

Cherry Garden School

Macks Road, London, SE16 3XU

Inspection dates 4–5 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Teaching is consistently outstanding throughout the school. Teachers and other adults support the pupils exceptionally well in activities which are very carefully tailored to their learning needs and abilities.
- Adults continually check on the pupils' understanding in lessons. Children receive a very high level of individual support. Adults ensure the pupils make the best progress that they can. There are very high expectations of each pupil's achievement.
- Adults make excellent use of communication aids to remove barriers to pupils' understanding. Adults know their pupils very well and skilfully adapt learning to ensure each pupil retains concentration and motivation.
- Teachers and other adults keep exemplary records of each small step in progress that the pupils make. As a result, they are able to plan very specific learning experiences for each child to promote their rapid progress.
- The pupils enjoy their learning because it is so well adapted to their individual needs and interests. All the pupils have an equal opportunity to achieve as well as they can.
- Pupils throughout the school, including in early years provision, make outstanding academic progress. Their progress is much more rapid than found in most similar schools and has improved consistently since the already high standards seen at the previous inspection.
- The pupils also make outstanding progress, throughout the school, including early years, in their communication, in development of early literacy and numeracy skills and in their personal development.
- Pupils are relaxed and happy learners. Their behaviour is excellent. It is exceptionally well managed by adults who ensure that relationships with staff and other pupils are warm and positive.
- The pupils feel safe and secure. Parents and carers confirm this. The pupils' attendance is above average and high for the type of school.
- The experience and commitment of the headteacher have enabled her over many years to maintain the highest standards. She has managed the development of a very competent senior team.
- Governors have a detailed knowledge of the school's work. They provide a high level of informed challenge to the school's leaders in ensuring that standards continue to rise.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils learning in seven lessons, all of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents in annual school surveys. There were too few responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, to be included. The 37 responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including self-evaluation and forward planning. Records of pupils' progress and achievement were looked at as well as monitoring reports on the quality of teaching and the range of subjects provided. Pupils' attendance records were analysed as were all procedures relating to the safeguarding of the children.

Inspection team

Melvyn Blackband, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties. All the pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- About a quarter of pupils are girls.
- A much higher than average proportion of pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding, granted for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after
- A much higher than average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly Black African. A third of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Children in early years provision attend on a full-time basis.
- The headteacher was in post at the time of the previous inspection.
- The school operates an outreach service for local mainstream primary schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Simplify the presentation of assessments of the pupils' progress so that their achievement can be demonstrated more clearly.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has displayed a strong and uncompromising commitment over many years to ensure the highest quality of teaching and the best provision possible for the pupils. Able and enthusiastic senior staff support her.
- Subject leaders continually and very effectively check on how each pupil is doing and how successfully the pupils' learning experiences have been adapted to ensure they make the best progress possible. The leadership of early years provision has ensured that the children achieve very well and are well prepared for future learning.
- The local authority maintains a 'light-touch' approach to the school. Officers from the local authority are appreciative of the school's contribution to outreach provision in local mainstream schools and the effectiveness of specialised training which senior staff deliver to teachers in other schools. The continuing success of the school has not diminished the drive of senior leaders, governors and staff to maintain and improve on the rates of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. There is thus an outstanding capacity to maintain improvements.
- Class teachers and subject leaders maintain an exceptionally detailed record of the progress of each pupil. As a result, pupils are consistently challenged to achieve as well as they are able. Should a child falter in making progress, adults examine each aspect of the learning process to provide even more focused support and appropriate changes to the pupil's activities. The equal opportunity of every child to achieve as well as possible is at the heart of the school's work. There is no discrimination.
- The overall assessment and measurement of pupils' progress are extremely detailed and thorough and senior staff use these very effectively in planning provision. The data produced, because of their great detail, are overly complex, and this makes it more time consuming than it need be in demonstrating the pupils' outstanding progress.
- The quality of teaching continues to improve from already high standards because senior staff rigorously and regularly monitor the performance of each teacher. Teachers are made clearly aware of the high standards expected and that they are accountable for the progress of their pupils. They are fully aware that pay awards are linked to their performance.
- Adults have excellent opportunities to enhance their skills through the high levels of training. Adults report their enthusiasm for the school's work and their place in it and appreciate the support they receive to increase their skills. There is very good morale in the school.
- The pupils' learning activities are exceptionally well adapted for each pupil. All the pupils have very detailed and tailored learning plans which are monitored for their effectiveness at every stage of the pupils' learning. Teachers make excellent and consistent use of communication aids, such as symbols, to reinforce the pupils' language development. This is further developed by the thoughtful and sensitive use of sensory experiences for pupils with complex needs. As a result, pupils enjoy school; they concentrate for relatively long periods and make outstanding progress.
- Communication through sensory work, symbols or carefully structured adult speech is the core of the school's work and is a major element of all learning. For the most able pupils, this can lead eventually on to the recognition of the shapes and sounds of letters. The pupils make excellent progress in learning to communicate. In all lessons also, the pupils' numeracy skills are well promoted through matching, shape recognition and sometimes counting. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress in the early stages of English and mathematics.
- Additional government sports funding has been used well to provide extra equipment, such as trampolines, and to fund staff training. Pupils have excellent opportunities to take part in lunchtime physical activity and to join other special schools in sporting experiences.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to go into the community through visits to places of interest. An artist in residence has produced a high standard of creative work with several classes. The pupils learn over time to respect and value other pupils and adults from different cultures. The school successfully helps pupils to develop their understanding of the rights of others and to take their place in modern Britain. The curriculum has a very positive impact on the pupils' academic and physical development and their personal development. It contributes very well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has used additional funding successfully for disadvantaged pupils to enhance resources in communication. This has helped to secure excellent progress for them. There are no differences in their progress compared to other pupils.
- The school effectively communicates with and supports parents. Parents report that they think highly of

