of school was on maternity leave and the executive headteacher of 'The Orchards' and two assistant headteachers were running the school. The school has an International Schools' award, an Eco Schools' (Bronze) award and has Forest School status.

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

Cherry Tree Primary School provides a satisfactory quality of education, and good care and support for its pupils. It has come through a period of massive change in terms of premises, governance and leadership. Older pupils have experienced much upheaval in the past. The school now has excellent facilities and a happy, calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall, but inconsistent between classes. In the settled environment which the new building provides, pupils' standards are beginning to improve in Key Stage 1. Leaders have rightly focused on improving the standards achieved by pupils by the end of Key Stage 2. These were too low and showed a declining trend. Inspection evidence shows that this trend is being reversed. Staff are, however, aware that more remains to be done to improve attainment in mathematics and in the writing standards of younger pupils.

Teaching is improving but the quality remains inconsistent. Planning and assessment are improving, but some lessons rely too much on the teacher talking at length. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school, and are keen to work. Whilst they are good at group work, they are not sufficiently encouraged to use discussion to explore ideas or new ways of expressing them. The curriculum covers all subjects and has a good and growing range of enrichment activities. There is too little planning for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects, and younger pupils get too little opportunity to write at length. Pupils are well cared for and staff, who know them very well, are adept at offering the advice and support to help them cope with difficulty, uncertainty, and change. Arrangements to safeguard pupils are excellent; pupils feel exceptionally secure and have a very clear understanding of how to stay safe.

Leaders and managers have successfully seen the school through a testing time. Development plans and their review are detailed and sound, but school leaders are aware that monitoring and improvement planning would benefit from clearer priorities and greater precision. Currently, not all middle managers take a sufficiently active role in ensuring that school policies and systems operate effectively in classrooms. Given pupils' improving rates of progress and the careful way in which budgeting takes place, the school gives satisfactory value for money. Improvements in attendance, the quality of teaching, and the level of care offered by teachers, are evident. The school evaluates its work regularly and accurately. These factors confirm that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise standards in mathematics throughout the school, by:
 - introducing more practical work into lessons
 - giving pupils more time to explain and explore their understanding of mathematical ideas
 - better planning for pupils to use numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Improve the consistency of teaching, by:
 - introducing more pace and less 'teacher talk' in some lessons
 - asking more probing questions and providing opportunities for discussion to get pupils to think more clearly
 - expecting younger pupils to write at length more often.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management, through:
 - making monitoring and improvement planning more precise, and with clearer priorities
 - improving the quality of middle management
 - ensuring that planned actions bring about improvements in teaching and learning.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

Generally, pupils behave well, are keen to work and try their best in lessons. They listen to, and follow advice and instruction. As a result, classrooms have a calm, pleasant and purposeful atmosphere. For example, Year 6 pupils worked well on using variable factors to solve problems, switching quickly from group to individual tasks. Pupils show particular pride in their new school building and treat equipment with care. From a below average level of skills on entry to Year 1 they achieve below average results in their end of Year 6 national tests. The school recognised that this was not good enough, especially as pupils' rates of progress were in decline over Key Stage 2. Rigorous monitoring of lessons highlighted a range of issues where improvement was needed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who had been underachieving, are now making the same satisfactory progress as other pupils. This stems from an overhaul of how they are supported, and more carefully-organised and focussed support both in class and in coaching sessions. The progress of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 remains variable, however, because the quality of teaching is inconsistent. The good work done in Reception, Year 6 and some other classes is not matched in all. Pupils make good and sustained progress in their reading, speaking and personal skills. This was evident in a music lesson where pupils were able to comment on tempo and how it created mood. Despite improvements, progress in mathematics remains inadequate, because the quality of teaching in the subject is too variable. Some pupils in Key Stage 1

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and lower Key Stage 2 make limited progress in writing because they have too few opportunities when they are expected to write formally and at some length. Attendance, is low but improving strongly although it still limits the progress of some pupils. However, the improvement in basic skills and pupils' ability to work together give them a satisfactory basis for the next stage of education. Additionally, there are strengths in aspects of personal development. Pupils are alert to issues of how to keep healthy, some even trying to advise and influence the habits of older members of their families! As seen in their response to assemblies and their attitudes to pupils from a special school, Cherry Tree pupils are sensitive and caring. They welcome outsiders and show a real interest in the experiences and lifestyles of people in other countries and from other cultures.

