

# Yew Tree Community Primary School and Acorn Nursery

Yew Tree Lane, Dukinfield, Cheshire, SK16 5BJ

**Inspection dates** 11–12 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) requires improvement. The open-ended play activities sometimes lack challenge and purpose, hindering children’s progress.
- Children in the Nursery are not taught daily by a qualified teacher and adults do not plan the next steps in each child’s development well enough. Adults do not attend all of the available training on offer at Yew Tree.
- By the end of Reception children are below where they should be for their age in reading, writing, number work and in communication skills.
- The gaps between the standards attained by different groups of pupils across the school are too wide.
- Pupils’ progress has been hampered by frequent changes to teachers and their achievement overall requires improvement.
- In some lessons where the teaching is not good, pupils chat or do not get on with their work.
- Some of the improvements senior leaders have made are recent and they have not yet had the impact on improving all teaching to at least good.
- Leaders do not focus on the progress that pupils are making when they evaluate pupils’ work.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. As a result, they are polite, friendly, kind and reflective.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils with a disability achieve well.
- The high quality teaching in music enables pupils to make rapid progress.
- The headteacher and governing body have in the last year led effective improvements in pupils’ phonics (the sounds that letters make) and reading, pupils’ behaviour and the quality of marking.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in each class and also looked at pupils’ work, teachers’ files and data about pupils’ achievement in each class. An inspector observed teaching in four small groups that was taking place out of class.
- An inspector observed pupils’ behaviour and safety at break times and lunch time and visited an assembly.
- Inspectors held several meetings with senior leaders, with teachers who lead subjects and part of the school. Similarly, we held discussions with the school’s business manager and with a representative of the interim strategic group (which replaced the governing body in May 2013).
- The lead inspector had a telephone discussion with the head of the off-site provision.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with five groups of pupils to take their views into account.
- The views of parents were taken into account through the 37 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View. We also took into account the school’s own survey of parents views with over 250 responses.
- The views of staff were also taken into account through analysis of 37 responses to a questionnaire.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school’s view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

## Inspection team

Allan Torr, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Gaynor Roberts

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Prydwen Elfed-Owens

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Yew Tree is much larger than the national average for primary schools.
- Over 40% of pupils are known to be eligible to be supported by the pupil premium. The pupil premium is a grant of money from the government to support children of Armed Forces families; to support children who are in care and looked after by the local authority; and pupils who receive free school meals.
- Acorn Nursery is led and managed jointly between the headteachers of Yew Tree and Oakdale schools and is situated within Dukinfield Children's Centre adjoining both schools. The teachers and other staff work for both schools.
- One pupil is being educated off-site at the local authority's specialist behaviour support service, BLISS.
- Most pupils are White British.
- There is a larger than average proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and needing external support (school action plus). The proportion of pupils with special educational needs needing school support (School Action) is below the national average. There is a larger proportion of pupils than average who are wheel-chair users or who have some other form of disability.
- The school met the government's current floor standards in 2011 and 2012 (this is the minimum expected by the government for pupils' attainment and progress) but did not meet it in 2013.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - making sure children in the Nursery are taught daily by a qualified teacher
  - making sure all adults in the Nursery meet frequently to discuss children's next steps in their development and plan activities that enable children to make better progress
  - making sure all adults make better use of data and observations to plan the next steps in children's learning and after an observation, record what the children's next steps are
  - improving play activities to make sure they are challenging and purposeful and improve children's communication, number, reading and writing skills.
- Increase the impact leaders have on improving learning so that teaching across the school is consistently at least good and gaps between the attainment of groups of pupils are closed, by:
  - revising how leaders' check on pupils' work to focus on pupils' progress and achievement
  - ensuring that developing pupils' writing skills is a key focus across the school
  - tackling the chatting in class which stops pupils from learning and making progress
  - making sure teachers and adults in the Nursery attend training and staff meetings with Yew Tree staff

