

Inspection of Cherry Trees School

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

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 February 2024

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	Inadequate

The headteacher of this school is Alison Higgs. This school is part of Endeavour Multi Academy Trust which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Heather Phillips and overseen by a board of trustees chaired by Simon Kibble. There is also an executive headteacher Laura Slinn who is responsible for this school and one other school.

What is it like to attend this school?

These are very special times at Cherry Trees School. The last few years have seen massive improvements. At the heart of these improvements are care, kindness and a determination that all pupils will get the most from their time at school. Pupils are happier, more confident, and are making greater progress than ever before.

Pupils have many varying special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including autistic spectrum conditions, sensory processing needs or speech, language, and communication needs. Whatever the need, the school is tenacious in ensuring that they get the right help quickly to overcome any barriers to learning these needs might create.

Relationships between staff and pupils are caring and supportive. All pupils are welcome and valued, regardless of their needs or starting points. Pupils told inspectors that 'just because you are different does not mean you should be treated differently'. This caring and supportive ethos runs through this small school with a huge heart. This contributes to behaviour that is positive in lessons and at other times.

Not a moment is wasted. Clubs such as cooking, movies and board games help to develop hobbies and interests. Museum, cinema, and London trips develop pupils' understanding of the world around them.

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

Since the last inspection, leaders, governors, and trustees have created a culture where all are committed to making the right changes to the provision for pupils. There has been an unswerving determination to make the necessary improvements quickly. Staff are proud of the improvements at the school and feel valued in their roles. They feel that the school is well-led and managed.

Across all subjects, there is an ambitious expectation for what pupils will learn in every single lesson. Lots of opportunities are provided for pupils to revisit what they have learned in the past. Consequently, pupils can recall learning from previous lessons and previous sequences of lessons. Some pupils, for example, told inspectors how their lessons in shape, space, and measurement in mathematics had helped them in the current lesson about polygons.

Working with parents and different services to understand the needs of pupils is a strength. Specialists, including speech and language, occupational and play therapists, provide timely advice and intervention. In most cases, resulting plans are swiftly put into place. For example, inspectors saw pupils access sensory swings or ear defenders to help them regulate their emotions and attend to learning. However, some of these plans are not consistently implemented, meaning that some pupils struggle to engage and focus on learning.

Generally, staff skilfully support pupils to learn new skills and knowledge. When needed, they move more-able pupils on to allow them to apply that knowledge in well-thought-out tasks. However, at times, staff do not support pupils to move quickly enough onto tasks to practice and develop their learning. This slows learning and limits how much pupils get from each lesson.

Communication is rightly a priority. Some staff are skilled in using the school's preferred communication systems and carefully use only the right number of words so as not to overload the pupil's receptive and processing skills. Inspectors observed some staff using pictures or symbol exchanges for pupils to request different food during the start of the day shared breakfast. However, at times, staff are inconsistent with how they use signing or symbols and can use too many words. This confuses pupils and makes learning harder.

Reading has a very high profile in the school. Those pupils who are ready to learn phonics do so quickly. Pupils are proud of their roles as reading champions or librarians. Eddie, the reading champion dog, regularly visits the school to provide an eager audience for young readers. However, for those pupils who are not yet ready to access phonics, lessons do not always provide opportunities to develop pre-reading skills, such as listening for sounds in the environment or developing attention.

Pupils are happy to come to school, and smiles and excitement are common at the beginning of the day. There are very few cases where pupils do not attend school enough. When this is the case, staff works closely with families to put the right support in place for their child to attend more.

The school has carefully considered what pupils need to be ready for the world around them. Lessons, trips, and school clubs combine to broaden pupils' life experiences. Sometimes, staff act on what pupils want for their lives. For example, inspectors spoke to aspiring actors who had additional opportunities to perform in school. However, sometimes, pupils' voices are not routinely captured and acted upon when designing the opportunities and experiences for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum for pupils who are not yet ready to access phonics and early reading is in the early stages of development. This limits how effectively some pupils share experiences around books, identify sounds in the environment or

recognise that pictures and words can communicate meaning. The school needs to ensure that the curriculum for pre-reading is well implemented in all classes so that more pupils can learn to find enjoyment and meaning from words and books.

- In some cases, teaching staff do not always adapt the curriculum to the individual SEND of the pupils and how they learn best. While the school knows the needs of the pupils well and has clearly defined plans for all pupils, there is some variability for some pupils in how well these plans are implemented. The school needs to ensure that the curriculum implementation is always well adapted to the different additional needs of the pupils in order to maximise their learning.
- What is important to the pupil is not always routinely captured and acted upon when considering the provision that is made for them. This means that the support they get or the opportunities for them to develop their hobbies or interests are limited. The school needs to ensure that they routinely capture and act on the voice of all pupils when identifying the provision they are making for them in school, and to help pupils to develop their own interests and hobbies.

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

Unique reference number	144208
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10327723
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
Headteacher	Laura Slinn (executive headteacher)
Website	www.cherrytreesschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 May 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last monitoring visit in May 2023, there has been significant building work at the school. This includes extensions and refurbishment to some classes, including the early years classroom.
- The school does not currently use any form of registered or unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, and personal, social, health and economic education. In these subjects, they visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, and talked with pupils and staff about how these subjects were taught. Inspectors also looked at other subjects in less detail to check how they were planned and taught.
- Inspectors observed informal times to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- During the inspection, the inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject teachers, governing body members, the board of trustees, and pupils. They also talked informally with parents, carers, pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- An inspector also spoke with representatives of the multi-academy trust.

Inspection team

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Chris Stevens

His Majesty's Inspector

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