

# The Cherry Trees School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	131608
<b>Local authority</b>	Tower Hamlets
<b>Inspection number</b>	381374
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Kay (Kathleen) Charlton

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	23
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nigel Huxted
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stuart Walker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 December 2008
<b>School address</b>	68 Campbell Road London E3 4EA
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8983 4344
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8983 9616
<b>Email address</b>	admin@cherrytrees.towerhamlets.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	5–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	29–30 May 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	381374



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Kay (Kathleen) Charlton

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector spent two days in the school and visited nine lessons. Six teachers were seen, amounting to over five hours of observation of teaching. All lesson observations were undertaken jointly with senior staff. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. The work of the school was observed and the inspector looked at documentation such as the school development plan, assessment information, pupils' records and work, as well as a range of school policies. Twelve questionnaires from parents and carers, 12 from pupils and 14 from staff were scrutinised.

## Information about the school

The Cherry Trees School is a smaller-than-average-sized special school catering for boys with severe and complex behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Many have additional learning difficulties and all have a statement of special educational needs. The number on roll varies throughout the year as pupils join at any point and at any age; very few join before age seven. The great majority of pupils have a history of disrupted education in mainstream schools with frequent fixed-term exclusions. Pupils are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds with about half from White British backgrounds. Few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very high. The school has Basic Skills Quality Mark for Primary Schools, Healthy Schools status and Silver Eco Schools award. It runs an outreach service which supports mainstream schools on behavioural issues. A new headteacher and senior leadership team were appointed in September 2011.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- Cherry Trees provides a good quality of education and is improving very well under the newly established leadership team. Its strong links with others, including a range of outside agencies and other schools, support pupils' development particularly well. It is not yet outstanding because aspects of teaching and the ways in which the school checks on its effectiveness are still not as good as they might be.
- Pupils' achievement and progress are good because of their renewed interest in learning. They are keen to improve and, through effective support, they gain confidence in mainstream settings, so that many move on successfully to mainstream secondary education.
- Teaching is good. Pupils are set challenging targets, know what is expected of them and make good progress towards the learning objectives explained at the start of each lesson. There are examples of outstanding teaching but in a few lessons, staff do not use a sufficiently wide range of approaches to ensure pupils' learning is of the highest quality.
- Behaviour is good, with pupils showing marked improvement from when they first start. They feel safe and show positive attitudes to learning. Attendance for most pupils improves rapidly once they join Cherry Trees and, overall, is well above average.
- Leadership and management are good with a key focus on improving pupils' life chances. The performance management of staff is rigorous in ensuring improvement in classroom practice. Whole-school development planning is well targeted to address areas in need of improvement. However, the criteria to judge initiatives are sometimes not sufficiently precise for leaders and governors to be able to check easily that key developments are effective. Safeguarding is extremely robust and the school is well placed to improve in future.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

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

- Ensure that by December 2012, in all lessons, staff use a wide range of approaches to ensure pupils' learning is always of the highest quality.
- By September 2012, make all criteria to judge initiatives sufficiently precise so that leaders, including governors, are able to check easily on the effectiveness of key developments.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils of different ages and abilities achieve well. Initial assessment of pupils when they start at the school is accurate showing that the starting points for most are low. All pupils achieve equally well, irrespective of their special educational needs, disabilities or ethnic background, and make good progress. As a result, attainment, including in reading, is broadly average at age 11.

The high emphasis given to the development of pupils' basic skills, particularly in language and literacy, pays off and this supports their learning in all other areas. Across the school, pupils make particularly good progress in developing their skills in communication. They are asked their opinions and they learn to express their views effectively. They develop confidence in reading and writing for a range of purposes and are proud of their achievements. At age 11, pupils do particularly well in the English assessments. Most show good ability to gain information from text as indicated from their reading about the Munich Olympics and in expressing views about the author's use of words to create effect when reading poetry. Pupils' skills in numeracy are developed effectively as seen when younger pupils predicted how many times they could bounce a ball in 60 seconds. By age 11, achievement in mathematics is good overall and pupils apply their skills well in everyday situations. Pupils of all ages enjoy working with information and communication technology (ICT) and use it successfully for a range of purposes including as a way of demonstrating their achievements to others.

Across a range of subjects, pupils make good progress. They enjoy practical subjects and they are especially proud of their achievements in art, music and food technology. Personal and social education forms a cornerstone of the provision and pupils develop a belief in themselves as seen when Year 6 pupils gathered evidence to show their secondary schools about their achievements at Cherry Trees. Virtually all parents and carers are pleased with the good progress their children make, and the inspector agrees that progress is good.

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## Quality of teaching

The carefully planned curriculum provides a clear structure for all aspects of learning. Teachers use assessment to good effect when planning lessons so that the work is well matched to pupils' levels of understanding. They have high expectations of pupils, good subject knowledge, and relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. The work of support staff is an important element of pupils' success, both in lessons and in one-to-one sessions, for example in reading. Staff use praise and rewards well to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem and help them work independently. This contributes effectively to the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers use practical resources to good effect to support pupils' learning and often inject a sense of fun into lessons. Outstanding teaching was seen in some English, mathematics and food technology lessons. In these lessons, staff used an extremely imaginative range of teaching approaches to challenge pupils to think for themselves. With very skilful questioning and feedback, they ensured that pupils' understanding was extended exceptionally well. Such opportunities to challenge pupils are not, however, always used to best advantage.

