

Cherry Trees School

Giggety Lane, Wombourne, Wolverhampton, WV5 0AX

Inspection dates 14–15 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- All aspects of the school's work are outstanding and have improved since the last inspection. This is because the whole-school community is committed to the shared vision of 'working, learning and achieving together' so that everyone can do the best they possibly can.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are extremely skilled. They work highly effectively in class teams to find imaginative ways to help pupils learn. They very quickly discover pupils' talents and build on these, so that everyone can experience success.
- Staff develop caring and highly supportive relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils feel very safe and behave exceptionally well.
- Children get off to an excellent start in the early years provision. They quickly become familiar with the routines which cue them into the changes in the day and begin to develop the skills they need to learn. Opportunities for outdoor learning are not fully accessible throughout the year.
- The executive headteacher and acting head of school rigorously monitor and evaluate the pupils' progress and how well teaching is promoting this.
- Achievement is outstanding because all staff have high expectations and aspirations for every pupil and set them challenging targets. They ensure that all pupils make at least good progress and many make outstanding progress in their academic, personal and social development.
- Parents are full of praise for what the school has done for their child. As one stated, 'The best progress for me is that my child is happy, so I cannot praise the staff enough for their genuine care and concern as he is now flourishing in the wonderful nurturing environment.'
- Governors are very well informed about the pupils' progress and teaching standards. They have made a strong contribution to the improvements made since the last inspection. The governing body provides an excellent level of support and challenge to the school's leaders.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed all teachers jointly with a senior leader. They visited eight lessons together. This enabled the inspector to see how teaching staff provided for pupils with different types of learning difficulties.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work and heard a small number of pupils reading. She also had a meeting with three pupils to talk about their work and their experiences of school. Informal discussions with pupils also took place during visits to the classrooms.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, acting head of school, the teaching staff and three members of the governing body. The inspector also had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation summary and school development plan, safeguarding policies, records of behaviour, reports to governors, attendance figures, information about children's progress in the early years provision, pupils' progress over time and the monitoring of teachers' performance records.
- Twelve responses to Parent View (the online questionnaire for parents) were considered, alongside the school's own parental survey and a letter sent in by a parent. The inspector also took into account 16 completed staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Lynda Walker, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cherry Trees School is a generic primary special school situated in South Staffordshire in the large village of Wombourne. It is federated with Wightwick Hall School. The majority of Cherry Trees' pupils move onto Wightwick Hall at the time of secondary transfer. An executive headteacher leads both schools and they share the same governing body.
- The school currently caters for 26 pupils, all of whom have been identified as having moderate or severe learning difficulties. Pupils' needs are often complex, including many with communication difficulties or medical needs. Approximately 30% of the pupils have autistic spectrum disorder and this proportion is rising steadily. A few pupils also have additional behavioural difficulties.
- All pupils have a statement of their special educational needs except for a few of the very youngest children who are currently going through the process of having an education, health and care plan drawn up. Each pupil also has a 'My Aspirational Plan (MAP)' which ensures that each pupil's educational needs are identified and reviewed on a termly basis.
- Approximately 50% of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for disadvantaged children. This is above the national average.
- The majority of pupils are White British. There are three times as many boys as girls, which is typical for small special schools of this type. At the time of the inspection there were three children in the early years provision, all attending full time.
- Pupils enter the school at any point in their primary or early years education and often during the course, rather than at the beginning, of an academic year.
- The executive headteacher is a Director of the Staffordshire Special Schools Company which comprises of 23 special schools across Staffordshire. These schools work in close partnership to provide training and network opportunities for its staff.
- The school has been awarded Dyslexic Friendly Status and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the opportunities for children in the early years provision to play and explore outside the classroom throughout the year by improving the outdoor facilities available to them.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The executive headteacher has created a learning culture in the school whereby everyone has high aspirations for the academic, social and personal development of every pupil and there is a real sense of shared responsibility. Senior leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, administrative staff, the site manager and governors all work together as a team to ensure every aspect of the school's work is of the highest quality and secures pupils' outstanding wellbeing and achievement.
- Every teacher takes responsibility for the leadership of a subject or aspect of the school's work. They demonstrate pride in doing this, benefiting from and valuing the strong senior leadership support given so that they lead their subjects confidently and extremely well. All policies and procedures are established jointly with the staff from Wightwick Hall School. This means that pupils and staff benefit from sharing good practice, and the consistent approaches operate across both sites. It enables a very smooth transition for the pupils when they move onto their secondary placement.
- The leadership of the early years provision is very effective and the curriculum is organised very successfully to meet the needs of Reception-aged children and those in Years 1 and 2. This provides extremely well for children's communication and early literacy needs, as well as their numeracy and personal development. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the new national curriculum programmes of study have been adapted extremely well. Pupils have a balanced programme which emphasises communication, literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and enables them to achieve very well and ensures their individual special educational needs are very well met. Work-based skills are introduced at a very early stage through a range of enterprise activities through which pupils learn the importance of taking on leadership responsibilities and being part of a team. Pupils told the inspector how much they enjoyed working in the tuck shop.
- The school has a very accurate view of its many strengths and areas that could be improved further. Teachers carry out a comprehensive self-evaluation every year (referred to as a 20/20 review) of the subjects or areas they have responsibility for, and these contribute very well to the high quality school development planning.
- Highly effective monitoring of teaching, planning and assessment procedures provides clear evidence of the leaderships determination to constantly improve the already very high quality of teaching and learning. Such monitoring underpins the very strong arrangements for managing the performance of teachers which is clearly linked to the national teaching standards, pupils' achievement and progress.
- The strong emphasis on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in the wide range of visits and very well-thought-out assemblies. Pupils experience great enjoyment and have excellent opportunities for reflection and the celebration of success. British values are an integral part of the school's ethos and culture. All pupils have the opportunity to take an active role in the school leadership groups which encourage them to make choices, value themselves and recognise their own abilities and challenges.
- The study of different faiths and cultures in lessons and assemblies ensures that there is no discrimination of any kind. Equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school's work, and this is reflected in the consistently high achievement of all groups of pupils, including the most and least able. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls. The school actively celebrates the worth and individuality of every member of the school community and takes care to ensure that each has the resources and the experiences that they need to do their best.
- The school makes good use of the primary physical education and sport funding to provide qualified coaches in football, golf, dance and multi-sports. These benefit pupils' participation in and enjoyment of physical activity, and are successfully developing the skills and knowledge of staff. Pupils have also travelled to different venues to take part in special school sporting events. Pupils are proud to demonstrate the new skills they have acquired as a result of this and, for example, the new equipment purchased in swimming.

