

Lime Tree Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106302
Local Authority	Trafford
Inspection number	309088
Inspection dates	11–12 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Arthur Markham

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 on roll	
School	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Denis Mallieu
Headteacher	Mr Simon Beswick
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2003
School address	Budworth Road Sale Cheshire M33 2RP
Telephone number	0161 9731554
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This smaller than average school serves an area with a high degree of social deprivation. The number of pupils claiming free school meals is well above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Close to a fifth of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and there are a small number of pupils in the early stages of learning English. Many pupils join and leave the school throughout the year. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2006. The school has recently achieved Eco Schools Status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which provides good value for money. It is improving rapidly following a period when standards fell and pupils did not achieve as well as expected. A major factor in this improvement is the outstanding leadership of the energetic headteacher. Since his appointment, he has ensured that close attention is given to improving the quality of teaching and learning. This has had a marked impact on the progress that pupils make throughout the school and the standards they attain.

Performance in national tests at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 has been below national averages in recent years, but in 2007 there was a dramatic improvement. At Year 6, standards rose significantly to a level above those attained nationally. Similarly, standards at Year 2 rose, with a greater number of pupils achieving the higher levels. This improvement is continuing, with school data showing that throughout the school pupils are making good progress from well below average starting points and are achieving well. One of the main reasons for this improvement is the use of challenging targets. Staff have worked hard, and successfully, to generate a mature attitude to school in pupils who, as a result, clearly realise the importance of working hard to achieve their targets. This is reflected in the very positive learning atmosphere evident throughout the school. Close attention is given to equal opportunities. Well-organised assessment procedures and careful monitoring of pupils' progress enable action to be taken to support any pupils seen to be underachieving. Parents appreciate the changes that have been made and rate the school highly. Statements such as, 'Since Mr Beswick became headteacher the school has flourished', reflect the views of many.

The level of care, guidance and support provided for pupils is outstanding. Pupils enjoy excellent relationships with their teachers and say teachers are kind and friendly. Pupils consequently feel safe and secure. Strong links with external agencies mean that very good support ensures the welfare of pupils. Pupils' personal development is good. Close attention is given to developing their self-esteem and this helps them grow in confidence. They show a good understanding of the needs of others and work and play together in a very amicable way. They make a good contribution to the running of the school, talking enthusiastically about the changes that have resulted from the work of the school council. In lessons, and around the school, pupils' behaviour is excellent. They say they really enjoy school; a view endorsed by parents who say their children are very happy to be there. This is reflected in the marked improvement in attendance, which is now above national averages.

A stimulating curriculum and lively and effective teaching ensure that learning is interesting for pupils. Close attention is given to literacy and numeracy, although teachers sometimes miss opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills to overcome the below average skills of many when they start the school. The teachers' effective use of interactive whiteboards interests and involves pupils, but the pupils' own basic computing skills, and opportunities to practise them in other subjects, are not as well developed as they should be.

Leadership and management are good. There is a strong team approach, with all staff and governors working together well to improve the effectiveness of the school. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school and carry out their responsibilities well. The school has a good awareness of its strengths and areas needing development because senior staff monitor its performance closely, but subject coordinators are not sufficiently involved in this

process. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and there is a strong capacity to continue to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. On entry to Nursery many children have skills that are well below those expected, particularly in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Staff work together very well and present a very caring environment for children so that children quickly begin to feel happy and secure. Very good use is made of the large and stimulating outside area to help children develop new skills. Effective teaching enables children to make a very good start to their learning. Children enjoy the well-balanced and wide range of activities and work enthusiastically at their tasks with high levels of enjoyment. Close attention is given to developing children's social skills, and routines are well organised so that children quickly acquire good learning habits. As a result, most children make good progress and by the end of the Foundation Stage the majority reach expected standards, although their speaking and listening skills are still weaker areas.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' speaking and listening skills in order to support the continued raising of standards.
- Improve pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and provide opportunities to use them in other subjects.
- Develop the role of subject coordinators to enable them to take a more active role in improving standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. A gradual decline in standards, evident in national test results in 2005 and 2006, was arrested in 2007. This is because of the determined drive to improve the quality of teaching and make learning more exciting and relevant for pupils. The 2007 unvalidated test results show that standards have risen markedly at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The performance of pupils in the Year 2 tests improved to a level close to national averages, with more pupils reaching the higher levels. Pupils' performance in the tests at Year 6 showed a marked improvement, with virtually all pupils reaching the expected Level 4 and a high proportion achieving the higher Level 5. School data show that this situation is being sustained with all pupils, including those at the early stages of learning English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These groups are making good progress and achieving well from their starting points. However, standards and progress in ICT is weaker.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' enjoyment of school is evidenced by their enthusiasm and excellent behaviour in lessons. Their attitudes to learning are good. They demonstrate a very sensible and mature understanding of the importance of doing their best and take pride in presenting their work well. They appreciate the way teachers work hard to make learning exciting by using a wide range of techniques so that activities challenge and stimulate pupils. As a result, attendance has improved

