A letter from the Headteacher

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome to the Cherry Garden Prospectus. I am proud of the school’s achievements in the past ten years, which were recognised by OFSTED with two consecutive ‘outstanding’ inspections.

The school meets the needs of a range of disabilities: from severe learning disabilities to profound and multiple learning disabilities. Many pupils come from a wide range of ethnic origins, some of whom have English as a second language.

Starting school is a huge step for a young child as they move out into the wider world, and we will work with you to help your child settle as quickly as possible.

For new parents, there is further information available in the ‘welcome pack’, which is shared at the home visit prior to your child starting school. You can also access our website at www.cherrygardenschool.co.uk.

We encourage all prospective parents and children to come and visit the school, meet the staff, ask questions, look at our specialist resources and see the children actively learning.

We look forward to meeting you and working together for the benefit of your child.

Teresa Neary
Headteacher
We aim to Nurture Success by:

- Empowering parents and families
- Promoting active learning within school and the local community
- Supporting the whole child by promoting adult wellbeing
- Providing a sensitive and child-centred learning environment with communication at the forefront
- Providing specialised support for the wider school community
- Promoting professional and respectful attitudes from all

OUR FACILITIES

- Soft play room
- Sensory room
- Sensory garden and adventurous outdoor areas
- 1:1 playrooms
- Eye gaze computer
- Access to hydrotherapy pool
- Indoor and outdoor trampolines for rebound therapy
Classroom Environment

- Well-structured classrooms
- High staff ratio, with a teacher and 3-4 staff in each classroom
- Classes are grouped according to age, type of disability and compatibility within groups
- Most classes have immediate access to defined outdoor play areas, providing focused opportunities for learning

Training & Outreach Support

We provide training for mainstream schools and consultancy. This is highly valued across the borough. We also run a ‘satellite class’ in another mainstream school where pupils attend sessions with their key workers. This has proved very successful in providing additional, targeted support for pupils with severe learning disabilities.

OUR STAFF

There is a strong team approach across the school, with excellent positive working relationships. This team approach includes senior leaders, support staff, teachers, governors, health professionals and volunteers. All staff working with the children are highly trained in a wide range of strategies. There is 100% commitment from all staff to ensure all pupil needs are fully met.
Multi-Agency Team

We work very collaboratively with a wide range of professionals, from health, education and social care, ensuring the best possible support for pupils to achieve their potential.

- School doctor
- School nurse
- School visiting dentist
- CAMHS
- Educational psychologist
- Educational welfare officer
- Children’s disability team (based at Sunshine House)
- Occupational therapist
- Speech & language therapist
- Physiotherapist
- Visual impairment advisory teacher
- Hearing impairment advisory teacher
OUR PUPILS

Range of needs

We cater for pupils aged 2-11 with complex learning difficulties, including pupils with ASD and sensory difficulties.

Safeguarding Procedure

The Headteacher is the designated teacher for Safeguarding. Cherry Garden School follows the Local Authority guidelines for Safeguarding.

A leaflet for parents and carers is included in the school’s ‘welcome pack’.

Any, including suspected, cases of child abuse will be referred to Social Services, including non-accidental injury, physical neglect, emotional and/or sexual abuse. The Southwark Local Authority guidelines are intended to protect children at risk and schools are encouraged to take the attitude that if there are grounds for suspicion, it is better to be safe than sorry. This means that headteachers run the risk of upsetting some parents by reporting a case which, on investigation, proves unfounded. In such circumstances, it is hoped that parents appreciate how difficult it is for headteachers to carry out this delicate responsibility, and accept that the headteacher is acting in what is believed to be in the child’s best interests.
Encouraging Good Behaviour

We recognise the importance of children having control of their own behavior. We have a behaviour management policy that promotes an holistic approach to help children learn to behave appropriately. The school aims to help pupils develop a sense of achievement, value and self-respect, as well as respect for others. All staff use positive behaviour management strategies, such as:

- Rewards
- Reasoning
- Setting clear limits
- Consistency of approach
- Avoiding confrontations
- Distractions
- High expectations of achievement
- Individual behaviour management plans
- Using a range of communicative strategies
Equal Opportunities

At Cherry Garden School, we are committed to promoting Equal Opportunities. We believe that every child has the right to achieve their potential within an environment that respects different cultures, language disabilities, beliefs and family groups. All children, whatever their ability, have access to all areas of the curriculum, which is adapted to meet their individual needs.

All children, both girls and boys, participate actively in all areas of the curriculum.

We live in a diverse society and love to find out about different cultures by celebrating different festivals, and enjoying the food, music and costumes from around the world.

Parents are encouraged to be active partners in the education of their children and all families and children are treated with respect and dignity.

The school offers a bespoke, broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum, including an adapted Foundation stage curriculum.

