

The Cherry Trees School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131608
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	328620
Inspection date	3 December 2008
Reporting inspector	James Bowden

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll	
School (total)	22
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Nigel Huxted
Headteacher	Mr Alan Fletcher
Date of previous school inspection	22 February 2006
School address	68 Campbell Road Bow London E3 4EA
Telephone number	020 8983 4344
Fax number	020 8983 9616

Age group	5–11
Inspection date	3 December 2008
Inspection number	328620

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. He investigated the following issues:

- teaching and learning
- aspects of care, guidance and support
- leadership and management.

Evidence was gained from lesson observations; from discussion with leaders, the chair of the governing body and learners; and from an evaluation of a range of documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail. The inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessment, as given in its self-evaluation, was not justified. These have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Cherry Trees provides for learners with severe and complex behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). Many have additional difficulties with their learning. Currently, all learners have a statement of special educational needs, apart from one who is in the process of assessment for a statement. The number on roll varies throughout the year as learners join at any point in the year and at any age. Placements are confirmed after an assessment period of six weeks. All learners maintain a placement with their local school, and the majority will attend that school for at least one half day each week. Typically, learners have had a disjointed experience of mainstream schools with frequent fixed-term exclusions. Currently, half the learners are of White British origin, the others being from a range of other minority ethnic groups within the local authority.

The school has an Outreach Support Service, which advises and supports mainstream schools on a wide variety of behavioural issues. It also employs a family support worker and a learning mentor dedicated to supporting learners and their families in transition to secondary schools.

Since the last inspection the school has had the Basic Skills Agency's Quality Mark for Primary Schools renewed, and has received the Schools' Preventative Education and Drug Intervention Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Cherry Trees is outstandingly successful in meeting its core aims of facilitating learning through a rich and meaningful curriculum, and enabling learners to better manage their behaviour and act on considered choices. The headteacher leads the school highly effectively and, along with his expanded leadership team, has ensured that the school has built further on the many strengths identified at the last inspection. A further strength is its work in partnerships with other professionals and outside agencies to promote learners' well-being and enable them to move on to the next stage of their education. Local primary headteachers comment highly favourably on the effectiveness of the school's outreach service. During the last school year this involved referrals from 18 schools for support for individuals, small groups, whole classes and school play development work. The service continues to make a major contribution to the inclusion of learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in mainstream schools. The overwhelming majority of parents are also supportive of the school's work. One, expressing the sentiments of many others, commented, 'The overall support we get as a family is fantastic. There is always someone available to talk with me at all times. My son has never been happier.'

Learners' achievement is outstanding because of the total support and education package the school offers. Standards on entry are below, and sometimes well below, what is expected for the learners' ages. However, the progress that learners make is excellent in relation to their starting points. Last year, some of those who took the end of Key Stage 2 tests achieved levels in line with national expectations, particularly in science. Appropriate and challenging targets for English, mathematics and behaviour are set for learners in their individual education plans. Last year's termly reviews showed approximately 90% consistently met their targets. There is no significant difference in the achievements of different groups of learners.

Learners' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Many have had a negative experience of education before arriving at the school. However, because of a carefully planned induction programme and the individual support they receive, learners improve their self-esteem and interact positively with one another and the adults who look after them. They were particularly welcoming and friendly towards the inspector, one learner ensuring that he joined them in eating fruit after the morning break. Learners' attendance improves in comparison to that in their previous mainstream schools. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of their personal development are outstanding. In a literacy-focused lesson, they were thoughtful in their responses to questions as regards the ethics of keeping animals in zoos. Learners' behaviour, which for some can be very challenging when they join the school, improves considerably and, though there is the occasional outburst, is good overall. They take part in two hours of physical activity per week and enjoy the healthy food options on offer at breakfast time and lunchtimes. Two classes have breadmakers and make their own bread for breakfast. Learners contribute well to the running of the school by electing a school council and giving their views, which are listened to. Learners' excellent progress in improving the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) eases their successful transition to the next stage of their education. All last year's Year 6 learners have successfully transferred to mainstream secondary schools.

