

Cherry Tree Academy Trust Marham Junior

Hillside, Marham, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE33 9JJ

Inspection dates

13–14 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive principal has built a leadership team that shares her vision and determination to improve the school. Standards are rising quickly in almost all year groups.
- Staff development is a priority. Through careful planning and support, middle leaders have developed their roles and are leading their subject areas effectively.
- Pupils have many opportunities to develop their writing skills. Consequently, most make rapid progress with writing.
- Working with senior leaders, teachers regularly review the progress that pupils are making to ensure that gaps in subject knowledge are quickly identified and addressed.
- Pupils' welfare and personal development are important to leaders. Careful attention is paid to those times when pupils need support and, as a result, pupils, especially the most vulnerable, flourish.
- Disadvantaged pupils' needs are well met. The pupil premium funding is used well to support both their academic and pastoral needs.
- The support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. Leaders carefully monitor the impact of interventions to ensure that pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Trustees know the school well. They have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are diligent in carrying these out. They, along with the executive head teacher, have a clear strategic plan and have correctly identified that they need to receive more precise information from subject leaders about pupils' progress.
- Standards in reading and writing, especially in Years 3 and 4, have improved significantly. However, the improvements in standards in the older year groups has been slower.
- Despite the school's focus on improving mathematics, unconfirmed key stage 2 outcomes in 2017 do not match the national average. Pupils' progress in mathematics is now improving.
- Changes to staffing this year, although carefully planned, have led to some inconsistency in the standard of teaching and learning. As a result, a few pupils do not achieve as well in lessons as they could.
- Teaching assistants do not always have the subject knowledge to extend pupils' learning. This leads to some pupils not making the progress they could in lessons.
- Provision for the most able pupils, while good overall, does not always provide enough challenge for these pupils to reach their full potential.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - improving the quality of information shared by subject leaders with trustees, to enable trustees to hold leaders more closely to account for the progress made by different groups of pupils
 - developing the knowledge and skills of teaching assistants to help them match work more accurately to pupils' abilities
 - making sure that teaching staff challenge the school's most-able pupils to a consistently high level.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive principal and trustees have created a working environment in which staff feel valued and their professional development is a high priority. Staff at all levels have benefited from ongoing training opportunities. This in turn has led to a substantial improvement in the personal care that pupils receive. It has also strengthened the work of middle leaders who are having a positive impact on improving standards further in the school.
- The executive principal has implemented an effective system of performance management. This has given staff clear pathways to improve their work. Teacher performance-related pay is linked to the school priorities, which ensures that all staff are focused on developing their responsibilities and improving pupils' achievement. Staff morale has improved as a result.
- Leaders, including the trustees, know the school's strengths and weaknesses. This year, they have swiftly altered the school development plan to link priorities to emerging weaknesses in pupils' attainment.
- Leaders carefully track pupils' progress on a regular basis and rigorously check the accuracy of teacher assessments through internal and external moderation. Teachers analyse the information they gather weekly to inform their planning for pupils' learning. They are held to account for the progress of the pupils in their class through half-termly meetings with senior leaders. Pupils who are falling behind are identified quickly and receive effective interventions to help them to get back on track.
- Pupils are inspired by the curriculum. The ownership that they are given through their selection of topics helps to motivate them to learn. 'Deep learning' curriculum days enhance pupils' interests in the topics they are learning about. This ensures that they produce work of high quality across all subjects. Special projects, such as the 'STEM go-karting project', ensure that science, technology, engineering and maths are all given a high profile. Work in pupils' books from last year demonstrates how this has had a meaningful impact on improving their mathematical knowledge and understanding.
- Leaders have thought carefully about how to spend pupil premium funding to support the specific needs of the pupils who attend Cherry Tree Academy. Through careful planning and monitoring, they have been successful in raising educational standards as well as ensuring that pupils' social and emotional needs are effectively managed.
- Sports premium funding is used to employ a specialist sports teacher from the local secondary school who is also providing training and professional development for a classroom assistant to become a higher-level teaching assistant with a specialism in physical education. Pupils have access to a wide range of sporting activities, and participation in a variety of inter-school competitions has increased.
- Additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively to provide support and individual interventions, which enable pupils to make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils are thoughtful and conscientious citizens, well prepared for life in modern

Britain. Leaders ensure that fundamental British values are an integral part of the school curriculum. Through 'life skills' lessons, pupils develop skills that are necessary beyond school. 'It prepares me for work,' a pupil explained. Leaders promote democracy and equality through the school house system, and pupils articulate how important it is to treat others with respect.

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted through a range of opportunities and experiences. Leaders ensure that pupils' emotional needs are met through the targeted support offered in 'Katie's Den' and through a variety of community projects such as baking and serving cakes at the village fete. Consequently, pupils take on increasing amounts of responsibility, both inside and outside the school, which significantly improves their social awareness.
- Most parents are supportive of the school. They feel that staff are understanding and considerate of the unique family circumstances that many of them experience. This has led to effective collaborative work to meet the needs of the most vulnerable pupils, improving their participation in school life and their achievement.
- Leaders' close monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment leads to appropriate priorities being identified in the school development plan. For example, focusing on the development of writing last year led to approximately a third of pupils in Year 6 achieving the higher standard.