the school's work, particularly how they are valued as partners in their child's development. The quality of communication ensures that parents are made fully aware of the school's work with their child and how they can enhance this at home.

- The school's work to safeguard pupils is outstanding and very well organised and fully meets statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very well informed and have an excellent understanding of information on pupils' progress, how it compares with that in similar schools, and the management of teachers' performance. They effectively oversee financial control, including the salary arrangements for teaching. They maintain close supervision of additional government funding and regularly check the impact on the pupils' progress and well-being. Governors are able to challenge school leaders very effectively. They take part in regular training, such as in aspects of child protection and safeguarding and in the use of performance information on pupils' progress. They ensure that current statutory requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They enjoy school, come in each morning with broad smiles and look forward to their activities. They have very positive attitudes to their learning across all parts of their school day. This has a very strong impact on their progress in lessons.
- Pupils have warm and trusting relationships with adults who help them. Their activities are exceptionally well matched to their interests and abilities. As a result, the pupils enjoy their learning and are confident that a trusted adult will help them if necessary. Their confidence, motivation and levels of concentration are thus enhanced very well and this has a significant effect on their outstanding progress.
- Adults manage behaviour very effectively. Pupils are very well known to the adults who work with them, and because relationships are so strong, learning almost always proceeds calmly and harmoniously. On occasions where pupils become distressed, there are consistent procedures to calm and reassure them, always individualised for each child. Adults are thoroughly trained in de-escalation techniques. Teachers immediately examine the causes for any distress in great detail and quickly adapt strategies to enable pupils to relax and resume effective learning.
- Teachers maintain detailed records on each pupil's learning styles and likes and dislikes and any likely triggers for confusion or distress. The school's records show consistently decreasing numbers of incidents as adults get to know pupils and how best to help them.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Safeguarding arrangements are effective and procedures well organised.
- Pupils feel safe and secure due to the high quality of their relationships with adults. Bullying is unknown in the school because pupils are always very well supervised. Over time through the continual interaction with adults and other children, the pupils learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Adults provide excellent role models. Parents confirm that their children love school. Their attendance is above average.
- The many visits into the community teach the pupils to behave appropriately and keep safe in different situations

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Much of the teaching is outstanding and never less than consistently good. There has been steady improvement from the already high standards found in the previous inspection. This is due to the rigorous effective checks by senior staff and subject leaders and high-quality, regular training to enhance teachers' skills. Much of the training is targeted on improving elements of performance identified through the careful monitoring of the quality of teaching.
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' progress. This contributes very successfully to the excellent achievement of all groups, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those for whom English is an additional language. Because of the high expectations, all the pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and the most able, achieve well. Teaching in the early years provision is outstanding.

