

Yew Tree Community Primary School and Acorn Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106223
Local Authority	Tameside
Inspection number	324353
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Onyon

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	501
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Andrew
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Short
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Yew Tree Lane Dukinfield Cheshire SK16 5BJ
Telephone number	0161 3383452

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2009
Inspection number	324353

Fax number

0161 3388743

Age group	3-11
Inspection dates	1-2 July 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This above average sized primary school is situated around a mile from the centre of Dukinfield in an area of social disadvantage. The proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage with a small number from different minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average and the number with a statement of special educational need is below average. The school is accredited with Investors in People, Healthy Schools, Basic Skills Quality Mark and Activemark awards and holds the Eco schools silver award. With the neighbouring Oakdale Special School, it jointly manages the inclusive mainstream/special educational needs Acorn Nursery, providing for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Yew Tree Primary is a good school. It enjoys the confidence of the overwhelming majority of its parents, who feel it provides a welcoming and supportive environment in which their children are safe and well cared for. Since the previous inspection the leadership team has successfully introduced accurate systems to support the assessment of pupils' work. Pupils' progress and attainment are now more closely monitored and work is well matched to their abilities. This has resulted in rising standards and in the overall improved achievement of most pupils, including those who have significant barriers to their learning and require additional support.

Having entered the Early Years Foundation Stage with lower than expected skills, pupils' overall progress is good, resulting in broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. In Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics reaches expected levels. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2. Science is a particular strength with standards being above average. Although the test results for 2007 were below the targets set for that year, the school responded positively by improving pupils' key skills in English and mathematics. Consequently, pupils are now working securely in both subjects with an increasing number reaching the higher Level 5 in Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with most lessons fully inclusive for all pupils. In the best lessons the focus is quickly established and learning proceeds at a good pace. Staff check on pupils' progress and marking directs pupils to their next steps in learning. Because the lessons are challenging and enjoyable, pupils are interested and keen to participate. This good picture is not consistent and there are occasions when teaching is not as effective, for example where the introductory part of lessons takes too much time resulting in the pace of learning slowing and pupils' progress not being as brisk as it might be. Pupils are not always encouraged to discuss their learning targets to help them understand how well they are doing or to think about what they personally need to do to improve.

There is a good curriculum. It is enriched through a range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities; for example, during the inspection Year 5 pupils visited Styal Mill. The curriculum is particularly effective in promoting pupils' awareness of how to stay healthy and safe. This is a happy school in which any behavioural or emotional difficulties are managed positively. Pupils enjoy their time in school and what it has to offer. Behaviour in lessons and in the playgrounds is sensible. Pupils' attitudes and conduct towards staff and one another lead to good working relationships during lessons. Pupils express their opinions openly through their school council, which provides them with a voice in the decision making processes of the school. Their good achievement contributes well to their future economic well-being.

Yew Tree is an improving school that is well led and managed and has worked to good effect to raise pupils' achievement. The hard-working headteacher is well supported by staff and governors and evaluates carefully what the school does. The school's evaluation of its work is accurate and matches the findings of the inspection in every area. The well-focused progress the school has made indicates that it has a good capacity to improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Nursery provides jointly for mainstream and special educational needs children. On entry to the Nursery, children make a good start in a stimulating, exceptionally rich and welcoming environment. They settle well because of the high quality of care and support they receive from staff. Staff work tirelessly to make sure no child is left out of activities, their needs are swiftly identified and catered for so that they can learn and develop confidently. Children's welfare is promoted well. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Imaginative teaching, together with effective support, make certain that all children achieve well, especially in the areas of personal development, and reading and writing, where daily sessions focus on developing children's knowledge of letters and sounds. Work in the Reception classes builds effectively on that started in the Nursery. Direct teaching and small group activities enable key skills to be taught effectively. By the end of Reception, children have made good progress to reach levels broadly in line with those expected for their age. Innovative use of the extensive outdoor space provides a range of opportunities tailored for children to explore, investigate and solve problems: for example, growing vegetables and plants in their garden area. Good provision for personal development builds confidence and ensures that routines are correctly followed: for example, children demonstrate safe habits and consideration when using equipment both inside and out. Behaviour is good. Regular observations and assessments by staff are shared with parents and added to so that all are aware of the next steps in their children's learning. Children's welfare is well provided for and this reflects the excellent relationships with parents, confirmed by their overwhelmingly positive comments.