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children enter into the nursery with skills and levels of development that are below those typical for three- and four-year olds, particularly in number, speaking, reading and writing. Overall, they make only steady rather than good progress.
- Children in the nursery make steady progress in their personal and social education, such as learning how to share, take turns, and make relationships with adults and other children. They develop creativity and imagination in their play, for example one group were happily playing in the 'doctor's surgery' learning about bones and pretended to examine each other. One offered an inspector some medicine to make me them better. Their knowledge and skills, in the better sessions, are carried through into other activities. A more-able group for example made progress in a phonics lesson (the letters we use in English and the sounds they represent). They confidently and accurately expressed the sounds in the words 'medicine', 'stethoscope' and 'tablets'.
- Children enter into the school's Reception with levels of development that are still below those typical for four-and five-year olds. When they leave Reception less than a half of the children have attained a good level of development and are ready for Year 1. In speaking, understanding, reading, number work, understanding of communities and the world, their development in 2013 was below the national average. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, children born in the summer do less well than those born in autumn and this gap is slow to close and continues to exist through to the juniors.
- A much higher proportion of pupils in Year 1 attained the expected level in phonics and reading for their age than in the previous year. Pupils change their books frequently in a Hogwarts-themed library under the gaze of a huge papier-mâché wizard. In Year 1 pupils listened captivated to the teacher's good use of voice and expression. They were motivated to choose books by listening to the teacher reading from an inspiring 'story chair' and talking about different books.
- Pupils across the school that spoke to us commented on how much they liked reading. They said that some of the reading books were tatty and need replacing but there is a good range from which to choose. Pupils' progress in reading is uneven but by the end of Year 6 pupils' reading has caught up and is close to the national average. Pupils supported by the pupil premium however, lag almost a year behind other pupils in their reading ability. This gap is closing steadily.
- Although in Year 6 last year, pupils' writing achievement was good; across the school writing requires improvement. In most year groups over a quarter of pupils are behind where they should be for their age. There are gaps between groups of pupils, for example, pupils supported by the pupil premium are over a half a year behind other pupils.
- Pupils' achievement fluctuates each year and in each year group. In mathematics for example, standards are low at the start of Year 1. Standards match the national average by the end of Year 2 but then fluctuate. In one year group in the juniors, almost 90 per cent are on track to attain the level they should for their age then in another year group it is only 69 per cent. The most able pupils achieve well when faced with good teaching over time but where teaching is less effective or staff absences occur their progress is hindered.
- All staff are working hard to close the gaps in attainment between groups of pupils. Boys attain similar to girls in most, but not all, classes and subjects. Pupil premium pupils were well below other pupils in the school but the gap between these groups, although still too wide, has begun to close. In one session, a groups of most-able pupils who are also supported by the pupil premium, made good progress towards reaching Level 6 in mathematics.
- The few pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well. They quickly pick up the language skills they need and often attain at a higher level than White British pupils.
- Pupils who have a disability achieve well. There are no barriers to success and teachers' expectations for this group of pupils are high. The school promotes inclusion well, and makes

sure, particularly disabled pupil, have equality of opportunity. It tackles any discrimination and fosters good relations between those with and those without a disability.

- Pupils with special educational needs are approximately two years behind other pupils. In the last year some pupils have started to achieve better but overall the achievement of this group of pupils requires improvement.

