

Cherry Tree Primary School

Highfield Road, Farnworth, Bolton, Lancashire BL4 0NS

Inspection dates

13–14 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not addressed deficiencies in the quality of teaching across subjects and year groups, so it remains inconsistent and not good enough. Consequently, over time pupils have not achieved well, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Recent assessment information provides a more detailed picture of pupils' current progress for leaders and governors. However, teachers do not use this information well enough to help pupils make strong progress.
- Too few pupils are currently making rapid progress and reaching the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- Learning activities do not routinely meet the needs and interests of all pupils. Some work is too easy, especially for the most able pupils.
- Teachers' expectations are not high enough to ensure that pupils achieve well and that the quality of teaching improves so that all pupils make progress in their learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not making the rapid progress they need in order to catch up with other pupils nationally.
- Leaders and governors use the pupil premium funding to provide additional resources for disadvantaged pupils. However, the impact of this spending is not fully evaluated.
- Several middle leaders are new in post so it is too early to see their impact on school improvement.
- Teachers are not consistently challenging pupils to develop their knowledge and skills in the foundation subjects. Some teachers plan learning which does not take enough account of what pupils have already achieved or what they have not yet mastered.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders have established a caring community ethos.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are now making better progress following improvements to in-class provision and interventions.
- Leaders are successfully promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils feel safe, behave sensibly and get on well with each other.
- Children get off to a good start because provision in the early years is good.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - making sure that assessment information is used accurately to identify actions which will accelerate pupils' progress
 - making sure that teachers have the highest expectations of achievement for all groups of pupils
 - making sure that teaching in subjects other than English and mathematics systematically develops pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - supporting middle leaders in developing the skills and confidence they need to carry out their roles effectively in order to improve pupils' performance
 - ensuring that the foundation curriculum effectively develops subject-specific skills and is covered well
 - ensuring that the pupil premium funding is having an impact upon raising standards for disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the outcomes for pupils by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of all groups of pupils, especially in mathematics and reading.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders' actions have not brought about sufficient improvements to the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Teaching is not yet consistently good enough to ensure that pupils make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. As a result, pupils' outcomes are still below national figures. Senior leaders are aware of these low standards. They have put changes in place that have not had time to make a positive impact on teaching and results. Leaders' own evaluation of the school is now accurate.
- Subject leaders for English and mathematics are still developing their roles. They have yet to undertake detailed monitoring in their areas of responsibility and therefore their impact is still embryonic. Plans are now in place to bring about the necessary improvement to teaching, especially in reading and mathematics.
- The school's assessment arrangements have recently been revised following advice from the school improvement partners to provide a more accurate picture of pupils' progress. However, this information is not used well enough by leaders and governors to improve pupils' progress or to monitor the impact of new curriculum developments in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have developed an organised system of performance management of all staff. The responsibility for leading this cycle is distributed across several senior leaders so that a clear focus is given to link teaching to school development targets. All staff say that they appreciate the rigour and support that these meetings provide. They feel that they are well supported by senior leaders and staff surveys confirm these views.
- Until recently, leaders have not dealt effectively with weaknesses in provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The leader with responsibility for this area now uses the additional funding more effectively to ensure that the needs of these pupils are met through the use of more focused learning targets and the identification of gaps in learning. Recent training of teaching assistants is intended to allow them to provide more focused support for these pupils so they make strong progress in their learning.
- The pupil premium funding has been spent on providing additional resources and staffing to support disadvantaged pupils. However, disadvantaged pupils continue to make less progress than other pupils nationally. Leaders are aware of the need to make sure that all resources improve the learning of disadvantaged pupils, but as yet no evaluation of the impact of the pupil premium funding has taken place.
- The physical education and sport premium is used effectively to expand pupils' skills and broaden their experiences effectively. The use of the sports premium has been successful in ensuring that many more pupils participate in sporting opportunities such as basketball, football and athletics. More pupils from different year groups are now taking part in competitive sporting events. Pupils say that they enjoy the range of after-school clubs and activities now offered by the school.
- Leaders have been successful in raising pupils' attendance, including that of

disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Attendance is currently close to national figures and persistent absence is declining.

- The planned curriculum is planned to be broad and balanced. However, the school is aware that they must build upon planning to ensure greater consistency in curriculum delivery and teaching across all subjects so that pupils are better prepared for secondary school.
- Senior leaders are working effectively with the Bolton local authority and with other schools in the Orchard Federation of Schools to improve teaching across the three schools.
- The school promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils' say that the school supports them in developing a good understanding of British values through a wide range of activities such as an inter-faith week, visits from local artists and support for local charities.
- Parents are positive about the quality of education that their children receive. They value the support for families and are confident that staff will listen to any concerns they may have. A large majority of parents would recommend the school to others.

