

Yew Tree Community Primary School and Acorn Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106223
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	377381
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2012
Lead inspector	Lyn Pender

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	501
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Osmond
Headteacher	Anne Short / Esther Bland
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Lyn Pender
Kathleen McArthur
Terry Bond

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 16 teachers in their classrooms and observed 21 lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the executive headteacher. They listened to pupils read, talked to them about their work and observed the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) in Key Stage 1 classes. They held meetings with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, representatives from the local authority and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and analysed documents, including the school's self-evaluation summary, school development plan, safeguarding documents, minutes of the governing body meetings and external evaluation reports. There were insufficient parents and carers responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to aid inspection planning. Inspectors reviewed parents' and carers' response in 134 completed questionnaires and the views of pupils and those of staff expressed in the questionnaires they returned.

Information about the school

The school is a larger than average size primary school. With the neighbouring Oakdale Special School, Yew Tree Primary jointly manages Acorn Nursery, which offers children mainstream education and resourced provision for those who are disabled or have special education needs.

The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. A higher than average proportion of disabled pupils and those with special education needs attend the school. Most pupils are White British, with a very small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and few pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language. The school has recently gained re-accreditation for Investors in People status and the Basic Skills Quality Mark. The school meets the current floor standard.

There have been some staffing issues since the last inspection, including the absence of a member of the senior leadership team. An executive headteacher has recently been appointed to the school in a temporary, part-time capacity. Before-and-after-school care is provided by an external provider on the school site and these provisions are subject to a separate inspection.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Pupils' achievement has risen over the current year because of improved teaching. From low starting points on entry to nursery, children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils are cared for well and parents and carers are overall happy with the school. The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory rather than good, because pupils' achievement is no better than satisfactory and aspects of teaching, assessment, the curriculum and leadership and management require further improvement.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage to reach broadly expected skills by the time they enter Year 1. Progress is satisfactory overall in Key Stages 1 and 2. However the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is better than that of their peers nationally
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Inspectors saw evidence in some classes that good teaching is helping pupils to make more rapid progress, but this is not a consistent picture across the school. Scrutiny of work in pupils' books and lesson observations show that teaching quality is also inconsistent across classes. Assessment systems are currently being revised and strengthened but this has not had time to become embedded in all teachers' practice.
- Pupils say they feel safe and valued in school. Relationships in the classroom are supportive and this means that pupils are ready to learn. Behaviour is satisfactory overall and in lessons where teaching is good, it contributes particularly well to pupils' learning and progress.
- The executive headteacher is providing effective leadership. Performance management systems have been reviewed and strengthened and the focus on school improvement has sharpened. However, self-evaluation is yet to be fully accurate. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is currently under review to ensure that it meets all pupils' learning needs. Middle leaders are beginning to play an increasingly active role in assuring quality but this is at an early stage. Monitoring is now regular and more rigorous and as a result, the quality of teaching has begun to improve.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate to at least good the progress of all pupils through improving the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that all lessons fully engage pupils and provide them with opportunities to learn actively
 - using assessment information more effectively to plan lessons that precisely build on pupils' prior knowledge and effectively match their individual needs
 - ensuring that all teachers' expectations about the amount and quality of work produced by pupils are consistently high.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - ensuring that the increasingly more accurate systems for tracking and assessing pupils' progress are fully embedded in order to assist lesson planning
 - making sure that strategic planning for improvement is based on a more accurate evaluation of the school's performance and that it is sharply focused on raising achievement
 - enabling middle leaders to more effectively check on the quality of lessons and of pupils' work in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Parents and carers feel that their children make good progress. However, lesson observations and work in pupils' books indicate that pupils' achievement, although broadly satisfactory, is inconsistent. Pupils are mostly keen to learn, take pride in their successes and respond well when given the opportunities to work actively or independently.

Children settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the nurturing ethos. Their curiosity is encouraged and they develop positive attitudes towards learning so that by the time they leave reception, children have developed the skills and knowledge close to those expected for their age. This reflects good progress through this Key Stage. In 2011, attainment by the end of Year 2 was below the national average reflecting slow progress across Key Stage 1. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory and attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly average. Evidence gathered during inspection shows that progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6 is now more rapid than before. In Key Stage 1 progress in reading is increasingly secure, with focused sessions to promote pupils' knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is now contributing well to develop pupils' reading skills. Reading attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is broadly average.

Satisfactory provision for disabled pupils and those with special education needs ensures that these pupils mostly make satisfactory progress, although there is some variability. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals do better than other pupils in this group nationally at the end of Key Stage 2.

Quality of teaching

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Examples of good teaching were observed but teaching quality is not sufficiently consistent at present to ensure all pupils make accelerated progress. Pupils benefit in particular from the strong, positive relationships established with their teachers.

Where teaching is good, lessons are characterised by effective questioning, good challenge and brisk pace, with little time lost reinforcing routines and classroom management. In the best lessons, teachers plan well for the needs of all pupils and target the work of teaching assistants to good effect. This brisk pace in lessons together with teacher's high expectations of the amount and quality of work that should be produced by pupils is beginning to drive progress forward. In these good quality lessons, teachers' detailed marking and consistent follow up work, focuses pupils on specific areas for improvement and leads to more accelerated progress. In less effective lessons, pupils do not progress as rapidly as they could because teaching does not hold their interests and they are not given enough opportunities to take an active part in their learning. In addition, lesson planning does not make effective enough use of the information on pupils' current and past progress to move learning on as quickly as possible. Teachers' expectations are not always high enough and consequently, the amount and quality of work produced by pupils is less than that of which they are capable.