- The school has used the pupil premium funding very effectively to provide additional literacy and numeracy support for eligible pupils. This has enabled them to make the same excellent progress as their classmates.
- There are strong partnerships with health professionals, such as the school nurse, speech and language therapists, and social services teams. Together with equally strong links with parents, these greatly benefit pupils' learning and wellbeing.
- Safeguarding is promoted exceptionally well. Checks made on the suitability of staff and visitors to work with children are rigorous. All staff are fully up-to-date with training in child protection and the management of behaviour. Robust checks are made on any potential risks and staff are vigilant in the supervision of pupils at all times during the day.
- The local authority has full confidence in the school's leadership and maintains a light touch overview of the provision because of the school's very high quality self-evaluation and improvement strategies. The executive headteacher works closely with the local authority to influence the strategic development of provision for pupils with special educational needs across the county.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are very skilled and experienced. They have a very clear understanding of the part they play in determining the strategic direction of the school. Governors have a detailed view of what is going on in school through a regular programme of focused visits where they link up with specific staff. Governors have a clear understanding of how the school promotes tolerance and prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. They place great value on promoting pupils' understanding of democracy, human values and consideration for others.
- Governors are fully aware of the links between teachers' performance and their pay, and the procedures for improving teaching. They are very well informed as to the quality of teaching and how it is reflected in learning. They set challenging targets for the headteacher and these are monitored very closely. Governors have a very good understanding of pupils' progress and other data, and challenge the school effectively.
- Governors have attended a good range of relevant training courses to help them to fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively. They have ensured that all safeguarding measures are in place and that health and safety procedures are being adhered to. Effective management of finances means that money is very well spent to enrich pupils' learning, including the specific use of the pupil premium and primary physical education and sport funding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. This is reflected in their behaviour in classrooms and around the school, the way in which they present their work and in their eagerness to take part in lessons. Exclusions of any kind are extremely rare. The school effectively monitors and celebrates good attendance, and this is now above the national average.
- All adults working in the classroom create a very positive atmosphere for learning and manage pupils' behaviour exceptionally well. This was seen in lessons and in the school's monitoring records of behaviour over time. Staff are exemplary role models and implement the behaviour policy consistently across the school. As a result, those pupils with challenging behaviours make outstanding progress in gaining self-control and re-engaging in learning in a very short space of time. Any kind of disruption is extremely rare. In the few incidents where any physical intervention is required, the school documentation is exceptionally thorough. Incidents are recorded in detail and there is clear information on any actions taken.
- Pupils spoken with were adamant that bullying of any kind is non-existent. They told the inspector that sometimes some children were 'a bit silly in class' and so would not get a merit, but that everyone was friendly and they all helped each other.