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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory overall, but inconsistent in quality. This results in progress in each key stage being as expected, with past underachievement being gradually overcome. Lessons are well planned and managed, although some teachers mistake

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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quiet for attentiveness. This means that if their introductions are too long, some pupils lose interest but this is not noticed. In most lessons, a range of methods, including brisk pair discussion, is used well. Apart from in Year 6, older pupils are given too much time for some tasks, so that the pace at which they work eases off. Much open questioning is well done, but pupils are too rarely encouraged to extend and justify their answers, or to think up original ideas. Practical and group tasks are a feature of many lessons, but opportunities to explore pupils' understanding of ideas occurs less in mathematics. Books are regularly marked and teachers have a sound understanding of how to give advice and set targets for improvement. A potentially good system of pupils working towards achieving their short-term targets, noted in exercise books, is not fully effective. The targets do not have a high enough profile in daily work, and some teachers do not update them often enough. Stimulating displays, good use of whiteboards, and clear and interesting teacher explanations are features of the best lessons.

The curriculum achieves a sound balance between developing the key skills of literacy and numeracy, and providing wider experiences. Information and communication technology, noted in a previous report as an area of weakness, has been improved by timetabled lessons in a new computer suite. A themed approach to some topics allows pupils to become genuinely intrigued, as in the case of work on 'Spies in World War II'. However, the lack of evaluation of the impact of the curriculum as a whole, means that staff are less clear about where improvements could be made. There is insufficient planning for practical sessions in mathematics, and for giving pupils the chance to apply learned number skills to other subjects and real-life situations. Pupils in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 do not get enough opportunity to write extended pieces in a formal style. There are improving opportunities, some through partnerships, for pupils to take up music and dance, and to study art and Spanish. A good range of visits and visitors and an increasing number of enrichment activities are appreciated by pupils.

Pupils feel well cared for, and say that adults always find time for them. Pupils are well supervised. Special care is taken to give them a choice of games and activities at lunchtime and to provide alternatives for those who prefer to socialise more quietly. Staff have worked hard, and to good effect, to improve attendance, with 'first day' phone calls and reward assemblies and attitudes to work, for example, through 'Star of the Week' awards. Much effort has gone into ensuring that systems to support newly-arrived or upset pupils work well. Close attention has been paid to the needs of the many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A clearer picture of their needs, better checks on pupils' progress and more suitable deployment of the good team of committed support staff has had a significant impact. Pupils now work more confidently and with increasing understanding.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3

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	
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?

Leaders and managers have had to deal with the move into the new buildings, and practical issues relating to the school's role in the federation of three schools. These changes have been successfully achieved, although some management issues remain. In the absence of the head of school, the executive headteacher has led the school with verve and enthusiasm. Staff morale is good. They especially appreciate how detailed monitoring of their teaching, planning and marking are now allied to supportive advice and coaching related to their work in the classroom. The effective way in which the two assistant headteachers have tackled their increased responsibilities has been central to this change of focus. As one teacher put it, 'It has always been made clear what was expected of us; now we are helped to do it.' The local authority has provided extensive and skilled support. The monitoring of pupils' progress is detailed. The range of initiatives to effect improvement has been planned, but these proposed actions lack precision and priorities are not sufficiently clear, so that their impact cannot be easily evaluated.

Middle managers have a broad understanding of their roles but vary in their ability to bring about improvement and influence classroom practice. Governors have adjusted well to their widened federation responsibilities. The improved information they receive means that they have a sound view of the school's performance and are beginning to ask searching questions about areas where improvement is needed. Safeguarding arrangements are excellent with the school going well beyond current guidelines to maximise the safety of pupils, for example, in the frequency of staff training and the scope of risk assessments. The narrowing of gaps in pupils' progress, between the progress of different groups, and the welcoming of pupils who find schooling difficult, show the school's commitment to equality of opportunity. The school understands the nature and needs of its own community and is actively seeking links with schools in contrasting circumstances to promote better community cohesion. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection, as evidenced in coping with huge organisational change and turning round a decline in pupils' progress.

