

The Cherry Trees School

68 Campbell Road, London, E3 4EA

Inspection dates 18–19 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The Cherry Trees School meets the needs of its pupils extremely well. Pupils make excellent progress in their learning, developing their social skills and in managing their behaviour.
- Under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and the senior team, the school has improved a great deal since the last inspection. The leadership team expects the highest standards of performance from all members of staff.
- Strong respectful relationships are at the heart of the school's work. All staff show the same level of care and concern towards all pupils and their families. Pupils feel very well looked after.
- The school does an excellent job in enabling pupils to improve their confidence, resilience and view of themselves as successful learners. As a result, they are able to cope in a mainstream school for part of each week.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Pupils make such good progress because their work is always made interesting by the teacher, and provides the correct level of challenge.
- Teachers use questioning very effectively to find out what pupils have learnt during their lessons. This approach also helps pupils explain their thinking and encourages them to come up with new ideas.
- Pupils are expected to try their hardest at all times. Teachers and teaching assistants are very well deployed to make sure that pupils get the support they need. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress.
- The range of learning opportunity the school gives pupils is rich and varied. Pupils develop their skills in outdoor adventure, musical performance and sports, alongside academic subjects.
- The behaviour of pupils in both lessons and social situations is outstanding. Teachers are highly skilled in group management. They use their voices to excellent effect to control behaviour and encourage engagement in learning.
- School staff work hard at maintaining good working relationships with parents and members of the local community. The school is very successful in including them in their work.
- The school uses additional funding it receives very well. This has enabled pupils to make excellent progress in their speaking, listening and communication skills. It has also supported pupils' outdoor learning, and made learning more fun by the introduction of tablet computers into classes.
- The outreach team is highly regarded by teachers in local mainstream schools. This team supports them to become more confident in behaviour management techniques.
- The governing body provides a very high standard of challenge and support to the school. Between them, governors have a very good range of skills and experience which makes them suitably qualified for their roles.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure meet statutory requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons, play times and lunch time. All observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspector observed two sessions that were part of a music and performing arts project, run at the school by Spitalfield's Festival.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, members of the governing body, middle managers, and a representative from the local authority. Discussions took place with individual pupils, the premises manager, and a member of the school's outreach team. A telephone conversation occurred with a headteacher from a local mainstream primary school who works with some of the school's pupils.
- Pupils' books were looked at jointly with middle managers.
- The inspector examined a number of documents, including information about how well pupils are learning, behaviour and attendance records, and the school's own evaluation of how well it is performing and its development plan. Information about safeguarding was also checked.
- There were not enough responses from Parent View, the Ofsted's online questionnaire, for the inspector to consider. However, he did take account of the results from the school's recent parent survey, and 18 staff questionnaires that were completed.

Inspection team

Andy Lole, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Cherry Trees School is a small special primary school for boys who have a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, or an education, health and care plan for social, emotional or mental health needs.
- Many pupils have additional learning difficulties, and have a history of disrupted education.
- Pupils are from a range of ethnic backgrounds, with about half being White British.
- All pupils are supported by pupil premium, which is government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or children looked after by the local authority. This proportion is very high. The school also receives physical education and sport funding.
- The school runs an outreach service, supporting local schools with pupils with behavioural issues.
- All pupils are on dual roll with a mainstream primary school, spending at least half a day per week there. These schools are St Mary's and St Michael's, Our Lady and St Joseph's, Bonner, St Peter's, Chisenhale, Arnhem Wharf, Old Palace, Cyril Jackson, Malmesbury, Bangabandhu, St Anne's, Hague, and Harry Gosling.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen safeguarding arrangements by:
 - having a consistent approach to the way records of behaviour incidents are written so that all reports contain the same level of detail

