

# Inspection of Cherry Tree Academy

Cobblers Lane, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF8 2HN

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Inspection dates: 11–12 March 2020

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders, including those from the Waterton Academy Trust, are improving the school. This work is needed. Over time, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have not achieved as well as they should. New leaders have quickly identified which aspects of the school's work are not good enough and where expectations of pupils have not been high enough. Leaders' work to develop the curriculum is at an early stage, but it is starting to help pupils to be more successful.

Children get a warm, friendly start to school in early years. Positive relationships are forged between children, staff and parents and carers.

New leaders have made great strides in changing the culture of behaviour. They know that this work needs to continue. Pupils say that behaviour has improved and that, in class, it is mostly good. However, sometimes low-level disruption to lessons is not addressed by teachers. Pupils say that bullying sometimes happens, but pupils know that their teachers will help them if it does.

Some parents have concerns about bullying. Most say that new leaders listen to their concerns and take appropriate action. Parents value the 'voice and concerns' groups that give them the chance to meet with the new headteacher to express any worries they may have.

Strong safeguarding procedures and carefully planned lessons and activities help to keep pupils safe.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Recent changes to the school leadership team have had a positive effect in a short amount of time. New leaders are focusing on getting the basics right. Their actions have improved the structure of the school day. Pupils now access the content of the national curriculum over their time in school.

Leaders have considered what children will learn in the early years and how they will build on this in key stage 1 and key stage 2. Leaders are still in the early stages of putting together an effective curriculum. Leaders understand the curriculum for each subject needs to be planned more carefully.

Leaders recognised that the curriculum in the early years did not support children to achieve well. The trust has employed an early years expert to help the school to make improvements. Staff in Reception and Nursery now work together. They make sure the curriculum in Reception builds on what children have already learned in Nursery.

A new scheme to support teachers in the delivery of mathematics has been in place for a year. This supports pupils to practise what they have learned. It is not fully embedded and so there are still significant gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Leaders have made sure that all subjects are now taught. However, they have not developed the curriculum well enough so that it builds pupils' knowledge securely over time. In science lessons, connections are not made to what pupils already know. This is the same in history. This limits what pupils know and remember.

Pupils with SEND have not achieved as well as they should. Parents have not received the information they should about the support that is in place for their child. Leaders know this. The headteacher has changed the way that specialist provision is used, making a very positive difference for pupils. Pupils with the most significant needs now receive effective support with their learning.

The new leadership team understand that the effective teaching of phonics and reading is fundamental to all pupils. A newly introduced phonics scheme is in place for pupils in early years and key stage 1. Teachers now read to pupils in every class, every day. Leaders work closely with parents to encourage children to read at home daily. This is rewarded each Friday. However, not all staff have the expertise to teach phonics and reading well. As a result, the teaching of reading is inconsistent across the school.

Pupils' attendance remains below the national average. The attendance team have implemented a range of new plans to ensure pupils attend more regularly. They track attendance weekly. They have a 'first day response' to all absence and take prompt action when pupils do not arrive at school. This has reduced lateness and begun to reduce unauthorised absences.

The personal development of pupils is a priority for leaders. They have recently begun to extend the experiences in place for pupils. This is to prepare pupils for their future lives. Leaders have made links with their local community and schools in the trust. They plan trips, including to the Houses of Parliament. However, pupils are currently unable to link this to their learning about British values and what this means to them. Pupils have a limited understanding of different faiths and cultures.

Leaders and trustees care about staff workload and well-being. Staff feel supported. They have confidence in new leaders and their clear vision to improve school. Staff know that they need to quickly improve the quality of education and are ready to put leaders' plans into action.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and the trust take the safeguarding of pupils very seriously. There are thorough procedures in place to make sure that adults' safeguarding knowledge is up to date. Staff know how to identify and report concerns. Leaders have recently

developed effective links with the safeguarding partners in the local authority to improve the support the school offers.

Pupils can talk about some ways they are being taught to keep safe. They know the difference between unkind behaviour and bullying. Leaders know that they need to better develop pupils' limited understanding of online safety and local risks.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The curriculum is not clearly sequenced and lacks detail in what pupils should know over their time in school. This has led to gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Leaders need to be clearer about the crucial content that pupils will learn in each subject and the sequence in which it should be taught from early years to Year 6. Leaders need to support teachers in how to deliver the curriculum effectively so that pupils know and remember more year on year.
- Pupils do not learn to read with fluency and understanding quickly enough. Not all staff are able to identify what is needed to help pupils 'catch up and keep up'. Leaders need to ensure that all staff are trained to deliver the school's new phonics programme systematically. They should ensure that pupils falling behind are given targeted additional support from the beginning to help them become fluent, confident readers.
- Over time, the needs of pupils with SEND have not been appropriately identified or understood. This has prevented them from achieving as well as they could. Leaders should make sure that teachers know how to recognise barriers pupils may have to learning, that support plans are precise and that pupils receive the support they need. Leaders should make sure that parents are well informed about the support in place for their children and how well they are learning across the curriculum.
- Pupils' attendance remains below national average. Pupils miss out on some of the curriculum on offer. The attendance team should continue to work with parents so that they understand the importance of good attendance. Leaders must challenge unexplained absence from school, including that of the most vulnerable pupils, to ensure disruption to learning is minimised.
- Pupils are unable to talk about British values and what this means to them. They have a narrow awareness of risks to their safety. As a result, pupils are not fully prepared for secondary school and life in modern Britain. Through the revised curriculum, leaders need to promote a wide range of opportunities for pupils. Leaders should ensure that pupils understand how to stay safe online and the potential risks to their well-being. Leaders should also make sure that pupils have an increased understanding of different religions, faiths and cultures.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	144400
<b>Local authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	10121667
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	298
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Becky Cook
<b>Headteacher</b>	James Grayston
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cherrytreeacademy.org.uk">www.cherrytreeacademy.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- This is the first inspection of Cherry Tree Academy since it converted to become an academy on 1 April 2017. It is part of Waterton Academy Trust.
- The current headteacher was appointed in January 2020.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The school has a nurture room called the 'Coverdale Provision'.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the executive headteacher, headteacher, deputy headteacher and phase leaders throughout the inspection. We spoke to trust school improvement officers, including the academy effectiveness officer. We met with the chair of the interim education board and the chief executive officer of the trust.

- We looked closely at the curriculum by doing deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and history. This work involved discussions with pupils, curriculum leaders and teachers, scrutiny of pupils' work, visits to lessons and hearing pupils read.
- We looked at how well the curriculum meets the needs of pupils with SEND. We met with the leader for SEND and reviewed support plans for pupils with SEND. We visited pupils working in the 'Coverdale Provision' and spoke to pupils with SEND during visits to lessons.
- We talked to pupils in lessons and around the school at breaktime and lunchtime.
- We considered the views of parents and carers, by speaking to parents before school and reviewing the 26 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Staff views were considered by speaking to a wide range of staff and reviewing the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- We carried out a wide range of activities to check how well school staff keep pupils safe. We looked at how well staff training, application of school policies and the curriculum for pupils create a culture of safeguarding.

### **Inspection team**

Zoe Lightfoot, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kate Rowley

Her Majesty's Inspector

Darren Marks

Ofsted Inspector

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