Governance of the school

- Trustees take an active role in school life and contribute greatly to the ethos and culture established within the school. They support and share the executive principal's vision to provide an education for pupils that develops them both academically and personally, so they can become purposeful members of society.
- Trustees visit the school often and keep concise records of their visits. Because of this, they are aware of the improvements in the school made since it became an academy, and they understand the priorities for improvement. They fulfil their role in ensuring that leaders are held to account for the school's performance.
- Trustees are fully supportive of the work that has taken place to improve the quality of teaching and learning at the school so far. Rightly, however, they have identified that they need more concise information from leaders on the progress of individual groups. Leaders have begun work to improve the information they share with governors. However, this is still at an early stage of development.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils at Cherry Tree Academy feel safe and well cared for. This is because their safety and well-being are at the heart of leaders' work. Alongside meticulous record-keeping, regular and effective training, and a curriculum that addresses online safety, the understanding and support offered to pupils is embedded in all aspects of the school's work.
- Staff are vigilant about keeping children safe. Leaders have invested in a team of staff

who work effectively together to address the needs of pupils. Weekly meetings ensure that all staff are aware of children at risk and the strategies in place to support them. In a setting where many pupils can leave the school with little notice, the record-keeping of attendance and absence is impeccable, and leaders make sure that all pupils are accounted for.

- The risks associated with the school's location and cohort are carefully assessed and appropriately planned for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Overall, teaching is good and, as a consequence, most pupils make good progress from their starting points irrespective of whether they start at the beginning of the school year or join part way through.
- Work in pupils' books and the accurate assessment of pupils' abilities demonstrate that there has been rapid improvement in reading, writing and mathematics across almost all year groups during the last academic year.
- Teachers provide concise and timely feedback, which helps pupils to understand and work towards the next steps in their learning.
- Time is used well in lessons to keep a focus on learning. Teachers set high expectations for pupils to show positive attitudes, work collaboratively and apply themselves with concentration.
- Most teachers use effective questioning to identify and rectify misconceptions, to encourage pupils to think for themselves and to discuss and explain their learning. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of the concepts being taught. On rare occasions, teachers do not identify misconceptions quickly enough and this results in pupils repeating mistakes.
- Effective teaching ensures that most pupils receive work which is appropriately challenging for them. A small minority of teaching does this less well. Where this is the case, pupils, in particular the most able, are not sufficiently challenged, which results in them learning less. Leaders have implemented plans to try to address this.
- The majority of teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils to make rapid progress in lessons. On some occasions, their lack of subject knowledge means that pupils' knowledge and understanding of a subject are not deepened, and when this happens pupils do not make the progress they are capable of.
- Overall, pupils focus on their learning and are conscientious and keen to do well. On rare occasions, when work is not matched effectively to pupils' needs, or when teachers' explanations are not clear, a small number of pupils become distracted and stop working. This leads to slower progress in lessons.
- Pupils' books show that they have a good understanding of key concepts. Their work shows that they are given plenty of opportunities to solve mathematical problems and develop reasoning skills. However, the provisional 2017 outcomes achieved by Year 6 do not reflect the higher standards being achieved across the school.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders place a high priority on pupils' personal and moral development; it is very clearly at the centre of the school's ethos, 'learning, living, laughing'.
- Pupils are thoughtful and caring. Many activities run by the pastoral team focus on enhancing pupils' personal awareness and improving their ability to reflect and see things from a different perspective. For example, during a 'deep learning curriculum day' last year, Year 4 pupils completed a 'slum survivor' challenge, sleeping overnight in cardboard boxes so they could gain a perspective of what it would be like to be less fortunate than themselves.
- Pupils are proud of their school and speak positively about the adults who work there. At playtimes and lunchtimes, the atmosphere is friendly and fun. Pupils volunteer for a range of jobs which develop their leadership skills. For example, Year 6 pupils run the school tuck shop. House captains have a real sense of pride and responsibility in their roles.
- Many parents praise the school for the support they receive and the understanding that school leaders have of their unique, and at times difficult, family circumstances. 'Our child matters', 'I honestly can't praise this school enough' and 'All of my children have thrived at this school' are just a few examples of parents' views.
- Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of how to keep themselves safe. The school curriculum addresses issues such as e-safety and bullying, ensuring that pupils have a sound understanding of whom they can talk to and what to do if they have a problem inside or outside school.
- Pupils talk about the benefits of exercise but are not as confident when discussing how to keep themselves healthy in other ways.
- A few pupils lack self-confidence and are not self-assured learners. At times, this leads to an over reliance on adults to support them with their learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is good. They are friendly and talkative to one another and equally confident and articulate when talking to inspectors and other adults. In particular, pupils talked warmly about the pastoral team and how much staff help them to improve their behaviour.
- Pupils understand right from wrong and the importance of making the 'right' choice. They talked excitedly about the house points they earn and the 'cherrytastic' stickers for going 'above and beyond'. These systems motivate the pupils and have contributed considerably to the improvements in behaviour since the school became an academy.
- Pupils value their education and rarely miss a day of school. Leaders are sensitive to the needs of the pupils and their families. Attendance is monitored carefully and is

above the national average for all groups of pupils.

