

Inspection of Cherry Tree Primary School

Berry Avenue, Watford, Hertfordshire WD24 6ST

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 July 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Cherry Tree Primary School. The school's beliefs and promises, 'We are kind, we aim high, we are brave', accurately describe pupils' attitudes to learning. Pupils are proud of their school environment. They appreciate everyone working together. Pupils are positive and kind to each other.

Leaders and staff expect pupils to work hard. Pupils are curious and are keen to have new opportunities to learn and explore. Leaders ensure that pupils receive the support they need to be ready for learning. Many pupils take time to talk to the school dog, Bonnie. She helps them feel calm if they are anxious or upset.

Pupils behave sensibly in lessons and at playtime. They are well-mannered and polite to one another. Pupils use their 'network hands' to identify adults who will listen to them if they have any worries. Pupils say that if bullying happens, their teachers make sure that it stops quickly.

Pupils have a strong understanding of environmental issues. They learn about important issues through their outdoor learning programme and responding to 'big questions'. Pupils take part in different activities locally, which helps build their sense of belonging to a community.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to achieve well, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have thought about the key knowledge and skills they want pupils to be secure with by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Teachers make use of links between subjects to build new learning on what pupils already know and remember.

Some aspects of the curriculum are in early stages of their design and teaching. Leaders have not carried out a full check on how well their curriculum plans are working with helping pupils learn more. They do not know if their programmes meet the needs of all pupils well. Some teachers have not developed the knowledge they need to teach all subjects, especially where there have been recent changes. This means that pupils do not fully grasp all they need to learn and remember.

Teachers check on pupils' understanding well. They use questions well to help secure pupils' learning and understanding. Teachers use the information from their checks effectively to shape future learning or deal with any misunderstandings pupils may have.

Leaders promote reading effectively. From the start of early years, children learn phonics. They learn to decode sounds and blend them into words. Books are suitably matched to help pupils practise the sounds that they know so they can become accurate and fluent readers. Adults provide additional support to any pupil who may find learning to read more challenging.

Leaders have carefully considered the books they want all pupils to read at every stage of their education. Older pupils enthuse about their reading choices. They have a strong knowledge of different genres and authors. Pupils increase their ability to infer and retrieve important information from texts.

Leaders collaborate well with teachers to quickly identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers adapt their teaching so that pupils receive the help they need in lessons. Pupils with SEND work alongside their peers to access the same learning. Pupils with SEND learn and achieve well.

Pupils are attentive in class. They willingly share their ideas and thoughts during discussions. Pupils behave well outside in less structured times. They play together well, cooperating in games and activities. Leaders' recent actions are beginning to improve pupils' attendance. However, a few pupils are absent on too many occasions. This means they do not benefit from the rich curriculum on offer.

Pupils learn to be caring and responsible citizens. They take on different roles and responsibilities. Some pupils have been elected to the school's pupil parliament or have joined the eco council. Pupils are accepting of others and recognise that everyone is different.

Staff appreciate the help and training they receive from leaders. Staff are proud to work at Cherry Tree.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe seriously. They have created a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders have established effective systems to keep pupils safe. Staff receive regular training, including regular checks on their understanding of safeguarding. Staff know the signs that they need to be alert for, and know how to report any concerns they may have. Leaders work with external agencies to offer support for vulnerable pupils and families.

Pupils understand about the dangers when they are using the internet. They have received regular online safety training and know how to report any issues or concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have developed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Some aspects of the curriculum have been more recently designed and developed. Leaders have not carried out a full evaluation of the curriculum to check how well their intentions are working in practice. They do not know if the curriculum is meeting the needs

of all pupils. Leaders should evaluate the curriculum's impact so that all pupils can make the strongest progress in their learning.

- Where the teaching of the curriculum is at an early stage, not all staff have sufficient subject knowledge to implement leaders' subject plans as effectively as possible. This means that in these areas, pupils are not learning as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that all adults receive the training they need to teach the curriculum effectively.
- Leaders have recently implemented new approaches to improve pupils' attendance. Some pupils are still not attending school frequently. Leaders should continue to establish their plans so that persistent absence is reduced and that all pupils benefit from leaders' well-planned 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	145353
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10226848
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	425
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Elizabeth Leeman
Headteacher	Cheska Tyler
Website	www.cherrytree.herts.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to an academy in September 2018 and is a member of the Inclusive Multi-Academy Trust.
- The new headteacher took up post in September 2020.
- The school does not make use of an alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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 carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography, design and technology and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons where they were being taught, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and other members of staff. The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust and the vice-chair of the trust board. The lead inspector spoke with five members of the local governance board, including the chair. The lead inspector held a telephone meeting with the school's chosen school improvement partner.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents. These included the employment checks undertaken when staff are appointed, the school development plan, the school's evaluation of its own performance and minutes of governors' meetings.
- Inspectors considered 124 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as 119 free texts. Inspectors met parents informally as they arrived at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors took account of staff's and pupils' views. They reviewed 54 responses to the staff questionnaire and 161 responses to the pupil survey. Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons and breaktimes.

Inspection team

Steve Mellors, lead inspector

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