

# Inspection of Cherry Oak School

60 Frederick Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham, West Midlands B29 6PB

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Inspection dates: 5 and 6 March 2024

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

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

Since the last inspection, there have been many improvements at Cherry Oak School. Pupils now receive a good quality of education. Pupils enjoy their learning and are happy at school.

Relationships are important here. From the very start in the early years, the school takes time to support children, families and carers with this important transition. These positive relationships continue throughout school. This means that staff know their pupils and families well. Most staff act quickly to support pupils when they become anxious and need help with their emotions. Consequently, pupils are calm across school most of the time.

Pupils' safety in and out of school is top priority. All staff understand the additional vulnerabilities pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have. Pupils are taught how to communicate when they need help. All staff demonstrate the school's motto of 'never do nothing' effectively. This means that staff are highly vigilant. All concerns, such as changes in pupils' behaviours, are acted upon quickly.

Staff model the school's values of respect, inspire, support and empower to pupils. In turn, pupils demonstrate these values well. For example, pupils encourage each other to be the very best they can be during sports tournaments. All this helps pupils to be confident and motivating individuals.

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

The school and federation have driven forward improvements since the last inspection so that pupils now receive a good quality of education. As part of these improvements, there have been several positive changes to leadership. These include governors taking appropriate action to stabilise the leadership of the school.

The school has created a carefully planned curriculum across all subject areas. The knowledge and skills that leaders want pupils to learn are planned to build in a logical order over time. However, in a few areas, the learning pupils are expected to know and remember is not explicitly defined. This means that the content pupils learn does not always build appropriately on what they have learned before. This slows pupils' learning.

A pathway model helps pupils to learn the curriculum alongside pupils with similar needs. These pathways are ambitious. Systems for assessing pupils' learning across subjects and pathways are effective. Consequently, leaders know how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum.

Leaders are determined to give all pupils a voice to communicate, especially pupils who do not yet use verbal language. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. These plans mostly support pupils' speech, language, communication and interaction needs, including autism spectrum condition. The school uses a range

of strategies to support pupils to communicate, such as symbols, objects of reference and signing. The most effective strategies to meet pupils' individual communication, sensory and behavioural needs are quickly established when pupils join the school. However, for some pupils these strategies are not always precise or detailed enough. They are not always reviewed in a timely manner. This is also reflected in some classroom environments. In a few areas of the school there are inconsistencies in how the classroom environment is maintained and used to support pupils' specific areas of need. This means that some pupils are not accessing their learning as well as they could be.

An established phonics programme is in place across school. Staff are experts at teaching pupils to read. Pupils not yet ready for the formal phonics programme are supported daily by experienced staff. They share books, identify sounds and help pupils to build their attention during lessons. Consequently, highly effective systems are in place to help pupils to read and develop a love of books.

Pupils access a wealth of wider experiences. They visit their local supermarket and learn how to handle money. Pupils successfully participate and win local sports competitions against other specialist provisions. Pupils visit different places of worship. Older pupils experience a residential visit. For most pupils, this is their first time away from home. Pupils on the school council make important decisions, such as changes to their school dinner menu. All these experiences help to develop pupils' confidence and their understanding of the wider world.

Leaders and governors know how important attendance is to pupils' education. Although attendance is improving, there remains a group of pupils who are not attending school regularly enough. Leaders and the school's family support team have clear attendance strategies in place to support these pupils and their families. These strategies are working well and are having a positive impact on pupils' attendance.

Governors fulfil their statutory duties effectively. They offer appropriate support and challenge to the school. Staff are supportive of the many positive changes to the school in recent years. Leaders and governors have been successful in securing positive changes to pupils' educational experiences.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In a few parts of the curriculum, the subject knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn is not explicit enough. This means that the content pupils learn does not always build appropriately on what they have learned before. This slows pupils' learning. The school should ensure that the explicit subject knowledge is

identified in these parts of the curriculum so that pupils can always build on their prior knowledge accurately and successfully.

- For some pupils, the strategies planned to meet their specific areas of need are not always precise and detailed enough. In addition, these are not always reviewed in a systematic and timely manner. This means that, at times, some pupils are not accessing their learning successfully enough. The school should ensure the strategies planned to meet the needs of pupils are always accurate and reviewed systematically so that all pupils can achieve successfully to their full potential.
- For some pupils, there are inconsistencies in how the classroom environment is maintained and used to support their specific areas of need, such as their communication, behaviour and sensory needs. As a result, some pupils are not as well supported as they could be. The school should ensure that the classroom environment is always maintained to a high and consistent standard and fully supports the specific areas of need for 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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103626
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290530
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	114
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Clare Mills
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gary Coffey (Executive headteacher)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cherryoak.bham.sch.uk">www.cherryoak.bham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	11 and 12 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been several changes to leadership. A new headteacher was appointed and then left in December 2023. The substantive deputy headteacher was then promoted from within the school as the interim head of school in January 2024. An interim assistant headteacher was also promoted from within the school in January 2024. A new executive headteacher was appointed in September 2021.
- The school is part of The Federation of Cherry Oak School and Victoria School. There are two schools and one college within the federation. The two schools share the same governing body.
- All pupils have an EHC plan. These mostly support needs associated with speech, language, communication, interaction, sensory and autism spectrum condition. Pupils also have medical and severe learning needs.
- There were no nursery-age pupils on roll during this inspection.
- The school does not make use of any alternative providers.

## Information about this inspection

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

- ② Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- ② This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- ② The inspectors met with the executive headteacher, interim head of school, interim assistant headteacher, chair of governors, additional representatives from the governing board, subject coordinators, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally with transport escorts, drivers and staff.
- ② The lead inspector spoke with a school improvement adviser.
- ② Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, communication, mathematics, physical education and sensory integration. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also looked at additional subjects, including humanities and art and design.
- ② The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- ② To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- ② Inspectors considered responses to the online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments. Inspectors also looked at responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- ② Inspectors looked at a range of documents provided by the school, including the school's self-evaluation, school policies, curriculum documents and SEND records.

## Inspection team

Anna Vrahimi, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Pete Hines OBE

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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