Governance of the school

- More recently, governors have improved the way they challenge school leaders by asking more probing questions about the information they have been given. They are increasingly challenging the headteacher. This was especially the case after the results in 2017. However, leaders and governors' actions over time have not been robust or effective enough to bring about the necessary improvements.
- Governors are now using the performance management of the executive headteacher as a tool to improve teaching and outcomes for all pupils across the school. They have an improving understanding of the strengths and the weaknesses of teaching at the school. They now regularly check that teachers who need support receive it.
- Governors are trained regularly and routinely check arrangements for safeguarding. Their work alongside senior leaders ensures a culture of safeguarding across the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A strong safeguarding culture prevails. All staff have received appropriate training in safeguarding and designated safeguarding staff have attended higher-level courses. All staff are trained to recognise potential risks to pupils in the school. All safeguarding policies meet the statutory requirements and effective procedures ensure that pupils are safe.
- The school works well with outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils and their families. Leaders take an active role in ensuring the safety of these pupils.
- Pupils and their parents are in strong agreement that pupils feel safe and are safe at this school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment, although improving, is not consistently good. At times, teaching is not matched closely enough to pupils' needs and abilities, which slows their progress.
- Teachers' expectation of what many pupils can achieve over time are not high enough. As a result, too few pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics because the quality of teaching over time has been variable across classes and subjects. Teaching does not provide sufficient levels of challenge or opportunities for pupils to develop reading, writing and mathematical skills across the wider curriculum.
- Pupils' books show some inconsistencies in how teachers are trying to improve pupils' writing. The development of pupils' handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar skills is stronger in some classes than in others. The most able, including the most able disadvantaged, show that they can use the skills they have learned in English lessons in some pieces of work, but this is not sufficiently sustained on a regular basis to help them move ahead of the expectation for their age.
- The teaching of mathematics still fluctuates in quality throughout the school. Pupils' books show that pupils across the school do not have enough opportunities in mathematics to apply their calculation skills to problem-solving or reasoning activities. This leads to pupils' developing misconceptions hindering further rapid progress.
- In mathematics, teachers' questioning and subject knowledge are not well developed. Pupils' deeper understanding of mathematical concepts in Year 6 is now starting to improve due to a sharper focus on developing their reasoning skills through challenging problem-solving activities.
- Over time, teachers' assessments have not always been accurate. In addition, their use of assessment information has not been good enough to ensure that activities are well matched to the skills and abilities of all groups of pupils. The accuracy of teachers' assessment is now improving as a result of professional development, including moderation with colleagues.
- Where assessment practice is stronger, teachers plan well for the wide range of needs in their class. For example, in the Reception class assessment systems clearly identify the next steps for each child's learning. As a result, tasks are well matched to the children's needs and they make much stronger progress.
- The teaching of reading varies across the school. Although pupils are now making better progress, this is inconsistent across year groups. Changes to the way pupils are taught phonics at levels which match their ability are strengthening their understanding. This is improving pupils' ability to decode new words so that they read more confidently and expressively. Pupils say that they enjoy reading and read regularly in school. Pupils' views were confirmed when inspectors heard pupils read. Most parents support their children's reading at home, making regular comments in their home-school diary.
- Teaching for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities reflects teaching seen elsewhere in the school and has mixed success. The wide-ranging support these pupils receive has not always been effective in helping them to make more rapid progress in line with other pupils nationally.

- The use of additional adults to support pupils' learning over time is variable across the school. In some cases, adults provide specific, targeted intervention for individual pupils to accelerate their progress. At other times, too much attention is given to pupils completing tasks, rather than on using effective questioning to check their understanding thoroughly.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The vast majority of pupils take responsibility for their learning and demonstrate good attitudes in class. Older pupils say that they enjoy the new challenge presented to them in English and mathematics and recognise that these activities are helping them to achieve their aspirations.
- Recent curriculum developments help pupils to gain a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations and to develop resilience to manage challenges in learning activities.
- Pupils are confident when discussing e-safety and how to keep themselves safe online. They have received advice on dealing with cyber bullying when using a range of digital technologies.
- Pupils feel safe in the school and have a teacher whom they can talk to if they have any concerns.
- The school has established supportive nurture sessions where vulnerable pupils and their families receive a high level of care and support from trained adults.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils take an active role in school life, for example through their involvement in being 'play leaders' and 'reading buddies' for the younger children in the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct around the school and in the playground is good. They play well together, making use of the school's play area and grounds. Pupils move around in the school in an orderly and calm manner. They respect each other and adults by holding doors open for one another.
- Pupils concentrate well in lessons and rarely disturb others. A few lose concentration if work is too easy for them. Staff manage behaviour well so that incidents involving poor conduct are infrequent.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare at the school and they are very confident that adults will help them if they have any concerns. The majority of parents agree.
- Pupils know the routines of school life well. They respond quickly to the instructions of adults around them. They value the rewards for and celebrations of good behaviour and achievement that are in place. Parents are kept informed of their child's behaviour

through the use of regular electronic communication. They appreciate the regular contact with the school.