- The school is a calm and supportive environment in which individual achievements are shared and celebrated during assemblies and throughout the school day. Pupils are genuinely pleased to acknowledge the success of others. They have excellent relationships with adults and show kindness and respect to each other. They are confident to go to any member of staff if they are worried about anything.
- Daily routines are very well established across the school and help pupils to feel safe and secure. Children in the early years provision are very quickly helped to understand the expectations for their behaviour. Throughout the school, pupils respond very positively to the use of praise and encouragement. Pupils' outstanding behaviour contributes very strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they build self-esteem and develop relationships with others. They become very reflective about how well they are doing and how they can improve further.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The high quality care and support the school offers ensures that pupils feel very safe and have trusting relationships with the staff. As pupils get older and develop greater independence, the school does all it can to make them aware of how to keep themselves safe.
- Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous and robust. The school conducts thorough risk assessments for activities that take place both on and off the school site, and ensures that pupils all learn about using computers safely. The inspector observed pupils in Key Stage 1 being reminded about only using programmes that were age-appropriate and the teacher checking that they understood what this meant. Pupils spoken to were able to tell the inspector about the dangers of using social networking sites.
- Pupils also said that they feel very safe in school because everyone is friendly and helpful. They recall that the staff teach them about what to do if there is a fire in school and how they can keep themselves safe in the swimming pool.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- In all classrooms, teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together. They know their pupils extremely well and are able to build on their strengths and interests to motivate and engage them in learning. As a result, every pupil is challenged to achieve even more and very well supported towards this. Adults ensure that every child is given the opportunity to succeed and feel good about themselves. As one pupil commented, 'I couldn't read and write properly at my last school but now I can because the teachers understand me!'
- Lesson planning is extremely thorough, making full use of the detailed information that teachers and teaching assistants have on the current achievement of each pupil. There is a constant focus on supporting every pupil to achieve the challenging targets that are set for them.
- Work in pupils' books, photographic evidence of their annotated work, the school's progress data and visits to observe learning in classrooms show that the impact of teaching over time is outstanding for all year groups, including the youngest children. Samples of work from every class showed that work was set at exactly the right level of challenge for each pupil and comments on the work accurately identified the next steps for learning. Across the school, pupils are given very good written and verbal feedback which allows them to know how to improve their work further.
- A very strong emphasis on communication, literacy and numeracy across all subjects is evident both in planning and practice. Teachers and teaching assistants use signing to enable those with poorly developed communication skills to communicate effectively. In all classrooms, visual timetables are displayed and all pupils, in particular those with an autistic spectrum disorder and communication difficulties, benefit from the use of these and from pictures and symbols.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is a real strength, as teachers' skills in this area are very effective. As a result, pupils' reading skills have improved. This in turn allows them to build on their skills in other areas.