- A particular strength of teaching is found in the precisely focused learning activities which teachers create for each individual pupil. There is a very high level of adult support for each pupil and this helps ensure that the pupils learn, often rapidly, in very small individual steps.
- Adults have a detailed knowledge of the pupils' abilities and progress and how best to help them learn. They quickly adapt the pupils' learning and provide extra support if necessary, anticipating where they may need to intervene. The adults are very skilled in using communication aids to reinforce the pupils' understanding, and to promote their communication in a wide variety of activities.
- As a result, pupils learn to communicate very effectively. Adults ensure this leads on to basic literacy and numeracy skills where pupils learn the shapes and sounds of letters. They are encouraged through patient teaching to make marks and eventually write letter shapes and sometimes their name. Teachers make sure that all activities reinforce basic skills and as a result, pupils make outstanding progress in English and mathematics.
- The high quality of individual learning activities is underpinned by detailed recording of each small step in progress. Adults keep minutely detailed records of the pupils' performance in each lesson and teachers make excellent use of them to plan precisely for the next small steps. This process has a very significant impact on the pupils' motivation and enjoyment, and promotes their rapid progress.
- The pupils are always made aware of when they have finished tasks and what they will do next. They are continually helped to understand how well they have done and what they could do to improve further.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The attainment of pupils remains low because of their significant, complex learning difficulties. However, their progress is outstanding and for the overwhelming majority is far more rapid than that seen in similar schools. There has been consistent improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Children in early years provision make outstanding progress through excellent teaching and high levels of skilled support.
- Pupils make excellent progress towards challenging individual targets. They make significant progress in their communication, early literacy skills and in their appreciation and use of numbers. For instance, in a lesson for younger pupils in Years 1 to 3, a pupil worked with support and made excellent progress in matching shapes and in learning to count to three.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make excellent progress because of the school's outstanding procedures to teach communication skills. The high quality of teaching and precisely focused learning activities ensure that disadvantaged pupils, a large majority in the school, make similar progress to other pupils nationally.
- The most able pupils are challenged successfully by the high expectations of their teachers and their individualised activities to do as well as they can. Some of these pupils learn to count competently, to recognise simple words and how to use basic phonics (letters and the sounds they make) to read and copy letter shapes.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- The children quickly settle into school and make excellent progress from their starting points, particularly in their communication and personal development. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- All groups of pupils achieve well, including the most able, those from minority groups, those who may speak English as an additional language and those eligible for additional funding.
- Adults quickly get to know the children and how best to help them learn. All children have very carefully adapted learning plans and individualised activities which are precisely focused on their needs and interests.
- The children receive a very high level of individual support from well-trained adults who effectively help to promote and extend the children's confidence with communication. The children experience a rich and exciting curriculum, making full use of indoor and outdoor resources.
- Teaching is outstanding because adults are extremely responsive to the individual needs of the children. Each pupil is stretched by interesting but challenging activities. Adults have high expectations of the children's progress. As a result, children maintain their interest and concentration well. They enjoy

activities and quickly learn how to behave well and form excellent relationships with their teachers.

- Adults maintain exceptionally detailed records of how well children are making progress. This enables teachers consistently and effectively to reshape the children’s learning to make sure they achieve extremely well.
- The children are very safe and secure. Safeguarding arrangements are robust. The provision is secure and very well supervised. All activities are effectively assessed for potential risk.
- There are excellent relationships with parents, who are welcomed into the classrooms. They feel valued in helping their child to make progress, because they are encouraged through workshops and regular communication with teachers to practise and reinforce the school’s work.
- The provision is led very well. The children make outstanding progress because of excellent teaching, precisely focused learning activities and high levels of care and support.

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	100881
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	448129

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	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Morton
Headteacher	Ms Teresa Neary
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 May 2010
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