

Cherry Garden School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 100881 |
| Local Authority | Southwark |
| Inspection number | 335612 |
| Inspection dates | 24–25 May 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Mike Kell |

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

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|--|-------------------------------------|
| 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 | 44 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Roy Mincoff |
| Headteacher | Teresa Neary |
| Date of previous school inspection | 22 May 2007 |
| School address | Macks Road London SE16 3XU |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector spent the majority of his time observing learning and observed seven lessons, involving different teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, outreach adviser, vice-chair of the governing body and therapists. Conversations were also had with parents and carers who visited the school. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, such as assessment information, improvement planning and monitoring records. The 19 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed, as were the 14 completed by staff.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- assessment procedures, including the use of photographic evidence
- the criteria that the school uses to measure and evaluate pupils' progress and achievements
- the impact of the school's outreach provision in contributing to the promotion of community cohesion
- the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the school.

Information about the school

All of the pupils have severe and complex learning difficulties, and in many cases this involves complex medical needs. They all have a statement of special educational needs. Pupils come from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds. Almost two thirds of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Boys account for about two thirds of learners.

There have been a number of staff changes since the previous inspection, including at a senior level. The school has also established an outreach provision since then, which involves supporting local mainstream schools in their work with children with communication difficulties. The school was awarded a Leading Aspect Award in 2008 for the quality of its child-centred curriculum. It has also achieved an Active Mark and Artsmark Gold as well as acquiring Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Cherry Garden School does outstanding work. Its Early Years Foundation Stage is an excellent facility. Children flourish from the moment that they enter the school because they are in a stimulating and vibrant environment. The key to the school's success lies in its meticulous attention to detail. Nothing is left to chance as equality of opportunity underpins all of the school's work. Intricate and detailed assessment procedures give staff detailed pictures of every pupil's personal and learning needs. This profile is used as the checklist for ensuring that the school provides for each of these needs, which it does exceptionally well. Consequently, pupils make excellent progress in their personal development and in their learning, even though attainment is low because of the severity of their learning needs.

The excellent quality of education is rooted in very effective teamwork and is guided by the vision that communication is at the heart of everything. Care, guidance and support are exemplary and pupils are always treated with respect and dignity. Therefore, pupils are given every opportunity to learn as communication channels open up and they feel at ease with themselves as staff manage their intimate personal needs so very well. Safeguarding procedures were very secure at the time of the inspection. Pupils are well taught. Their communication needs are met exceptionally well through a variety of approaches, but behaviour management strategies are not always applied so consistently. The outstanding curriculum is rich and varied. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used extensively.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Leaders managed the recent staff changes extremely well. The school's holistic approach to learning relies heavily on a refined range of assessments, especially relating to communication. New staff cannot ease into such sophisticated systems without significant support from school leaders. They set very high expectations and work very successfully in helping new staff to meet the challenges. A dimension of assessment that is less polished than others relates to determining pupils' academic progress. Too many systems, or elements of systems, are used and so there is not absolute clarity as to how leaders evaluate progress or how they report their findings. The school has forged excellent links with parents and carers and other partners, and it makes a good contribution to promoting community cohesion. The outreach service makes a significant contribution in this respect. Its establishment since the previous inspection illustrates the school's successful track record of change and innovation. This is very likely to continue because leaders remain ambitious, self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate and a good governing body knows how it can become even more effective. These factors, together with the clear commitment of all staff to ensure that pupils receive the best possible education, confirm that there is

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excellent capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more explicit the assessment systems and criteria used to measure pupils' learning in order to evaluate their progress, and report the findings in a clear, simple and unambiguous fashion so that they are easy to interpret.
- Ensure that all pupils' behaviour management plans are implemented and applied consistently.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

All pupils, including those with particularly complex needs, make excellent progress in their learning. Accelerated progress occurs because learning in lessons is good overall and on occasions outstanding. Pupils' achievements are excellent because staff view all the time that a child spends in school as potential learning time. Break and lunchtimes feature exceptionally high quality exchanges between adults and pupils. Staff read stories to pupils, they interact with them when they are involved in symbolic play, such as dressing up, and support them on the trampoline or other outdoor apparatus. Once again, communication is the key; pupils make decisions and show preferences by indicating the activity of their choice from a book of photographs. Pupils make excellent progress in acquiring language, communicating choices and decisions, and in acquiring early reading and writing skills. The most able pupils count, draw patterns and copy their name. They also show developing understanding of cause and effect through ICT, such as by pressing switches to communicate or to build up a jigsaw-type photograph of themselves on a screen.