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

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The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
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	1
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

When they join the Nursery, children's skills vary, but are overall well below what is usually expected for their age. Many have weak number skills, and low language and social skills. They make good progress. Children settle quickly and learn to take turns, get on with each other, and accept that they must share and wait for an adult's attention. Accommodation is spacious and well laid out, and there are very good outdoor activity areas. Being part of the federation means that resources are excellent, and staff make good use of them. Areas like 'Small World' and the 'Ice Cream Parlour' encourage children to try out ideas. The 'Birthday Train' and 'Animal World' gives them an interest in others, and a sense of a wider world. The forest area helps children to use tools in a safe environment; good care enables them to learn to apply rules and routines. One explained, 'We can't go beyond the cones because Miss can't see us then'. They tidy away well and follow instructions carefully. Teaching is good overall, but is more stimulating in Reception. In this setting, there is a strong focus, not just on getting children involved in talk, but on using and developing their spoken ideas. By the time they leave Reception, many children's skills are close to the national average, although their ability in writing is weaker. This is because while most have a sound understanding of layout and how to form sentences, they do not get enough opportunity to write formally in books. The leadership team is successful in creating good teamwork among staff and has a clear idea of where and how further improvements can be made.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers are strongly supportive of the school and appreciative of its work. 'A safe and secure school where children are happy' was a typical comment. Almost all who returned the questionnaire felt that their child enjoyed school, and that staff were highly effective in ensuring the safety and well-being of their children. Many also commented very positively on the steps taken by the school to teach pupils the importance and benefits of a healthy lifestyle. A few have concerns that, in the drive to raise standards, some teachers can lose sight of the need to make lessons 'fun'. A few parents and carers feel that reports focus more on academic progress than on their child's personal development. Inspectors agree that, whilst teaching is improving, more lessons could be stimulating. They agree that reports should provide more information on pupils' developing personal skills and qualities. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concern at how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors judge that situations involving challenging behaviour are handled well and with sensitivity to the needs of all involved.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cherry 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 inspection team received 102 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 388 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	60	37	36	1	1	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	59	58	36	35	5	5	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	48	47	43	42	10	10	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	44	47	46	9	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	46	45	49	48	5	5	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	41	50	49	9	9	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	44	50	49	6	6	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)	39	38	51	50	7	7	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	38	52	51	9	9	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	40	42	41	16	16	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	37	53	52	5	5	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	37	36	49	48	9	9	5	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	47	44	43	7	7	1	1

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



14 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cherry Tree Primary School, Bolton, BL4 0NS

You will remember us visiting your school recently to see how you were getting on. Thank you for being so polite and helpful and for telling us what you think of school. Cherry Tree is a satisfactory school which is improving. The things we liked best were:

- you behave well, get on with each other, and usually work hard in lessons
- most of you this year are making better progress with your work
- you are doing well with your reading, and answer questions well
- you understand the importance of good health, and what you can do towards keeping yourself and others healthy
- you think about other people and their feelings, and try to do what is right
- all the adults in school take good care of you. You always feel that you can turn to them for help and advice. They help you to feel very safe and settled
- you get to off to a good start to school in the first two years, especially in the Reception class.

There are always ways to improve things. We have asked staff to:

- help you to do better in mathematics by giving you more practical work, showing you how to use mathematics in other lessons, and getting you to talk about the subject more
- make more lessons interesting by shorter teacher explanations, more brisk question-and-answer sessions and time for discussion to get you thinking, and with more chances for younger pupils to write
- make sure that plans by senior staff to improve what goes on in school are simpler, clearer, and used by all staff.

You can help by always doing your best, and attending school whenever possible.

Our best wishes for your future happiness and success.

Yours sincerely,

Jon Lövgreen

Lead Inspector

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