The early focus by all staff is on improving learners' capability for learning when they arrive. This is highly effective and improves their appetite for learning. In lessons seen, learners clearly wanted to learn and be actively involved. In a numeracy lesson, younger learners thoroughly enjoyed the role-play activities when improving their knowledge and understanding of weights

and measures. Teachers and school support assistants know learners very well and adopt a calm yet purposeful approach in lessons, having established clear boundaries for what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. Learners themselves comment positively on the effectiveness of teaching, saying teachers make learning fun. There is much focus on learners working together as small groups, but there are not enough opportunities for independent learning and research. Teaching overall is good but learners, nevertheless, make outstanding progress because of the wide range of additional support and other opportunities that extend their achievement.

The curriculum is outstanding because it meets fully the needs of all learners, enables them to achieve academic success, and contributes substantially to their personal development. A topic-based approach covers both skills and information in a structured way and within a meaningful context, which enlivens learning. Teachers use ICT highly effectively in lessons to make the curriculum interesting. An excellent focus on personal, social and health education further broadens learners' curriculum experience. This is enhanced by a programme for addressing anger management. The curriculum is enlivened by a wide range of enrichment activities, both within the school and off-site. The school takes part in the annual Spitalfields Festival, with learners composing their own music and poetry over the course of a fortnight and then performing this for their parents and other adults.

The provision of high-quality care, guidance and support for learners is particularly effective because it supports each individual in very specific ways. Break times and lunchtime play activities are particularly well supervised, which enables all learners to play safely and respect each other's space and choices of activity. Highly effective working relationships with a range of other specialist agencies and professionals also contribute extensively to the excellent progress learners make. Effective procedures have resulted in improved attendance for learners. Their transition to secondary education is particularly well supported by the school. Very effective procedures enable the school to track pupils' academic progress across the National Curriculum subjects, as well as their personal progress.

Leadership and management are outstanding at all levels, the new senior management team having a clear view for the direction of the school with a focus on continuing improvement. Rigorous and accurate self-evaluation has resulted in very well-focused and effective development planning. Robust monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning have been used to identify and share good practice, thus providing a focus on improving further its quality. The school ensures that every learner really does matter and, therefore, makes excellent progress. All staff benefit well from continuing professional development opportunities. The school does all it can to promote community cohesion - involving learners in the local and wider communities. Governance is highly effective and is focused on learning, supporting the work of the school exceptionally well.

In light of the improvements and developments since the last inspection, and of the clear direction set for further improvement and continuing success in enabling learners to make outstanding progress, the school has excellent capacity to continue to improve even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the range of teaching strategies to include more opportunities for independent learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

16 December 2008

Dear Pupils

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

I recently spent a day at the school to see how it worked and find out how well you are doing. I'd like to thank you very much for the friendly way in which you welcomed me when you arrived at the start of the day and when I visited your lessons. I noted how you were all keen to learn and do well. I also know your parents are pleased with the progress you make. I really enjoyed joining the Green Class for breakfast and the Blue Class for lunch, where I was able to chat with some of you. I also met a small group of you to chat about your views of the school. I am very impressed with the school and the excellent education and support it gives you.

Cherry Trees is an outstanding school. This is because:

- the headteacher and his senior staff lead the school really well
- they have made sure the school is as much like a mainstream primary school as possible so that you can catch up on work you missed and then move on to secondary school
- during your time here you make excellent progress in your learning and personal development
- your behaviour improves and you really enjoy your learning
- teachers make sure that lessons are interesting, and they give you all the help and support they can
- the school makes sure you are safe and very well cared for
- the adults who work with you want to make sure you do well in the future
- the curriculum and other activities make your education very interesting.

There is just one thing the school could do to make things even better for you:

- give you more time to learn on your own in lessons.

Once again, many thanks for such an enjoyable day. I would also like to wish you all the very best for your future education.

Yours faithfully

James Bowden

Lead Inspector