What the school should do to improve further

- Share good practice in teaching and learning throughout the school enabling the pace of learning to be accelerated.
- Engage pupils in setting their learning targets so that they understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well overall considering their below average starting points. Standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are broadly average overall. Standards in science in Key Stage 2 are currently above average. This is because pupils have developed good investigation skills and enjoy the practical challenges provided. Raising standards has been a major focus for the school and has resulted in improvements since the last inspection. Recent improvements in assessment, targeting and tracking procedures have ensured a closer match of work to pupils' needs. This has resulted in an increase in the number of pupils who reach the higher Level 5 by the end of Year 6. Where there are opportunities, pupils in both key stages enjoy contributing to whole-class discussions and talking with their partners, helping to accelerate their progress in English. Identified areas of weakness across English and mathematics have been addressed by well-targeted programmes, successfully boosting the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. The 2009 outcomes of national assessments indicate improved outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills because of the high quality care they receive from support staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The vast majority of children enjoy coming to school. 'This is a friendly and safe school', agreed a group of pupils. Pupils feel safe in school and have confidence in staff to deal with any problems quickly. Most pupils are well behaved, although a small minority need regular support from staff to behave well all of the time. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy because the school promotes this well. For example, the excellent playground activities enable children to promote their physical development. Pupils make informed choices about healthy food from the good range available at lunchtimes. They make a strong contribution to their school community through developing play areas and the school grounds. Older pupils take on responsibilities such as looking after younger ones in the playground. The good links with other schools and the many visits and visitors that the pupils enjoy effectively develops their knowledge of the wider community. Good entrepreneurial skills are promoted when children run stalls for summer fayres. Pupils leave well prepared for the next stage of their education. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development gives a secure foundation for each pupil's future life. Attendance is broadly average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. As a result, pupils make good progress. In the best lessons classrooms are well organised with good quality displays which are both informative and celebrate pupils' achievements. Where teaching is good, teachers have high expectations of their pupils and in most lessons learning gets off at a brisk pace. Electronic whiteboards are used well by teachers to demonstrate learning intentions and to engage pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. This encourages pupils to put forward their thoughts and ideas readily and productively, and to ask for help and advice when they need it. It also promotes good standards of behaviour. Teachers ensure that learning activities have the right amount of challenge for pupils to progress well. Teaching assistants work well alongside class teachers during group activities, providing effective additional support for those who need help to join the lesson and succeed with their work. However, this best practice is not consistent across the school resulting in some teaching that is satisfactory rather than good. In these lessons teachers spend too long in explaining what the pupils are going to learn. The pupils are patient and listen well, but are not engaged in active learning quickly enough, the pace of learning slackens and progress is slow. Occasionally, teachers do not carefully plan work that takes full account of what children can already do which also results in a slow pace to activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has developed since the last inspection to better meet pupils' needs and interests. However, some of the initiatives to improve the curriculum are at an early stage and have not yet had an impact on standards. The school is at the early stages of developing a skills-based curriculum with the aim of encouraging more independence and involvement in the pupils' learning. Children report that they enjoy their education. They like the many visits and visitors to the school to enrich learning. Opportunities to be involved in 'themed days' are talked about

by pupils with great enthusiasm and are helping them to develop creativity and express themselves. Opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects and to use information and communication technology are firmly established. The curriculum contributes well to the development of pupils' personal, social and health awareness. This is particularly so for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All statutory requirements are met and resources to support play and sport are good. Personal learning plans for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities take account of their interests and development needs well and promote their progress. Pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment. They say that these enable them to do things they would never otherwise do.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There is high-level pastoral care offered to all resulting in the very strong caring ethos where staff know the pupils well and provide them with good support. Pupils trust the adults in school and know they will listen and support them if they have a difficulty. Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils and their welfare are firmly in place, as are procedures for child protection. Academic support and guidance are satisfactory and improving because of accurate and comprehensive tracking of pupils' progress. Personal targets related to literacy and numeracy help pupils to see how well they are doing but pupils are not always involved in the setting or reviewing of the targets and do not always understand how well they are doing or what it is they need to do to improve. All staff, following the good lead of the headteacher, invest considerable time and energy in promoting pupils' emotional and social well-being and have a very clear understanding of their needs. Therefore, pupils feel valued, secure and their self-esteem develops effectively. Well-planned provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including the most vulnerable, helps these pupils achieve well. As one parent, reflecting a typical view, commented, 'I could not be more pleased with the support my child has received; she is now a very happy sociable child who is achieving well.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and focused on raising standards and achievement. The headteacher has a clear vision for improvement, which is shared effectively with other staff through discussions and a well-conceived school development plan. The involvement of subject leaders has also created a greater ownership of the school's management processes, particularly in checking on the quality of teaching and analysing assessments and pupils' work in order to identify areas requiring improvement. This is why standards in science, for example, are currently rising. The school is an inclusive community. It has good procedures in place to address equality and diversity amongst its pupils. It challenges any stereotyping and monitors the progress made by different groups of pupils, identifying correctly the need to raise attainment. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory and is developing. There are good local and national links but limited contact with international institutions. The school is an integral part of its local community and has a range of local visits and visitors who enrich the curriculum. The governors are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and supportive of the headteacher; they successfully hold the school to account, fulfilling their statutory responsibilities well and making a valuable contribution working alongside the school management team in guiding the school forward. The school provides good value for money.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	2

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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**

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

Thank you for making my colleagues and I feel so welcome and for helping us to find out all about your school. We enjoyed being with you and seeing your bright smiles, enthusiasm for your work and pride in your school. We were pleased to see how well behaved you are and how kind and considerate you are to each other. I am writing to tell you about the findings of the inspection.

Yew Tree is a good school. It has good teaching, a good curriculum and takes good care of you all. Your personal development and well-being are good. The school does a good job helping those of you who find learning difficult. You all seem to enjoy school and learn at a good rate and become very pleasant and mature individuals who put others before yourselves. You have positive attitudes towards your work and are rightly very proud of your school. You know a lot about staying safe, being healthy and making a positive contribution to your school community.

Your headteacher and all the staff team do their best for you. They are always seeking ways of doing this. They know the strengths of the school and what they need to do to improve. To help you to do even better we have asked your school to share the best practice in teaching and learning across the school to help you to progress even more quickly. We have also asked the school to encourage you to be involved in setting your learning targets so that you understand how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve.

It was a pleasure to visit your school. Keep working hard and coming to school regularly so that you continue to do well! On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to pass on my best wishes to all of you, and thank you once again for making our visit so enjoyable.