



The Cherry Trees School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131608
LEA Tower Hamlets LEA
Inspection number 282233
Inspection dates 22 February 2006 to 22 February 2006
Reporting inspector Heather Yaxley HMI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	68 Campbell Road
School category	Community special		Bow
Age range of pupils	5 to 11		London E3 4EA
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	020 8983 4344
Number on roll	25	Fax number	020 8983 9616
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Nigel Huxted
Date of previous inspection	18 October 1999	Headteacher	Mr Alan Fletcher

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Cherry Trees is a small school for boys with severe and complex behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. Many have additional difficulties with their learning. All pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need or are being assessed in accordance with the Code of Practice. Pupils represent the full range of social and cultural backgrounds, with many having additional support from community services. There are four class groups with places for a total of thirty two pupils and the number on roll varies throughout the year as new pupils are admitted. All pupils maintain a placement with their local school and the majority will attend that school for at least one half day each week. Pupils come from all areas of the borough of Tower Hamlets. The school has an Outreach Support Service with three teachers who work with several schools in the area on a referral basis. Since the last inspection the school has been awarded Beacon Status, two School Achievement Awards, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Healthy Schools Award and was mentioned in Her Majesty's Chief Inspectors Report as a particularly successful school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The Cherry Trees is a good school that enables pupils to make outstanding progress in their personal development and good progress with their learning. The care and guidance that pupils get from all staff is excellent and enables them to achieve well. The way in which staff share their professional skills with other schools, together with the work undertaken by the outreach teachers makes a significant contribution to the inclusion of pupils at this school and to others in the borough. The management team and the governors know their school very well and accurately identify areas of and areas for development. There is clear information about how well pupils are doing but this is not used systematically enough to know how good the progress is and what it is that contributes most to their success. The staff are beginning to enhance the links between subjects in order to develop pupils' learning skills. The curriculum and teaching are good. The school provides good value for money because the progress that most pupils make in their academic and personal skills enables them to eventually attend their local schools. The success that the school has had since the last inspection and the effectiveness of current systems and procedures mean that the school is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