- Overall, staff manage behaviour well. There are, however, some inconsistencies. Pupils are spoken to in a caring and considerate way, and this approach is effective in quickly de-escalating low-level disruptive behaviour. When staff are less established, the high standards expected by leaders are not always met. On rare occasions, this results in low-level disruption.
- A small minority of parents feel that bullying is an issue at school. Inspectors gathered pupils' views on this. The vast majority of pupils spoken to and who responded to the Ofsted survey do not think that there is any bullying at the school. Those that said it sometimes happens went on to state, 'We always have someone to speak to' and 'The teachers sort it out quickly.'

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes have improved since the school became an academy. Leaders and teachers have worked with determination to secure improvement in all subjects. Work in pupils' books demonstrates good progress in all subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils enter and leave the school at a variety of points during the school year. Leaders and teachers work quickly to assess pupils' learning and implement effective support to ensure that they make good progress from their starting points. Careful thought is given to ensuring that pupils are well prepared for the next steps in their lives, no matter how quickly they might move on to another school.
- This academic year, in almost all year groups, more pupils are on track to achieve the expected and higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because leaders have improved teaching, learning and assessment and acutely focus on developing core skills not only in English and mathematics lessons but also across the curriculum.
- Pupils have a multitude of opportunities to write at length in a range of subjects. Teachers set high standards and expectations of pupils' work in all subjects. As a result, a large proportion of pupils have improved the quality of their writing and are writing at greater depth.
- Reading has been given a higher profile during this past academic year. Pupils who read to inspectors did so confidently and shared their enjoyment of reading. Pupils make good progress in reading, and more pupils are achieving at expected and higher levels in Years 3, 4 and 5.
- Although the proportion of pupils in Year 6 attaining the expected standard in mathematics was below national standards in 2017, work in their books shows the impact of actions taken to improve teaching in mathematics. This academic year, work in pupils' books shows an increased focus on understanding and interpreting mathematical language. Consequently, there is an improving picture in this area.
- Leaders have thought carefully about the support they offer to pupils who are disadvantaged. Staff know pupils' academic and emotional needs very well and provide them with individualised support which facilitates rapid progress. As a result, the gap

between these pupils and that of other pupils nationally is diminishing.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress from their starting points. Senior leaders and teachers work swiftly when pupils join the school to accurately assess starting points and address any additional needs promptly. Leaders ensure that pupils receive the help they need in a timely manner, and this helps them to make progress quickly.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, can articulate their learning clearly and are insightful about how much the teachers have helped to improve their knowledge and understanding. Leaders are ensuring that they identify when standards are not high enough. For example, last year, in Year 6, the most able pupils were not making as much progress as expected. Class groups were split, and this resulted in rapid improvement and a greater proportion of pupils achieving higher standards in their writing than the national average. This year, in a few classes, there is, as yet, a lack of challenge for the most able pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	141227
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10036104

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	163
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Richard Durrant
Principal	Michaela Webb
Telephone number	01760 337346
Website	www.cherrytreeacademy.co.uk
Email address	junioroffice@cherrytreeacademy.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school became a sponsored academy in October 2014. In November 2014, the trust appointed the infant school headteacher as the new executive principal and chief executive officer (CEO).
- The school is a smaller than average-sized primary school with a significantly high proportion of service children.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.
- School leaders work closely with the local services base to carry out a range of

community projects including science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) projects.

- Most pupils are of a White British heritage, and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is well below the national average.
- While the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, the proportion of pupils who have a special educational needs statement or education, health and care plan is slightly above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every classroom at least once and in most classes more than once. Senior leaders joined inspectors on approximately a third of these observations and learning walks.
- A range of discussions took place with senior leaders, class teachers and support staff. Information from these meetings was then reviewed against a variety of school documents, including information about teachers' performance, school improvement plans, information about pupils' progress and attainment, scrutiny of pupils' work and external views about the school.
- Inspectors talked to pupils in a range of informal settings, including playtime and lunchtime. They also met formally with three groups of pupils. The lead inspector evaluated the views of the 71 pupils who responded to the Ofsted pupil survey.
- Inspectors reviewed 21 staff survey responses, 37 responses from the online Parent View forum and 28 free-text responses from parents. Inspectors also took account of the views of parents during discussions at the end of the school day and through letters they sent to the inspection team.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, talked to them about their reading skills and looked at their reading records. Pupils also talked to inspectors about their learning and showed them around the school, during which time inspectors took note of displays and the learning environment.

Inspection team

Kerry Grubb-Moore, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lynn Lowery

Ofsted Inspector

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