

Inspection of Cherry Tree Academy Trust Marham Infant

Cedar Road, Upper Marham, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE33 9LT

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Marnham Infant school is warm, happy, and inclusive. Pupils feel safe. Bullying rarely happens. Pupils know that if they have any worries adults will sort these out for them.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They listen carefully to each other and their teachers. At breaks and lunchtime, pupils play happily together. Pupils who join the school are welcomed and accepted. They benefit from the high-quality pastoral support in place and make new friends quickly. Adults know pupils and their families well. They know there are times when some need additional help. When this is the case, pupils receive effective care and support. This contributes strongly to pupils' well-being.

Pupils enjoy many extra-curricular activities, such as those on offer on 'Fab Friday'. These activities provide opportunities for pupils to apply their classroom learning in a practical way. During the inspection, pupils returned from walking to the local Marham Fen, enthusiastically chatting about what they had learned.

Pupils enjoy their learning across a range of subjects. Despite this, adults do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. The curriculum has areas that require significant improvement to support pupils achieving as well as they could.

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

Leaders have identified the knowledge and skills they want pupils to know and remember in each year group. Where leaders have decided on the sequence in which new knowledge will be taught, for example in mathematics, pupils learn better. In most subjects though, leaders have not carefully sequenced the order in which new knowledge will be taught. Instead, pupils experience a range of disconnected activities linked to topics they are learning about. They do not build detailed knowledge over time.

Leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils enjoy reading. They have chosen a range of rich texts through which to deliver the curriculum. Pupils enjoy the texts they read and those their teachers read to them. Consequently, they develop a love of reading as they move through the school.

Leaders have introduced a new phonics programme. Although staff have received training, not all have the subject knowledge to ensure they teach the programme well. Adults do not routinely identify misconceptions. This means that not all pupils learn their sounds consistently well. The youngest pupils do not receive the support they need to help them become confident and fluent readers. Expectations for the presentation of work in books and for pupils' handwriting are not high enough. As a result, many pupils do not present their work neatly. Some do not form their letters appropriately or spell key vocabulary accurately.

Teachers do not consistently check pupils' learning and understanding in lessons. Some subject leaders are new to their roles. Not all of them have the knowledge and skills they need to check how well pupils learn in their subjects. This means they have not been able to improve the quality of education in their subject. They do not have the skills to support less-experienced teachers well enough.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Adults are skilled at adapting activities for pupils with SEND. This helps them to make small steps of progress in their learning and have access to the same curriculum as their peers.

The wider curriculum supports pupils' personal development well. Outdoor learning opportunities help pupils to take well-considered risks, along with developing resilience and perseverance. Pupils learn to be respectful and celebrate differences between themselves and others. Pupils learn how to look after themselves, such as by eating healthily and taking part in lots of physical activities. Strong pastoral support also supports pupils' personal development.

Leaders and staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Environments in classrooms and around the school are calm and orderly. Pupils from the early years upwards apply the school values of learning, living, and laughing. They ask for things politely and help each other out. They show respect for each other and the adults who work with them.

Leaders have identified areas where the school needs to improve but have not yet put in place their improvement plans. Trustees are committed to their roles. They carry out regular checks on the work of the school. However, they do not know all the areas in which the school needs to improve. Leaders carefully consider staff's workload before introducing new initiatives. Staff appreciate this approach.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a well-established culture of safeguarding. Leaders have provided staff with relevant and up-to-date training. All staff know pupils very well. They are swift to spot any changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is at risk. Staff know how to report any concerns they may have. Leaders make timely referrals to outside agencies to ensure that pupils receive the help they need.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when working online. They also learn how to stay safe in the local community, for example crossing the road safely. Leaders make rigorous checks on new staff to ensure they are safe to work with children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not sequenced the important knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn in many areas of the curriculum, including in the early years. Activities do not help pupils build new learning on what they already know. This means pupils do not develop a detailed knowledge in many subjects. Leaders must ensure that curriculum plans identify the knowledge that pupils need to learn and in what order, to ensure that pupils learn well over time.
- The phonics programme is not delivered effectively. Teaching does not fully match the expectation of the programme. Some adults do not have sufficient knowledge to teach the programme well. This means the youngest pupils do not learn to read well enough. Leaders must provide staff with training to support them to develop the knowledge and skills to deliver the phonics programme consistently well.
- Some subject leaders are new to their roles. As a result, they do not know what their subject looks like through the school and how effectively it is taught. Senior leaders need to ensure that subject leaders have the time and guidance to develop their roles further and support teachers to implement the planned curriculum effectively. Staff do not have consistently high expectations of pupils' work and presentation. Leaders should ensure that the agreed policies are adhered to and that staff communicate their high expectations of work and presentation to pupils.

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.

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	141161
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10241843
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	176
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gary Walker
Headteacher	Michaela Webb
Website	www.cherrytreeacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher also leads the junior school within the Cherrytree trust. The infant school is the sponsor school for the junior school.
- The school serves the local RAF base at Marham. This means it experiences high mobility of pupils.
- The school has had a number of changes in teaching staff recently.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this graded 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 these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders,

considered curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and scrutinised samples of pupils' work. Other aspects of the curriculum were also scrutinised to give inspectors further evidence for the quality of education. The lead inspector also heard a number of pupils read.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and early years leader. The lead inspector met with members of the trust board, including the interim chair.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour across the site. They met with groups of pupils to seek their views of the school. They also spoke to pupils informally in class, around the school and at breaktimes.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record, and reviewed safeguarding paperwork and systems. Inspectors spoke with leaders, teachers, support staff, members of the governing body, trustees, and pupils to evaluate the culture of safeguarding in school.
- Inspectors considered 42 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents, and 41 free-text comments. The lead inspector also spoke with parents at the end of the school day. Inspectors considered the views of staff, including the 20 responses to the online staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Joan Beale, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Julie Harrison

Ofsted Inspector

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