### **The quality of teaching**

### **requires improvement**

- Teaching is patchy across the school which means in some classes and subjects it is good but in other classes or subjects, teaching has little impact on improving pupils' progress. Some of this patchiness is because of frequent teacher changes due to staff illness, or teaching in the past that has not been good enough.
- Most parents and carers believe their children are taught well. Staff in their survey agreed they had the guidance they need to improve their teaching. Pupils who spoke to us commented that teaching had improved and they were particularly complimentary about the teaching in music, reading and art.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement. Yew Tree Nursery children are not taught daily by a qualified teacher. The headteacher noted this immediately when she started at the school and is working with the local authority to implement a plan as soon as possible to make sure the children are taught daily by a teacher. When teachers do interact with children, they ask searching questions and set up some purposeful activities which enable children to make better progress.
- Sessions and activities are not designed well enough to help children make faster progress. The learning journals do not track children's progress well enough and the observations in the journals do not identify the next steps that children should take.
- In Nursery and Reception, some of the activities children choose have little purpose or challenge. The outdoor provision for mathematics in particular is not good. However, some activities are well-designed and link well to the topic for the day. Some children for example made good progress in their understanding about fire fighters. They chose from a range of activities that made them learn something new. All of these activities related well to the visit from the fire service that morning.
- Across the school, in some lessons, pupils make rapid progress because the teaching is exciting and interesting and the teachers have high expectations and demonstrate clearly how to produce high quality work. In a music lesson for example, provided by the local authority music service, teaching was outstanding. All pupils, including those with a physical disability, learnt the tempo, pulse and beat to African-style music which resulted in an exciting class performance.
- Where teaching required improvement, pupils were not interested by the activities or what was being taught so they chatted and were distracted from their work and their progress slowed. Teaching assistants provided helpful support but did not ask questions that made pupils think, explain their answers, or use better vocabulary, pronunciation or writing skills.
- Teachers' marking has improved. Some pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 who spoke with us talked warmly about 'fix-it' time. Pupils were clear what they needed to fix from the previous lesson and often wrote comments back to the teacher which the teacher then followed up and responded to. In these classes the marking helped pupils make progress. In the infant classes however on occasions pupils could not read teachers' comments and did not know what they needed to do to improve their work.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Children's behaviour in Nursery and reception is mostly good. Children cooperate with each other, share, take care of resources and are polite and friendly to adults. On occasions however children are too boisterous for example throwing play dough, throwing construction blocks and running aimlessly and quickly around the

classroom. This behaviour was observed during 'choice time' indicating the activities were not always purposeful or engrossing for children.

- In the rest of the school pupils are friendly, polite and have good social skills and relationships with each other and adults. One pupil commented "there are a few naughty ones but a lot more good ones." The pupils that spoke with us complimented the headteacher and teachers for improving behaviour. As one pupil said "the improvement since September 2012 when behaviour was horrible is awesome".
- The whole staff implement and follow the rewards and sanctions system. They said in their survey replies to us that behaviour issues are dealt with well. Most parents and carers also agreed that behaviour is good and incidents are dealt with by staff.
- In some classes pupils' progress is hampered because teachers have to spend time engaging those who are day dreaming, chatting or who are not getting on with their work.
- The amount of time pupils have had to be excluded from the school has reduced as has the amount of sanctions handed out by staff such as 'red cards'. Incident logs show a good reduction in the incidents of poor behaviour.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement mainly because there is too much name-calling. The most common names pupils told us about was because of the way pupils look; for example being teased because they are overweight; need glasses; freckly or for being short. A few pupils who have special educational needs told us that occasionally other pupils called them 'dumb'. There were also a few occasions where children used the term 'that's so gay' in a derogatory way. The name calling, according to the pupils we spoke with, is reducing and incidents of cyber bullying are rare.
- The school has taught pupils how to stay safe. Pupils who spoke to us talked about their confidence in water safety, fire and medical safety, Year 5 and 6 pupils for example learn about how to apply First Aid. The police have visited school as have nurses and paramedics to talk about how to stay safe.
- Pupils' health and well-being has been improved by the use of sports' premium. A greater proportion of pupils is now involved in team and individual sports and has a better idea of how to stay healthy through exercise and recreation.
- The pupils' attendance is around the national average and has improved, as has punctuality.
- The off-site behaviour provision has improved pupils' attendance, self-control and attitudes.

