

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Cherry Garden School

41 Bellenden Road, London SE15 5BB

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 December 2024

Outcome

Cherry Garden School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Cherry Garden School receive the highest quality of care and education. No stone is left unturned to ensure that pupils' physical, emotional or developmental needs are met in full. Whatever these needs, staff work effectively to enable pupils to succeed. The school's high expectations help pupils to achieve the very best outcomes.

One of the strongest aspects of the school is the relationships with pupils and their parents and carers. These highly positive relationships are one of the school's cornerstones of its success. They help to ensure that behaviour is impeccable. In addition, adapting how the curriculum is taught to meet each pupil's individual needs is the essence of the school's provision.

Pupils receive this high-quality education because the curriculum is carefully designed. Pupils benefit from expert teaching and strong links with their families. This has a positive impact on pupils' outcomes and happiness. Pupils enjoy school a great deal.

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

Three factors single Cherry Garden out as exceptional: the first-class education that pupils receive, the high quality of care and support that the school provides, and the outreach work with local schools. The school goes the extra mile to bring all these together effectively. This is what helps to ensure that each pupil's needs are met in full.

The school's first-class education is the result of the carefully devised and executed curriculum, including in the early years. Its success is based on two intertwined and

equally important factors: structure and flexibility. The curriculum sets out what pupils are to learn in each of the three 'pathways'. Each of these is matched to pupils' broad developmental needs. However, staff use these pathways flexibly and adapt their teaching to meet pupils' specific, and often significant, developmental needs. This flexibility and adaptability are key reasons for the school's, and pupils', success.

This approach is exemplified by the school's absolute commitment to enabling all pupils to communicate effectively. This begins in the early years, where children learn classroom routines. For some pupils, communication is through pictures or sign language. Where appropriate, there is a clear focus on teaching early reading to the youngest pupils, as well as those who are older. Staff teach the school's phonics programme skilfully. Where pupils' developmental needs allow, they become increasingly assured readers as they get older. The school's aim to make everyone a reader is achieved most effectively.

The curriculum is enhanced well by opportunities to visit, for example, the local library and swimming pool. These give pupils experience of the wider world, including learning how to cross roads safely, for example. Learning how to choose and borrow books from the local library not only supports their reading but also helps to prepare pupils for secondary school.

The excellent care and support given to all pupils is another cornerstone of the school's exceptional provision. Staff know their pupils, and their families, extremely well. They know what makes pupils tick and how to engage them in learning. Staff are expert in getting the best out of each pupil, in promoting their independence and in keeping families in the loop. During the inspection, this was illustrated most effectively by pupils' end-of-term shows. Everyone was involved in these moving celebrations of pupils' achievements.

All staff play their part in the leadership of Cherry Garden. High expectations are the norm. This includes the commitment to improvement. Everything the school does is reviewed to ensure that it has maximum impact on pupils' achievements. This work is ably assisted by governors, who support and challenge the school in equal measure.

The school shares its work with others and contributes much to the local authority's approach to provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is part of the reason why there is a constant push to make sure the school does the very best for each pupil and that this benefits the wider community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in June 2015.

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	100881
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10345695
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Felicia Hughes
Headteacher	Kelly Hawker
Website	www.cherrygarden.southwark.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Currently, the school does not have any children aged two on roll.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school operates an outreach service for local mainstream primary schools.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning where appropriate and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector observed a planned visit to the local library with a small group of pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteachers. Inspectors also met with teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors met with the chair of governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, including parents' written comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jonathan Newby

Ofsted Inspector

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