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Under the strong and determined leadership of the headteacher, the school has improved significantly since the last inspection. Senior leaders and the governing body have very high expectations for all pupils, and do all they can to realise these. This has helped to create a very positive ethos and culture within the school. As a result, pupils make outstanding academic progress and learn to manage their behaviour exceptionally well.
- The headteacher is very committed to pupils being included in their own communities. He has broadened pupils' learning opportunities by developing better links with the local area, and encouraging parents and other visitors into the school on a regular basis. The school has excellent relationships with a wide range of agencies and organisations. These are used to good effect for the benefit of the pupils. All pupils regularly attend a mainstream primary school.
- The school has improved its physical environment over the last two years. This includes an adventure playground and a new multi-purpose classroom. The playground is very popular with the pupils and has encouraged a good level of positive play between pupils and staff.
- The senior leadership team has a very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This includes how well each member of staff is performing. Effective action is taken to make improvements when required. Progress in reading was slower than expected during the last academic year. Following the introduction of a new approach to teaching literacy, progress in reading is now better than expected.
- Middle managers play a significant role in ensuring that teaching is of the highest quality. Recently this included them identifying some new ideas for how subjects would be taught. Since the school has adopted these approaches, middle managers have very successfully supported teachers in their delivery.
- The subjects taught in the school ensure that pupils make excellent progress in all areas of their learning, including in English and mathematics. Teachers support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well, and help to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Younger pupils learn about being a good citizen by taking it in turns to take on the 'leader of the day' role in their class. They are in charge of certain practical jobs, such as making the toast, but also are taught how to be a good role model to the other children.
- Additional funds received by the school are used effectively. Pupil premium funds have been used to improve pupils' speaking, listening and communication skills. They have also funded additional support for new pupils during their first few months in the school, and have been used to buy some new tablet computers. Primary sport funding has been used to increase the range and quality of activities. This has included outdoor adventure activities, such as rock climbing, canoeing and camping trips, swimming lessons, and cricket and football clubs run by sports professional. As a result pupils have increased their self-esteem, confidence and abilities in sports.
- Senior leaders and governors manage child protection concerns well and in the best interests of the pupils. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. The school does not have a consistent approach to how records of aggressive and anti-social behaviour are written. As a result the level of detail included varies. The school ensures that pupils have equality of opportunity and that any discrimination is tackled effectively. Good relations between staff and pupils are fostered.
- Staff are very positive about the training and development opportunities that are available to them. There are strong systems in place to ensure that staff are properly managed and supported to continually improve their performance. They value the way the school links performance with pay.
- The school runs an outreach service, which is funded by the local authority. This is highly regarded for the work it does to help teachers in mainstream schools improve their skills in managing the behaviour of pupils. As a result, pupils in these schools are well supported to make better progress.
- The school employs a part-time family support worker. As well as working with individual families, she runs groups in the school where parents and carers can provide support to each other. This service contributes to the close working relationship that the school has with parents. Parents have a very positive view of the work of the school.
- The school receives four days of support from the local authority each year. It uses this in a variety of ways, including the annual performance review of the headteacher, and getting advice on improving teaching when needed. The school benefits from this support when it needs it.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides strong challenge and support to the school. The excellent range of skills and experience of members means that they have the right level of expertise to oversee the school's

work. They receive regular training from the local authority. Governors play an active role in monitoring all aspects of the school's work. As a result of their visits to the school and reports received from the headteacher, governors are very well informed about the quality of teaching and the progress and behaviour of the pupils.

- The governing body monitors the financial arrangements of the school well. It checks that all funds, including additional government funding, are used effectively. The governors also ensure that there is a clear link between staff performance and pay. Governors monitor all safeguarding procedures robustly to ensure they are effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Incidents of aggressive behaviour and the frequency of the use of restraint have both reduced by 50% over the last two years.
- Staff are very skilled at letting pupils know how to behave well. Pupils are told when they are being a good role model, or when they are getting adult attention for positive reasons. Pupils respond really well to this approach.
- Relationships between adults and children are excellent. Adults consistently demonstrate a high level of respect, care and concern for the children. Pupils like the adults and respond very well to their guidance.
- Pupils are very keen to be part of all of the lessons and activities. They have very positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils know how good their behaviour has to be for them to join in with others, and work hard to achieve this.
- Rare occasions when pupils need to leave lessons are very well managed by staff. The prompt removal of pupils at these times means that other pupils' learning is not affected.
- During lunch and play times adults and children enjoy each other's company. Pupils show good social skills in their table manners, passing food to others, and engaging in quiet sensible conversations. Pupils play well together, and listen to the advice of adults about how to be a good sport.
- When a pupil expresses concern or anxiety, adults sensitively encourage him to quietly share his worries away from the group. This results in pupils being able to quickly get back to their work.
- There is a behaviour support plan for each pupil. This helps staff provide a consistent response if pupils present challenging behaviour. Recent training has given staff more ways to avoid the need for restraint.
- Although all incidents of aggressive or anti-social behaviour are recorded, the school does not have a consistent approach to this. As a result reports vary in how much detail they include.
- Incidents of bullying rarely occur, confirmed by the school's records. If they do, adults deal with them effectively.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel safe at school. They know who to talk to if they have any worries. They have a good awareness of keeping themselves safe, including when on the internet.
- All staff receive child protection training at a level relevant to their responsibilities. They use this information well to safeguard pupils. Detailed records are kept of all child protection concerns and correspondence with other agencies regarding these.
- Pupils are kept safe by good systems to ensure the health and safety of the school site. Procedures for recruiting staff are carried out well, ensuring that all safety checks are completed.
- School staff regularly accompany pupils on their visits to mainstream schools and monitor pupils' behaviour, attendance and progress very effectively during this time.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and high compared to attendance at other similar special schools.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. As a result, nearly all pupils make outstanding progress in all areas of their learning, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils respond really well to the high expectations adults have of them, and the clear routines that are established in all classes. Teachers are highly skilled at managing pupils, using the right tone of voice for different situations, and knowing when to intervene or when to leave pupils to work independently. As a