- All pupils from the early years to Year 6 are provided with numerous opportunities to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to a range of activities across the curriculum. For example, in an art lesson, pupils were estimating the amount of black or white paint they needed to add to a colour to make it a lighter or darker shade.
- Lessons are very interesting and enjoyable and take place in environments that are inviting, extremely well organised and resourced. Teachers use questioning extremely well to check and build on what pupils already know as well as their understanding in lessons. They are expert at helping pupils to develop their thinking and reasoning skills so that they all make gains in their knowledge and understanding.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- School staff work closely together and are skilled at identifying and meeting pupils' needs. As a result, pupils who arrive at different times during their primary school years make good and often better progress from their wide variety of starting points.
- Leaders carefully track the progress of individual pupils and the different groups within the school. Although cohorts are small and variable, the school compares the progress made by pupils to those nationally who have similar starting points. This shows that progress is outstanding in all parts of the school, including for those who have autistic spectrum disorder or behavioural difficulties.
- Assessment focuses very much on the progress pupils make against their individual targets (MAP). The removal of national curriculum levels has had little impact on the school, as the majority of the pupils are working at P levels (performance scales for pupils with special educational needs who are working below national curriculum levels). The careful analyses of assessment information ensures that, if any pupil is at risk of not progressing as expected, this is swiftly recognised and additional help quickly put in place.
- Pupils make exceptional and rapid progress in their communication and literacy skills. The school's detailed curriculum planning ensures that these skills are practised throughout the day in all aspects of learning. Children in the early years provision make particularly strong progress in this area and in the ways in which they cooperate with and listen to adults, often from very low starting points. This sets them up very well for learning. Older pupils continue this consistent progress because of the very skilled teaching.
- Pupils quickly learn to recognise and use symbols, and then letters and words, through the well-organised and monitored provision for teaching reading and writing. More-able pupils read with confidence and fluency, and understand the text. They produce extended pieces of writing related to the books they have read. Less-able pupils learn how to break down new words and work on understanding print in a range of situations in school and in the community.
- Strong progress in numeracy is shown by the pupils' growing confidence in matching objects and recognising numbers and, later, in their counting, adding and subtracting skills. Numeracy is taught in very practical ways which means that pupils learn to apply these skills in everyday situations that are meaningful for them, for example when buying and selling goods in the tuck shop.
- Children in the early years provision make outstanding progress and particularly so in communication, physical development and simple problem-solving in numeracy. Children learn quickly to take turns, to explore, to make simple choices and request activities.
- The school's strong focus on developing pupils' personal skills and independence has been a significant factor in getting them to enjoy their learning and giving them the confidence to participate in lessons and group activities. These skills contribute significantly to their ability to make outstanding progress in lessons.
- Pupils who are receiving extra support through the pupil premium funded activities are making excellent progress in their reading, literacy and numeracy skills because of the individual attention they are receiving.

The early years provision**is outstanding**

- The leadership and management of the early years are outstanding. Staff have very thorough systems for assessing what children can do when they join the school and for tracking progress. Home visits and close work with parents and other agencies mean that children's needs are identified as precisely as possible. Staff regularly observe and record information about children's development and use this to plan future activities that meet their individual needs.
- Children settle very quickly into the early years and develop their confidence as learners. At the time of the inspection, some children had only just joined the school but they readily took part in activities because the staff had very quickly made them feel safe.
- Children make excellent progress, especially in language, communication, and personal and social development. Children gain in confidence by seeking out things that they particularly like playing with and are beginning to make choices, for instance between two different toys. Children learn to use objects, pictures and symbols to express themselves. They learn about numbers through counting songs and about measures through filling and emptying containers. They do puzzles and start to identify colours and shapes.
- Children enjoy stories and some can say what they think will happen next. They have plenty of opportunity to make marks and learn about cause and effect, for instance by playing with musical instruments or using a touch screen.
- There are lots of opportunities for children to develop further their physical and creative skills in the well resourced outdoor playgrounds. The school is exploring ways of improving these areas so that they can be used in all weather conditions to enrich teaching and learning.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124516
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	447882

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	26
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Graham Peebles
Executive Headteacher	Paul Elliott
Date of previous school inspection	21 March 2012
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