## **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body are knowledgeable, skilful and are determined that Yew Tree pupils should have the best teaching and provision. Initially progress and improvement was slow and hampered by the turbulence in staffing, by inexperienced and weak middle leadership. As a result, the school has only since September started to improve and this is the main reason why leadership requires improvement.
- The school has invested in training for staff and for middle leaders. The headteacher and deputy headteachers have evaluated teaching across the school and implemented training for individuals but also for the whole staff depending on their needs. This training has been successful in raising the quality of teaching but because of illness and changes to staff it has been slow to improve all teaching to be good.
- In the Nursery, because staff work for two schools, the headteacher at Yew Tree has been unable to incorporate teachers and adults into all of the training offered by the school. The local authority has been slow to recognise or put right the problems in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The middle leader responsible for the Early Years Foundation Stage has evaluated the provision and has a good action plan in place to improve it. Some changes have been made so adults have started to meet fortnightly to discuss activities and children's progress but this is nowhere near frequent enough. Consequently teaching has not improved quickly enough and staff have not used data about children's achievements quickly or well enough to help children make faster progress.

- The local authority has a high level of involvement in the school which has led to improvements in governance and in the quality of middle and senior leadership. As a result the governing body was replaced by an interim strategic group from May 2013 and senior and middle leaders were placed on courses to develop their leadership skills. Although the local authority has a good knowledge and understanding of the main part of the school there has been insufficient advice and support to tackle the weaknesses in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The main school improvement officer played a large part in setting up systems to manage the performance of staff and provided a level of challenge for the senior leaders.
- The local authority support has improved the use and spending of the pupil premium fund. As a result, pupils have targeted teaching and activities and so the gap in attainment between them and other pupils has started to close. The support has also improved the security of the site and safeguarding.
- Keeping pupils safe is a high priority (safeguarding). The single central record meets government requirements and the systems to let visitors into the school have improved. Pupils are well-supervised at break times and there is a thorough system in place for assessing risk. For example there is a risk assessment in the Reception class next to each part of the unit, such as the water play area, the construction area and the sand area. Accident records are well kept and are easily monitored.
- Senior leaders' checks of the school's work are accurate which means they have an honest view of where the school is now and what it needs to do to improve to be good. They check the quality of teaching by observing lessons, looking at pupils' work, tracking pupils' progress and by conducting learning walks. They hold discussions with teachers every six weeks to identify what is working well and what aspects of teaching still need to be improved. As a result, teaching has started to improve. However, the checks on pupils' work do not go into detail about the quality of the activities, the progress pupils make or of the quality of teaching.
- The checks on teachers' work link closely to the decisions leaders make about teachers' pay. As a result teachers are more accountable for the impact their lessons have on pupils' progress and learning.
- The sport premium (a grant from the government to increase participation and skills in sport) has been spent and is showing some impact. The number of pupils involved in school teams and competitive sport has increased as has their level of skill and knowledge for example about how to play different sports. The school offers a range of after-school clubs including dance, football and gymnastics.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils act as learning leaders in Key Stage 2 and have other leadership responsibilities such as in the eco group and the junior leadership team (school council). The school puts on curriculum theme days such as media day, French day and book day, and the team votes to decide on what the next theme day should be. Pupils have frequent chances to reflect on their own learning, to empathise with others and to gain knowledge about different religions and countries. They also develop their knowledge and understanding of music, art and the theatre.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The interim strategic group meets monthly and sometimes weekly to discuss the progress of the school. It has started to become more autonomous and generate the information itself that it needs to challenge the school to improve. It contributes to, adds to and discusses the headteacher's self-evaluation of the school and the school's improvement plans. The Chair of the group is an assistant headteacher of a school and so had the knowledge about education and teaching to be able to both support and challenge leaders to improve. As a result of this challenge, the performance management of teachers has been improved; there is better oversight of the achievement of different groups of pupils.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106223
<b>Local authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	430999

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	513
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Vicki Johnson
<b>Headteacher</b>	P Tankard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 3383452
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