- Pupils' attendance is now broadly in line with national averages. Leaders have taken effective action to work closely with families and external agencies so that attendance is now improving and the number of pupils who are persistently absent is declining.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- At both key stage 1 and key stage 2 in 2017 the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard for their age were below the national level in reading, writing and mathematics. Too few pupils were working at the higher standard by the time they left key stage 2.
- Assessment information from 2017 shows that pupils made less progress than seen nationally in reading and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils made progress below that of other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics. Progress in writing was above national figures for all groups of pupils.
- The progress of current pupils is improving but is not yet consistently good across each year group. Pupils in Year 2, Year 3, Year 4 and Year 6 particularly are making better progress in reading and writing than in mathematics.
- The teaching of phonics has been more effective over the last three years, leading to improvements in the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard by the end of Year 2. Attainment in phonics was still below the national figure in Year 1 in 2017.
- The proportion of pupils who receive additional support for their SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average. Current pupils who receive additional support are now making better progress than previously. This is a result of the actions of the coordinator, who closely monitors the link between pupils' progress in the classroom and the additional support provided for them.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not doing well enough in reading and mathematics. Funding to support these pupils has been used for a wide range of activities not always linked to targeting gaps in pupils' knowledge, skill or understanding. This has slowed their progress in these subjects.
- Leaders at all levels are working hard to improve outcomes over time, but this has not yet had an impact on outcomes across all aspects of the curriculum. Outcomes remain variable for all pupils and for groups of pupils, including pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The broad curriculum is not being taught consistently well, so pupils do not achieve good outcomes in a range of subjects and are not well prepared for the next stage of their education. For example, inspectors saw work in pupils' books that demonstrated weaknesses in the teaching of science which were leading to pupils struggling to improve their basic scientific knowledge.

Early years provision

Good

- Strong leadership of the early years provision ensures that the children have a high-quality learning environment, both indoors and outside.

- Teaching, learning and assessment are consistently effective and enable children to sustain good progress in all areas of learning.
- Children start in the early years from a variety of starting points but all are below those that are typical for their age. They make good progress in securing foundations for further learning. As a result, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development across the areas of learning is now closer to national figures. This shows that children are well prepared for the next stage in their learning in Year 1.
- The early years leader has introduced a very effective tracking and assessment procedure. All staff are well trained through regular observations and are confident in their assessments. This tracking of children's progress is used to identify areas for further development. Parents are kept well informed through detailed electronic communication that they receive about their children's progress.
- The early years leader works very closely with outside agencies to ensure that children who have SEN and/or disabilities are provided with effective provision from the early stages.
- All staff work closely and effectively to keep children safe and ensure that all statutory welfare requirements are fully met. As a result, children feel safe, behave well and relate warmly and respectfully to adults and other children.
- Children develop an interest in and joy of reading at an early age. Reading challenges promote independence as children are given tasks closely matched to their ability that encourage them to use their developing phonic skills to decode and blend increasing complex words.
- Children in the Reception class learn well across a well-planned range of indoor and outdoor experiences that promote good progress. For example, children were seen developing their early writing and mathematical skills in adult-supported activities, both in the classroom and outdoors. They were observed enthusiastically writing letters to Father Christmas while another group was being challenged by their teacher to use more complex numbers to count and partition with great success.
- The early years leader has ensured that the provision for all children, including the most able and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, enables them to progress and achieve as well as their classmates. Disadvantaged children are enabled to progress and achieve close to the national average.
- Children know routines well, respond immediately to instructions and play well together, which supports their positive attitude towards learning.

School details

Unique reference number	105187
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10042461

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	419
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Holly Bonfield
Executive Headteacher	Mr Andrew Feeley
Headteacher	Mrs Mary Fraser
Telephone number	01204 335883
Website	www.theorchardsfederation.org.uk
Email address	head@theorchards.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 May 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Cherry Tree is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is part of The Orchards, a federation of three schools. Its partner schools are Orchards Nursery School and Green Fold Special School. The school shares two

sites. Children in the early years foundation stage share accommodation with the nursery school on the lower school site, while all other Cherry Tree pupils share accommodation with the special school at the upper school site. All three schools share the same executive headteacher but are subject to separate inspections.

- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club managed by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited classes throughout the school to observe teaching and learning. They were accompanied by the executive headteacher and headteacher during some of these visits to lessons.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school's self-evaluation.
- The inspectors examined the school's systems for checking pupils' progress and records of checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspectors listened to Years 2, 3 and 5 pupils read, and observed pupils learning in small groups. They spoke with pupils in lessons, at lunchtime and at playtimes.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, headteacher and members of the governing body. A meeting was also held with the local authority school improvement partner.
- The views expressed in the 11 online responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, 49 staff questionnaires and 24 pupil questionnaires were also considered. In addition, the inspectors also gathered the views of several parents during informal meetings at the school.
- The inspectors evaluated the school's use of the primary physical education and sport funding and the pupil premium funding.

Inspection team

David Fann, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sheryl Farnworth	Ofsted Inspector
Nusret Ellahi	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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