* Use assessment information more systematically to evaluate pupils' progress* Further develop the curriculum in order to provide pupils with more opportunities to develop learning skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress towards nationally expected standards of work during their time at The Cherry Trees School. All eligible pupils take national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 and although the numbers are small it can be seen that standards are improving over time. Standards are low on entry to the school and often remain so but the progress that pupils make is good in relation to their starting points and in relation to difficulties associated with their behaviour and learning. Previous periods of disrupted schooling often mean that pupils are slow to make progress at first but the rate of progress increases when they have been at the school for some time. Pupils make less progress in speaking and listening than English and mathematics. Pupils are set targets that are challenging and that require considerable effort and perseverance in order for them to be achieved consistently. The school makes accurate assessments on how well individual pupils are achieving in academic subjects but should use this information to track progress more carefully. Information on pupils' personal development should also be used more systematically to fine-tune the quality of targets that are set.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The progress that pupils make in the development of personal skills is outstanding as a result of the excellent support that they receive for learning and social skills. Pupils clearly want to be in school and their attendance is good. They enjoy learning as well as playing and sometimes they are so engrossed in what they are doing that they don't want to stop, as shown by two boys working on a well focussed activity with times tables. The majority of pupils keep contact with their local school for one afternoon each week and most will transfer successfully to a local secondary school when they are eleven. They can do this because they develop a strong sense of right and wrong and are able to behave in ways that keep themselves and others safe and healthy. The progress that is made with their behaviour is outstanding. They use effective strategies that help them to co-operate and socialise with one another. When they do things wrong they are quick to accept the consequences and are very keen to make a new start and carry on with what they need to do next either in their work or in their play. In lessons pupils show confidence in having a go at things that they find difficult. Although many might become frustrated if they make mistakes, they have learned to find ways to make sure that they successfully complete work. They are supportive of one another, share in their successes and are particularly welcoming to new pupils to their classes. The school environment is very well cared for and respected and the School Council is very active in making changes, for example to the outside play area and the addition of a water fountain.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good because teachers and support staff work very well together to give help when it is needed and encourage pupils to work as independently as they can. This enables pupils to be confident in their approach to work. In some instances staff do not use assessment thoroughly enough to maximise opportunities for pupils to recognise how they learn as well as what they are learning to do. Pupils are encouraged to apply their thinking to solve problems, as seen in a lesson where a group were increasingly challenged to explain their use of multiples. Resources, including information and communication technology (ICT) are used well to motivate pupils. This was demonstrated well in a lesson where pupils were working on dialogue and stage directions and their previous planning was on screen to prompt the next part of the task. Classrooms are attractive, well organised places to learn and display work that celebrates pupil achievement and success.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and continues to evolve. It meets the learning needs of all pupils through themes that interest, motivate, and build on previous knowledge and understanding. Useful plans are in place to make more links between subjects so as to improve opportunities for pupils to practise skills and acquire new ones in a systematic way. The curriculum is broad and well balanced, giving appropriate emphasis on English, mathematics and personal skills. This enables pupils to develop the appropriate set of skills for successful transfer to local or secondary schooling. Opportunities for developing Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) skills are extended into playtimes and lunchtimes where staff actively engage pupils in directed activities. An example is the way that co-operative skills are a focus for team games at playtimes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care and guidance that pupils receive from staff is outstanding and has a significant influence on their personal development and success. All pupils start the day with breakfast with their class. This sets pupils up for a good, calm start to the day and, as observed with the youngest pupils, it is a chance to successfully engage pupils in co-operative activity as well as conversations with one another. There is a high level of consistency amongst the whole staff team. Pupils know that staff will be firm, fair and persistent in the management of behaviour and that the school is a place for learning. Suitable procedures to protect pupils are fully in place. There is a high expectation for pupils to succeed as soon as they are admitted to the school and a key to this is the level of preparation that is undertaken with all those involved with the pupil. New pupils settle quickly to well-established systems that reward them for good behaviour. Staff are confident in managing potentially difficult situations because they know the pupils very well. Staff work very well together and go out of their way to remove as many barriers to progress as possible. This includes the work of the Family Support Worker who successfully encourages parents and carers to work with the school and seek additional help from other community services. The Outreach Support Service makes a significant contribution to the inclusion of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties in other schools. The service is highly valued and used well. Teachers report that they have been helped to 'restore my self-confidence', 'have reassurance that I am doing the right thing' and 'have a clearer knowledge about the problem and how to deal with it'. Support extends to whole staff training, modelling good practice and developing policies.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The inspector agrees with the school's own evaluation that leadership and management are good and that this applies to all levels of management. The headteacher has

successfully developed a stable and highly skilled staff team that is committed to the long-term success of pupils in their personal and academic skills. There is strong commitment to, and high level of success, in including pupils in their local schools. As a team the staff have been successful in improving the school's work but need to improve systems to more accurately evaluate pupils' progress. Governors are fully involved in the school and are rightly proud of how well the school is doing. The views of others within the school community are actively pursued and the school enjoys a good reputation with parents, carers and other providers. Since the last inspection the school has had considerable success and recognition for what it does well, as shown in awards for achievement, as a healthy school and for improving basic skills. Leaders and managers have made good development over a period of time, demonstrating skills and motivation to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I had a very enjoyable visit to your school this week looking at how well the staff and governors are helping you to do the best that you can in your classwork and your behaviour. I am pleased to be able to tell you that I think that The Cherry Trees School is a good school that helps you to make excellent progress with your behaviour and attitudes. You are making good progress in the work that you do in class.

I was very impressed with the way that Yellow Class had breakfast together and then were ready for work when the washing up was done. In Green Class I liked the way that you worked together on the dialogue and stage directions for the play and I hope that you had a good time performing it. Blue Class were very focussed on what they were learning in the maths lesson and some of them didn't want to stop! The boys in Red Class were having to think really hard about how they were using multiples and were good at explaining how they got the answers.

All staff take very good care of you and are always looking at ways that they can help you more. Alan is working very hard with the staff to make sure that you keep doing as well as you can and I have asked him to look more closely at how fast you are learning and what it is that helps you the most. Also, to look at the subjects that you are learning. I am sure that Alan will also want your help in making your school an even better place to work and play in. I have written a short report on my visit that I hope some of you will read it with your parents.