Inspectors' analysis of pupils' work showed that marking across the school has become more consistent this term and pupils are benefiting from the good guidance provided. Vivid examples in pupils' 'exciting writing' books show effective marking focused on promoting strategies to improve story writing and to develop more complex sentence structures. Teachers' planning is more detailed and providing more opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their mathematical, reading and writing skills across the curriculum.

Teaching generally promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development satisfactorily. Pupils are encouraged to consider the impact of their life styles on the environment and to make choices which promote good ecological responsibility. For example, in reception, children have been caring for a number of eggs which recently hatched into chicks and have now been taken to a local farm. Their enthusiasm was clear to see as they eagerly and knowledgeably talked about what they had seen and done during this time. This reflects good teaching over time, so that by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's skills are broadly those expected. Enrichment activities are varied. The school is particularly proud of the music and sporting opportunities provided. Almost all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire considered that their children were well taught, a view supported by their children's enthusiasm for school, but not wholly matched to inspection findings.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Most pupils say they enjoy coming to school, feel safe and think that behaviour is good. The ethos of the school is very inclusive, providing for pupils with a wide range of needs. Strategies for managing pupils with more challenging behaviour are effective; a small number of pupils need regular support to behave well and this is provided with little disruption to lessons.

Pupils, who have a good understanding of the types of bullying, think that little bullying occurs in school and that adults deal with any issues promptly. Most parents and carers, who responded to the inspection questionnaire and those who talked to the inspectors, felt that behaviour was good. However, a small number did raise concerns about bullying issues which they felt remained unresolved. Inspectors investigated this matter fully and found that school leaders had followed school procedures and taken appropriate steps to respond to parents and carers concerns. Recording of concerns raised by parents and carers, and subsequent actions taken by the school, are in place but these are not as well-organised as might be expected.

Pupils feel secure and play well together at break times. Playground equipment is popular and keeps pupils active; however, there is some boisterous behaviour which sometimes goes unchecked. School leaders are taking steps to address it. The curriculum helps pupils keep themselves safe, for example, when using the internet. Attendance has improved and is close to above the national average.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Adults effectively care for pupils well and this is rightly recognised as a strength by parents and carers. The executive headteacher is highly regarded by staff and is providing robust leadership. Staff morale is good and there is a clear, shared vision to improve provision and raise attainment. Changes to self-evaluation procedures are beginning to provide a more accurate view of the schools' strengths and weaknesses; there is a strong impetus for change across the school. Strategic planning is not yet firmly focused on raising attainment and improving the rate of progress made by pupils. Clear, measurable actions which will enable leaders to determine how successful the school is doing are still to be agreed. A more robust tracking system and the use of increasingly rigorous data analysis are beginning to result in accelerated progress for some pupils. This is at an early stage and is not yet having a consistent impact across the school.

Changes to monitoring procedures have provided senior leaders with a more accurate picture of the quality of teaching. However, the role of middle leaders is insufficiently developed to enable them to contribute fully to improving the overall quality of teaching and learning. Leaders have correctly identified that assessment fails to provide sufficiently accurate information to enable teachers' to move learning forward as swiftly as possible in all lessons. Recent changes have secured some improvement in assessment, but it is too early to see the impact on pupils' outcomes. Members of the governing body take their role seriously and are working with the executive headteacher to ensure that the school continues to move forward. They are committed to playing a more active role in determining the strategic direction of the school and in developing further the skills needed to be able to hold school leaders firmly to account. Capacity for improvement is satisfactory

The schools' inclusive ethos supports well the promotion of equal opportunities and access to educational entitlement. For example, the academic achievement of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is better than that found nationally. The school meets requirements for safeguarding. Pupils display positive attitudes, most are punctual and attendance continues to improve.

The curriculum is satisfactory and is being revised to increase the opportunities pupils have to develop their creativity; the impact of these changes is yet to be assessed. A range of visits and visitors contribute effectively to pupils' satisfactory spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils clearly understand the school's code of conduct for behaviour. They enjoy taking on responsible roles in school and show that they understand the moral and social values the school promotes. There are opportunities in lessons and assemblies for pupils to reflect on important issues.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



19 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Yew Tree Community Primary School and Acorn Nursery,
Dukinfield, SK16 5BJ**

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. The purpose of our visit was to find out how well you do in your work and what can be improved. I would like to thank you all for your help and for the friendly and sensible way you talked to us and told us about your school.

You go to a satisfactory school which is improving. This means that your school does some things well and others it needs to improve. Your school looks after you well and you feel safe. It has a friendly atmosphere because of the way you get on with each other and with the adults. You get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and your school helps you reach average standards by the end of Year 6. Your attendance is improving and almost all of you attend school on time. You try hard in lessons and your behaviour in the best lessons is good.

Your headteacher, governing body and staff want you to do even better so they have agreed to improve teaching and their leadership even more so that you make progress more quickly and learn as well as you can in reading, writing and mathematics. To help them do this they will analyse and make better use of the information they collect on your progress to get a clearer picture of how you are doing. This will help them set more accurate and challenging targets for you to achieve.

All of you can help your school even further by working hard, behaving well and doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Lyn Pender
Lead Inspector

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