and is now good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies present them with good opportunities for quiet reflection and contribute well to their growing spiritual awareness. The Eco team works well to encourage fellow pupils to look after the environment. Pupils carry out a range of duties which enable them to contribute to the life of the school and to show their concern for others. For example, playground buddies ensure that younger pupils are looked after in the playground. Pupils' sound basic skills, together with their well developed personal skills, prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers know their pupils well and plan lessons carefully to meet pupils' needs. Relationships are excellent and pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Good routines ensure that classrooms are quiet, industrious places. Pupils show an enthusiasm for learning and work hard. Most lessons stimulate pupils and move at a good pace, although occasionally too lengthy explanations leave pupils with little time to complete tasks and review their learning at the end of the lesson. Use of questioning is generally good, but teachers sometimes miss opportunities to develop pupils' speaking skills by demanding extended answers. Teachers make good use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress. Arrangements for setting targets are very good and teachers' effective use of comments when marking pupils' work helps pupils to understand how they can improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. Close attention is given to the basic skills and other subjects are covered well through the use of a thematic approach. This makes learning more relevant and interesting for pupils. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply their ICT skills across the curriculum. Pupils' personal development is developed well through 'circle time' discussions and personal, social and health education lessons. Specialist teaching is used effectively to enhance pupils' learning by providing French lessons for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Physical education lessons foster healthy lifestyles well and provision for sport is good and enriched by the effective sports partnership with the nearby high school. An annual residential trip for Years 5 and 6 promotes teamwork through adventurous activities. A good range of after school clubs and visits and visitors enhance pupils' learning and add greatly to their enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school places great importance on giving sensitive support for all its pupils. Staff know pupils very well and the school works very effectively with parents so that pupils' needs are met. Pupils with additional learning needs benefit well from the extra support supplied by the teaching assistants. Vulnerable pupils are particularly well looked after and the school works in very close partnership with a range of agencies to support them and their families. Procedures for child protection, health and safety and risk assessment are in place and are regularly reviewed. Procedures for setting targets, and the school's systems for assessing and tracking the progress of pupils, are excellent. They enable early intervention to support individuals and have been

an important factor in the recent improvement in standards. Pupils know their targets and are given good guidance as to how they can achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The inspirational leadership and clear vision of the headteacher give a strong direction to the school. Expectations have been raised and everyone is working together well to improve the school's performance in order to eliminate the underachievement of pupils in previous years. Recent results show this is proving very successful. The strong focus given to making pupils aware of the importance of education is reflected in their quoting of the school motto, 'Serious about school' and their mature approach to learning. Parents are very pleased with the changes that have been made and say that Lime Tree has progressed greatly. Rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluation effectively identify the school's strengths and areas requiring development. Senior managers are contributing well to this process, but the school is aware that subject coordinators are not sufficiently involved. Governors are very supportive of the school and offer a good balance of challenge and support to school leaders.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I really enjoyed talking to you and getting your views of your school. Many of you said it is a good school and I agree.

I particularly liked the warm and friendly atmosphere and the way the staff take very good care of you so that you feel safe and happy. They work hard to make learning interesting for you so that you do well. The wide range of activities that they plan for you impressed me and it was very clear that this helps you to really enjoy school. Many of you told me this, and how much you like your teachers. The way you work hard for your teachers is the main reason that you make good progress and achieve well. I was very impressed with your behaviour, which is excellent, and I liked the way that older pupils take care of the younger ones. It was also pleasing to hear, when I talked to some of you at lunchtime how aware you are of the importance of a healthy diet and the need to take part in physical activities so that you keep fit and healthy.

There are some things the school needs to do to make it even better. I have asked the headteacher and staff to make sure that they give you plenty of opportunities to develop your speaking skills. You can help by giving longer explanations when you answer questions. I have also asked your teachers to develop your ICT skills by giving you more opportunities to use computers in all subjects. You can help by continuing to work as hard as you were doing in the lessons I observed. Finally, I have asked the teachers in charge of subjects to keep checking how well you are doing in order to determine how they can help you do even better.

Thank you for helping me so much with the inspection of your school. I hope that you will continue to work hard in school and help the teachers so that Lime Tree Primary becomes an even better school.