PARTNERING WITH PARENTS

At Cherry Garden School, we recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents. We have an open door policy, which means that parents are welcome to come at any time to join the class and work with their own child and other members of the group. This needs to be discussed with teachers to ensure the class is on-site at the time of the parental visit.

We have a number of specific activities which parents/carers are welcome to join on a regular basis. For example, there is a range of workshops, social events and whole school activities, such as sports days, festivals and celebrations.

We have two ‘Parent Support Advisors’ who lead workshops on Wednesdays and are available to meet individually with parents.
We really value the knowledge and support parents bring to the school and expect parents to work closely with the school to support their child’s learning at home.

THE CURRICULUM

All children between the ages of 5-11 years have access to a curriculum that focuses on six areas of learning. This curriculum is described as the ‘semi-formal’ curriculum. Speaking and listening is a thread that runs across all subjects given its importance for all children.

As far as is possible, IEP targets are incorporated into areas of learning in order to give pupils the opportunity to practise their skills in a variety of contexts.

Particular emphasis is placed on the areas of Communication and Personal, Social & Health Education. All pupils are encouraged to be as independent as possible in all activities.

Each key stage has a two-year topic cycle which allows for core skills to be generalized through a range of creative and motivating contexts.

Curriculum for Pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities

The curriculum for PMLD works in conjunction with ‘routes for learning’, which is a bespoke assessment focusing on communication and cognition.
Early Years

The Early Years’ curriculum is based on the ‘Foundation Stage Curriculum’, with a greater focus on core skills of physical development, cognitive development, communication, and personal and social development. We provide a stimulating learning environment in which children are encouraged to play, make relationships and have fun. Through this approach, children achieve the basis for all learning; by learning to take turns, make choices, follow their own intentions and be proactive in their own learning.

Emphasis is placed on:

- Children communicating their needs and expressing themselves through a range of communication modes, for example, PECS, Makaton, Objects of Reference.
- Developing communication skills by using body language, objects, symbols, gestures, Makaton signing, communication aids, PECS and talking.
- Developing independence skills such as feeding, toileting, washing, teeth-brushing, dressing, and awareness of safety in and out of the school.
- Developing fine and gross motor skills by the use and tolerance of aids, crawling, standing, walking, stair-climbing and running.

Creative Arts

We are passionate about creative arts in the school and work in partnership with other organisations to enhance the provision for our pupils. Currently, we work with Southwark Playhouse, the Globe Theatre, Bow Arts Trust and art projects in conjunction with other mainstream schools. We have a dedicated dance teacher and a music teacher who run class groups for weekly sessions.
Lunchtime Clubs

We run a range of lunchtime clubs, such as singing, art, dance and music.

Community Links

Cherry Garden School has strong links with the local mainstream schools and we are currently running a lunchtime choir for our pupils with pupils from a nearby school.

All the children have the opportunity to go on an educational trip each term. These trips are organised by the class team and usually relate to the topic for that term. Once every two years, we do a whole school trip to the seaside and a school journey for Year 6 pupils.

Cherry Garden has links with a number of mainstream schools that include whole class projects and individual pupil links.

Religious Education

The school has a whole school assembly every week and all children participate in a daily act of collective worship.

Sex Education

The 1993 Education Act requires sex education to be provided as part of the National Curriculum. The emphasis at Cherry Garden School is on personal, social and health education. We encourage children to develop gender identity, develop friendships, have clear boundaries and behave appropriately in a range of situations, both in school and out in the community.

Children are encouraged to develop independence and hygiene skills, including dressing, toileting, washing, etc. We also encourage children to find appropriate ways of expressing their feelings, needs and wants through a range of communication strategies.
TEACHING AND LEARNING

Every aspect of life in school is a learning opportunity. All teaching staff plan for and deliver creative and motivating activities that enable pupils to actively learn. Our biggest resource is our staff, who tirelessly ensure pupils are appropriately challenged and fully engaged in all curriculum activities. We adopt an holistic communication approach across the school and use Makaton, PECS, Objects of Reference, touch cues, eye-pointing and communication books. Communication is facilitated throughout the day and is at the forefront of what we do.

TRANSITIONS

Into Cherry Garden

Once a child has been identified for a place at Cherry Garden, the teacher observes the child in their nursery setting, and visits to Cherry Garden are arranged for the prospective child. A home visit is conducted with the teacher and the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher to share information in the school’s ‘welcome pack’. A separate health review takes place with the school nurse.

From Cherry Garden

Parents are encouraged to visit secondary settings when their child is in Year 5. There are three secondary special needs’ schools that the majority of our pupils transfer to, and each school has particular criteria for admittance. Parents’ preferences are always given a high priority when choosing their secondary school in Southwark.