Staff use drama techniques very effectively to improve pupils' confidence in communication. Across the school, adults are adept at helping develop pupils' skills in reading and the gains pupils make in reading ages reflect this. The comprehensive system of record keeping and well-presented exercise books demonstrate pupils' good progress over time. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly of the opinion that teaching is good, a view supported by inspection evidence. Pupils confirm that adults are good at explaining how they might improve their work and in helping them develop their skills in communication, literacy and numeracy.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds work and socialise together very well. All learn to take responsibility for managing their own behaviour with clear improvements over time. Pupils respond very well to the behaviour targets they are set and, in discussion, many make comments such as, 'I have calmed down a lot since I've come here'. Incidents of bullying or harassment, including those based on race, gender or sexuality, are rare, and, as pupils say, they are dealt with quickly and effectively if they do occur. Pupils state that 'staff take time to listen to us and they help us sort things out'. They are very aware of the importance of keeping safe, as seen when they use the outdoor climbing equipment and when discussing issues about the misuse of alcohol. Staff respect pupils and, in turn, pupils are considerate and respectful to staff. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and lessons proceed in a calm and orderly manner. Indicative of their positive attitudes and behaviour is how well they care for the school, with displays of work and garden areas respected and appreciated. Pupils say that they like coming to Cherry Trees and that they enjoy the extra activities, including the opportunities they get to perform for others, for example during the 'Spitalfields Fortnight'. They really appreciate breakfast time because they can catch up with their friends' news.

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Although a few parents and carers have reservations about the standard of behaviour the inspection shows that, overall, it is typically good. Pupils also indicate that it is generally good. Parents and carers agree, as do staff and pupils, that children are safe in school. Through the use of rigorous first day absence calls, home visits and the work of the family support worker, the school achieves great success in promoting attendance.

## **Leadership and management**

Leadership ensures that staff, including those from the outreach service, operate as a cohesive and effective team that 'puts pupils first'. Senior leaders communicate high expectations and ambition and set out planned actions based on accurate self-evaluation. The ways in which they support and develop the staff ensure consistent improvement in classroom practice as well as an enthusiasm from staff about wanting to improve further. Senior staff provide very good role models to staff and they spell these out very effectively, for example in the expectations they set in the dining hall.

Leaders at all levels are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and show clear commitment to future improvement. All staff have ensured that the school has responded well to issues raised at the previous inspection and that it is in a strong position to improve further. The governing body makes certain that statutory requirements are met and that policies have a positive impact on school life. It holds senior leaders to account and is aware that the criteria to check on the effectiveness of improvements are not always precise enough. As a result it, together with senior leaders, cannot always be secure that improvements, for example in the quality of teaching, are as good as they might be.

The curriculum is well organised and ensures the systematic development of pupils' basic skills. A wide range of enrichment activities, including kayaking, rock climbing and overnight camping trips, enhances the provision and adds to pupils' enjoyment of school. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is particularly good, ensuring a positive ethos for learning. The principles of equality of opportunity are at the heart of everything the school does and there is an absence of discrimination. The school ensures, through careful monitoring, that any pupil who is finding difficulty is given extra support so that they achieve equally well as others.

Safeguarding arrangements are extremely robust, as evident in the very rigorous child protection and vetting procedures. Partnerships with other schools and outside agencies are very effective, particularly in supporting pupils' inclusion into mainstream and, also, their smooth transition to secondary education. The school works well with parents and carers giving them regular updates about their child's progress and, as required, individualised support to help them with their child's behaviour and learning. Comments such as, 'The best decision I have made for my child was sending my son to this school' sum up their views well.

## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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](http://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.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.**



31 May 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of The Cherry Trees School, London, E3 4EA**

Thank you for your warm welcome and the help you gave me when I came to inspect your school. Many of you told me that you learn a lot in lessons and that staff help you to understand how you can improve your work. I judged Cherry Trees to be a good school where you make good progress and are well prepared for secondary school.

Teachers plan lessons carefully and make sure that they are closely matched to your levels of understanding. I could see that you make particularly good progress in speaking and listening and that you learn to express your views very well. You clearly enjoy some of the extra activities you take part in, like rock climbing and kayaking.

Your behaviour is good and you try hard in lessons. I was impressed with your behaviour in the dining room and in the playground where you help each other a lot. You feel safe at school and you say there is little or no bullying. You are clear that any member of staff will help you if you have a problem.

Cherry Trees is led and managed well and the staff are keen to make it even better. I have asked them to make sure that, in every lesson, your learning is as good as it possibly can be by making sure they always use a wide range of different approaches. I have also asked them to check even more carefully that the work they do to improve the school is really having a positive effect.

Yours sincerely

Kay Charlton  
Lead inspector

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