Pupils make excellent progress in their personal development too, such as in independent work and self-help skills. A lot of smiling goes on and pupils certainly enjoy being at school. Their attendance is above average. Pupils show a very good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy within the context of their learning difficulties. They behave well, although a few are not yet responding to new behaviour management plans. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education as their improved communication competence allows them to show assertiveness and make their feelings known. Their transition to secondary school is also eased by the excellent progress that they show in their ability to function in a community and in their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They become more socially aware, recognise the needs of others, and contribute very well to the school community through carrying out small jobs.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 1 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹ | * |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 1 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 1 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹ | 2 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good, with significant pockets of outstanding practice. Lessons proceed at a good pace and teaching assistants work well with individuals or small groups. Routines are very well established. All staff know what to do and they have the tools and skills that enable them to do it well. They are very adept at using or responding to the excellent range of communication approaches that is in use, such as signing, electronic switches, symbols and the innovative personal gestural dictionaries that give clues as to how to interpret each pupil's movements. Necessary daily medical and/or therapeutic practices sometimes disrupt learning but not unduly so. A number of pupils have behaviour management plans, but the school has recently changed the way in which it implements them and there is not yet consistent practice. Therefore, in a very few instances pupils' behaviours disrupt their own or others' learning. Finely tuned assessment processes, including annotated photographic evidence, record pupils' achievements very well and are used extremely well to support each pupil's next learning activity.

A carefully designed curriculum balances the promotion of literacy and numeracy skills with creative experiences and community-based learning. Educational visits to places like Kew Gardens and HMS Belfast do much to widen pupils' experiences and to extend their horizons, and visitors into school enrich learning. The artist in residence and links with Southwark Playhouse give pupils invaluable insights and promote their spiritual and cultural development extremely well. The biennial residential visit to Devon provides exceptional openings for pupils to participate in outdoor activities. The three strands of provision work in harmony, with no artificial boundaries between one element and

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another because excellent care and support enable every pupil to be included. All staff are involved in some way in pupils' care and well-being and they know their roles very precisely. Each of them understands how their contribution links in with those of others. This coordinated approach to care, guidance and support explains why pupils' personal outcomes are excellent. Collaborative working gives class teams the protocols that they need to manage pupils' everyday needs and to respond to emergencies or unforeseen events.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 1 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 1 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders were instrumental in driving forward developments and in managing change during a transitional period. The well-respected outreach programme shows the school's commitment to supporting inclusive practice by enabling pupils with communication difficulties to succeed in mainstream settings. Initiatives such as this are indicative of the school's good contribution to promoting community cohesion. Other links benefit its own pupils, such as playgroup sessions with children from a neighbouring nursery.

School leaders are supported by a good governing body. Governors have overseen the establishment of very effective safeguarding procedures. They do however realise that they need to build on the recently implemented programme of regular, planned formal visits into school to get first-hand knowledge of the school's work. Currently, they rely mainly on the headteacher's reports. These are thorough and indicate exactly the school's strengths and development areas, informed by rigorous self-evaluation. They also indicate judgements on pupils' progress, but these are not so clearly articulated. While it is appropriate to use different assessment vehicles, the school needs to make it even clearer which ones are being used to judge progress and the criteria that are being applied to give an overall picture of pupils' achievements. They are very well placed to do this and to make further change, with every indication that they will do so successfully.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|---|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 1 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 1 |

| Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms | |
|---|----------|
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 1 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 1 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 1 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is very well led and managed, with embedded systems for planning, observing and assessing children's work. This ensures that the provision runs smoothly and that quality is maintained even during lengthy staff absence. Children get off to a flying start because their needs are determined very quickly. Play-based observations are noted meticulously and so individual learning pathways are very carefully planned. A very good curriculum makes use of outdoor areas and maintains a strong focus on communication and language, personal development, and in many cases physical development. Children learn at a very rapid rate and make excellent progress in skills as varied as turn taking to communicating with symbols.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are very positive about the school, even though some comment about issues that are outside the school's control, such as the amount of speech and language therapy that is available or the condition of the building. The general view is summed up by the parent who said, 'My son has been at the school for one year. He has come along tremendously. He is talking more and doing

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more. He is always excited when he comes home after being at school.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cherry Garden School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 19 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 44 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 14 | 74 | 5 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 14 | 74 | 5 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 11 | 58 | 8 | 42 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 7 | 37 | 12 | 63 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 10 | 53 | 9 | 47 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 5 | 26 | 13 | 68 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 7 | 37 | 12 | 63 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 3 | 16 | 16 | 84 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 9 | 47 | 10 | 53 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 8 | 42 | 11 | 58 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 8 | 42 | 11 | 58 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 10 | 53 | 8 | 42 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 13 | 68 | 6 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

Overall effectiveness of schools

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 51 | 45 | 0 | 4 |
| Primary schools | 6 | 41 | 42 | 10 |
| Secondary schools | 8 | 34 | 44 | 14 |
| Sixth forms | 10 | 37 | 50 | 3 |
| Special schools | 32 | 38 | 25 | 5 |
| Pupil referral units | 12 | 43 | 31 | 14 |
| All schools | 9 | 40 | 40 | 10 |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



26 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cherry Garden School, London SE16 3XU

Thank you for smiling such a lot when I came to see you. It was good to see how much you enjoy being at school. Your school is great. The staff take really good care of you and you do lots of interesting things.

You learn a lot and make excellent progress in your work. You know ever such a lot about how to stay safe and healthy and you behave well in lessons and in the playground. I am very pleased to see that most of you go to school as much as you can. The people who run your school do a very good job. They want to make it even better. I have given them two ideas to help.

- Make sure that they know exactly how well every one of you is doing in your work.
- Help some pupils to behave better.

Finally, thank you once again. I wish all of you the very best of luck for the future, especially if you are going to a new school this year.

Yours sincerely

Mike Kell

Lead inspector

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