result, lessons are always highly productive.

- Excellent planning results in pupils having work that is very well matched to their individual ability and interests. Staff are very well deployed in lessons to ensure that each pupil gets the help they need.
- Careful and persistent questioning enables teachers to find out what pupils have learnt so far, and challenges them to think in different ways about their work. In an English lesson the teacher helped pupils share their views about whether or not the moon landings really happened, by questioning their responses. This enabled them to explain and think through their reasoning more clearly.
- As a result of a recent focus on improving the quality of speaking and listening, teachers consistently expect pupils to pronounce accurately words they find difficult. In a class debate, pupils are encouraged to start their responses using the correct terminology.
- Much of the teaching of English is done through studying high quality fiction books. Pupils really enjoy learning lots of different things about the characters and the story. They produce excellent work, showing a strong understanding of what they have learnt.
- In mathematics, pupils rise to the challenge of being expected to work out problems on their own. The teacher remains close at hand to ensure that any misunderstanding is quickly corrected. An excellent range of resources is available at all times to help pupils learn.
- As part of a music and performing arts project, pupils are encouraged to use music as a way of communicating with others. They really enjoy copying the melodies that the music leader plays, to create a musical conversation with him.
- Work books are marked regularly, helping pupils to know how well they are doing, and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Teachers carefully monitor the progress of pupils in every lesson. The school tracks how well each pupil is progressing towards an annual target. If pupils are falling behind what is expected, additional support is given.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Many pupils start the school a long way behind where they should be for their age. This is due to disruptions in their education or because of learning difficulties. All pupils achieve exceptionally well against targets set by the school. This includes pupils from all ethnic backgrounds. Targets are agreed following a careful analysis of each pupil's learning potential, taking into account a wide range of factors.
- The most able pupils are working at an age-appropriate level in both English and mathematics. Work is carefully selected to ensure that they are suitably challenged. They enjoy their work, and feel a sense of pride in their achievements.
- All of the pupils in the school are eligible for government funding for disadvantaged pupils. The outstanding progress they make clearly demonstrates that they are rapidly catching up with where other pupils typically are nationally, in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make excellent progress in reading because they have daily practice developing their knowledge of the sounds that letters make to decipher new words. Reading activities are planned throughout the day, in whichever subject they are studying. Pupils are confident to read aloud, whatever their ability.
- In writing, lower ability pupils are given lots of support to help them overcome their worries about putting pen to paper. Regular handwriting practice helps their writing to become legible. As they become more confident they are able to complete extended writing tasks.
- In mathematics, pupils are very engaged taking part in fun, practical learning. They enjoy competing against each other in number quizzes using tablet computers. They make excellent progress in learning their multiplication tables, working out different written methods for dividing numbers, and counting accurately.
- Pupils produce high quality pieces of art work. These include designs for new cars, and seascapes.
- The school is very successful in preparing pupils for their next school placement. To work towards this, pupils take part in at least weekly visits to a mainstream primary school, often the school they were placed at before arriving at The Cherry Trees. Pupils show improvements in their behaviour and learning on these visits. Fifty per cent of pupils who left the school in 2014 transferred to mainstream secondary schools.

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

Unique reference number	131608
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	448062
Type of school	All-through
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	6–11
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	25
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Huxted
Headteacher	Stuart Walker
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 May 2012
Telephone number	02089834344
Fax number	02089839616
Email address	admin@cherrytrees.towerhamlets.sch.uk

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