

Inspection of Cherry Trees School

Giggetty Lane, Wombourne, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV5 0AX

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 February 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

At Cherry Trees School, not all pupils receive a good enough education. Leaders have begun to identify what they want pupils to learn, but the curriculum is not always ambitious and does not meet pupils' needs. Pupils, including those in the early years, are not always taught things in the right order to help them learn and remember more. Reading is not taught well. Leaders know this and have begun to put this right.

Some teachers use the sensory curriculum well to plan learning activities for the pupils who are at the early stages of development.

Pupils are happy to come to school and are warmly welcomed by staff each day. Staff help pupils to learn routines so that they become increasingly independent. Pupils have some opportunities to engage in activities that will help them develop their understanding of the wider world. However, leaders have not planned these opportunities well enough.

Leaders have focused on improving pupils' behaviour. Pupils know how to behave. When pupils struggle, staff are quick to support them. Bullying is dealt with quickly and pupils feel safe in school.

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

Leaders have not been effective in improving the curriculum. It is not ambitious enough for all pupils. Leaders do not always check on how well teachers implement the curriculum. This has led to inconsistencies in the way the curriculum is taught.

Leaders have begun to improve the teaching of reading. However, it is not a high enough priority in the school. Teachers are sometimes confused about which approach to use, and not all staff have the skills to teach reading. Some pupils are not supported well enough to improve their reading quickly.

In some subjects, such as mathematics, leaders have developed a clearer intent for the curriculum. However, teachers are not implementing these intentions. Teachers do not always use assessment well enough to ensure that pupils learn as well as they can. Some pupils are given work to complete that they can already easily do. Teachers do not support pupils well enough to know and recall information. As a result, pupils are not making the progress they could.

In subjects such as personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, leaders are not ambitious enough about what they want pupils to learn, know and understand. Pupils do not access their entitlement to a full PSHE curriculum, and teachers' implementation of this curriculum area is inconsistent. The relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) curriculum is part of the school's planned PSHE curriculum but does not fulfil the statutory requirements. Leaders have not planned and communicated to teachers what they want

pupils to know at the various ages and stages of their education. Some teachers are not aware that they should be teaching RSHE as part of the PSHE curriculum. Leaders have not consulted with parents on their intentions for the RSHE curriculum. As a result, pupils do not have the information they need about relationships, including sexual relationships, and health.

Children in the early years do not have a good start to their education. The early years curriculum is not ambitious or coherently planned. There is not a sharp enough focus on developing early mathematics and literacy skills. Children do not have enough well-planned experiences to build on what they know and can do. As a result, they are not well prepared for their next step in learning. However, children in the early years quickly learn the routines and enjoy coming to school. The staff know them well and care for them.

The recently appointed executive headteacher quickly identified that staff did not manage the behaviour of pupils well enough. She introduced appropriate new systems and approaches to address her concerns. Consequently, leaders are now persistent in expecting staff to manage pupils' behaviour in a positive way. As a result of the senior leaders' persistence, the school is calm and well-ordered.

Leaders deal with any perceived incidents of bullying quickly. Most of the parents who spoke to inspectors or responded to the online questionnaire feel that staff manage behaviour well and that pupils have a positive attitude to learning.

Pupils are kind and respectful to each other. Leaders talk about times when they discuss fundamental British values with pupils, for example in assemblies and on celebration days. The school provides experiences to promote pupils' personal development. However, not enough pupils access these opportunities.

Leaders are mindful of staff's workload, and the vast majority of staff feel well supported. Trustees, governors and leaders know that the school needs to improve significantly. They have begun to take action to make these improvements. They are passionate about the school and committed to making the changes necessary. Leaders have a vision for how they want the school to be. They have begun to make changes, although these changes are too new to have the impact that is needed and some plans for improvement have been hindered by the turnover of staff. New leadership appointments have given a greater capacity to make the necessary improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Upon appointment, the executive headteacher quickly began to address concerns about how the school identified and secured help for those pupils who needed it. However, safeguarding practices are still not good enough.

Staff do not have a good enough understanding of the dangers that pupils might face. As a result, staff may not identify those pupils who need help quickly enough.

Leaders do seek the help of external partners. However, the leaders' monitoring of safeguarding is not good enough. Leaders are not quick enough to identify weak staff knowledge and poor recording practices. Leaders are missing opportunities to spot potential risks. As a result of this, pupils may be at risk of harm.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that staff know and take their responsibilities for safeguarding seriously enough. As a result of poor knowledge and recording, staff are not properly equipped to identify risks quickly enough to keep pupils safe. Leaders need to ensure that staff receive the training they need and that they improve monitoring to ensure that staff remember this training and use the recording and reporting systems consistently.
- Plans to improve the teaching of reading are not yet implemented or consistently understood by teachers. As a result, pupils in the formal curriculum pathway do not improve their reading quickly enough. Leaders need to raise the profile of reading and ensure that staff receive the necessary training to become experts in the teaching of reading, including phonics.
- Leaders' intentions for the curriculum are not always ambitious, and the way in which the curriculum is planned is not well sequenced. Teachers are not consistently implementing curriculum plans in the more formal pathways. This means that pupils are not being provided with a good enough education. They are not supported well enough to learn and remember more. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is ambitious, well sequenced and implemented by all staff.
- The curriculum in the early years is not ambitious enough. It is not coherently planned, and there is not a sharp enough focus on developing early mathematics and literacy skills. As a result, pupils are not well prepared for their next stage in education. Leaders need to develop an ambitious and coherently planned curriculum that the teachers implement.
- Leaders do not consistently plan the opportunities for pupils' personal development. They have not given enough thought to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. As a result, pupils do not have access to their entitlement of a full curriculum and are not learning the information they need. Leaders should identify what they want pupils to experience and develop a sequenced curriculum.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

Unique reference number	144208
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10212183
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	54
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Simon Kibble
Executive Headteacher	Laura Slinn
Website	www.cherrytreesschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Endeavour Multi Academy Trust.
- There have been significant changes to the leadership team over the last two years. An acting chief executive officer (CEO) and a new executive headteacher took up their post in September 2020. A new head of school and assistant headteacher were recently appointed in September 2021.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the assistant headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, the CEO, the chair of the trust, representatives of the governing body, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally with parents, carers and staff to gather general information about school life.
- The lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website and additional documents provided by the school during the inspection.
- During the inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with the head of school, who is the designated safeguarding lead, and the executive headteacher, who is the deputy safeguarding lead. Pupils' case files were reviewed. The single central record of the checks on staff's suitability to work with children was scrutinised.
- Inspectors met with staff to discuss their workload and the support they receive to carry out their roles.
- Inspectors examined behaviour support plans and incident records and observed the start of the day and informal times of the day, to evaluate pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online parent questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, the pupil questionnaire and the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Amanda Clugston, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Orgill	Ofsted Inspector

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