



Cherry Tree EDUCATION

Where children have the time and therapeutic space to fulfil their potential

Effectiveness of Leadership and Management is Outstanding (Ofsted 2018)
Quality of Teaching and Learning is Good (Ofsted 2018)
Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare is Outstanding (Ofsted 2018)
Outcomes for Pupils is Good (Ofsted 2018)

School Prospectus

2020-2021

‘A school can become a surrogate ‘secure base’ which can contain the inevitable anxiety engendered by the challenges of learning. School can provide compensatory relationships and experiences to pupils whose capacities to learn have been impaired by adverse emotional and social experiences.’ Heather Geddes, Attachment in the Classroom, 2012.

Introduction

‘There is evidence that suggests that a whole school approach is important as it ensures that mental health and well-being is embedded within the culture and processes of the school, and ensures that they work with partners in health, the voluntary sector etc. to provide mental health support for those most in need’. House of Commons Education Committee, *Mental Health and well-being of looked-after children*, 2016.

Cherry Tree has been designed to meet the needs of pupils who present with mental health issues which has stopped them from accessing long term education or who have struggled to fit into the education models available to them. Cherry Tree specialises in pupils who need time to settle, need space to thrive and need patience and support to achieve. A highly experienced staff team will work together with all relevant agencies to ensure that an individualised education package is shaped around each pupil. This will ensure that in time, they can reach their potential academically, while building their emotional stability and resilience.

‘Children have different experiences even at the same school and that for well-being ‘child school’ fit is as important as attending a ‘good’ school.’ Gutman and Feinstein 2008, cited in Office for *National Statistics Insights into children’s mental health and well – being*, 2015.

Mental health and ongoing difficulties can present in many ways, both verbally, non-verbally and through various behaviours and so each individual situation will be discussed thoroughly to ensure that Cherry Tree can give the best possible fit for a pupil. Understanding their holistic needs means that the most effective strategies can be put in place to promote their growth and aid their progression. All strategies and individual plans will flow and adapt to the ongoing needs of the pupils.

Reflective practice and staff development is an integral part of Cherry Tree life and underpins much of what we do. Regular meetings with external experienced and qualified professionals ensure that we remain up to date in our knowledge and add to our expertise to provide the best possible teaching and learning environment for our pupils.



Ethos

Our school ethos is to value all pupil’s skills and abilities beyond the cognitive. Pupils voices are valued and are at the heart of, and a part of every decision we make. Cherry Tree will strive to be innovative to meet the diverse, emotional and aesthetic needs of all pupils. We will endeavour to build mutually respectful relationships so that pupils feel appreciated and noticed. We believe in encouraging pupils to take learning risks and explore the world around them which in turn enables them to feel more positive about their learning and their future. The character, personality, individuality, awareness and resilience of each pupil is encouraged and developed, thereby promoting a healthy and enjoyable approach to learning and to life.

We will do this through our Intentions

At Cherry Tree we will ensure, through our considered intentions, that:

- Our pupils are the focus of everything we do
- Our pupils are inspired and stretched to achieve the success they are capable of
- Our pupils are encouraged to adopt the responsibilities that go with their rights
- Our pupils are encouraged to adopt healthier and safer lifestyle options
- Our staff establish rich, diverse and stimulating learning environments for all
- Our staff provide ongoing choices, challenges and encourage initiative
- Our staff provide opportunities in a safe and happy environment
- Our staff will ensure that opportunities are local, national and international
- Our staff demonstrate a commitment to equality of opportunity
- We let you know what the pupils are doing each step of the way
- We let you know the pupil's base line in core subjects
- We let you know regularly what they achieve and how they are progressing
- We let you know how they are progressing in relation to their peers
- We expect and maintain high standards in every aspect of school life and for it to be evident in behaviour and attitudes of all pupils
- We will promote the professional development of all staff and volunteers



Education Psychology Assessment

To assist us in knowing what our pupils need to help them learn, we commission an Education Psychologist to do an up to date Education Psychology Assessment for each new pupil. The results of the Assessment help us to ensure the right strategies are in place and to refer to other professionals if needed. The results are also shared with other appropriate professionals to ensure cohesive working.



EHC Plans

Cherry Tree caters mainly for those pupils whose needs are not currently being met by either a mainstream, special or independent school within the area that they live. Most pupils who have complex and additional needs to help them learn will already have an Education and Health Care Plan. However, to ensure that those who need an EHC Plan have one, we offer to take the lead on pulling all information together to complete the relevant documents to ensure pupil's needs are outlined, recorded and reviewed. Cherry Tree staff have a vast amount of experience of working closely with colleagues in Local Authorities and relevant departments to ensure this work is completed smoothly and efficiently.

We ensure that an experienced member of staff will lead any EHC Plan meetings and or reviews.

All pupils also have an Individual Education Plan that will work alongside all other relevant educational documents and will be reviewed either termly or bi-termly depending on the needs of the individual.



School Counsellor

To complement our therapeutic education provision, we commission our own school counsellor for pupils to access weekly, or fortnightly should they wish to do so.

Our counsellor has a range of experience working with children who have mental health issues, attachment difficulties and who have experienced trauma and is also a member of the BACP.

The pupils will have a choice as to whether they would like to see the counsellor or not, so the option is entirely theirs and will be offered on the day. The sessions are confidential between the pupil and the counsellor, unless any safeguarding / child protection concerns are raised.

We would not want our service to interfere with any other therapeutic input the pupils may be having so we will liaise with all agencies concerned to ensure the best possible outcomes for our pupils.



Out of Hours Support

Sometimes parents and carers may feel that they would benefit from extra support if they have concerns about a young person. Sometimes, when it is out of hours, it can be hard to get anyone on the end of a phone. If a parent or carer feels that they are experiencing a particularly difficult time they can contact the headteacher or School Operations Manager to discuss whether some extra phone contact outside of hours would be beneficial in helping towards positive change.



The Curriculum

Square pegs do not fit into round holes so why keep trying the same? For some children, the traditional classroom setting does not work and can create even further barriers to their

learning. This can often become a revolving door which adds to the loss of crucial real education time for the pupil. Cherry Tree is a detached building in a quiet residential area and has a warm homely feel and can cater for up to 10 pupils. The rooms are spacious and comfortable, and pupils are encouraged to take ownership of their school. The property also has a large safe garden area with working spaces where various 'hands on' projects can be carried out e.g. gardening and upcycling. At Cherry Tree our aim is to provide an excellent education for all our pupils. Our commitment for an engaging and bespoke curriculum is rooted in a desire to bring out the best in all pupils and prepare them for success in life. For our English, maths and ICT curriculum we use the functional skills BKSBS as a diagnostic tool to set levels and to assess on a bi-termly basis. Our data gathering takes a holistic approach by ensuring we capture the personal development steps pupils take and celebrate and reward their positive behaviour. Recognising positive change highlights and encourages their personal growth, self-esteem and individuality. Each student is encouraged to use BKSBS regularly so that they take responsibility for their personal development, which helps prepare them for success in their NCFE functional skills examinations. For pupils who need an integrated plan to allow them time to settle into school life, a variety of environments can be accessed including classrooms without walls using the spacious outdoors of either the local beach or the Kent countryside. In our experience, pupils who have a history of sporadic education respond well when a variety of these learning environments are available. Through this flexible and adaptable approach, pupils have the time and space to discover their strengths and the way they learn best, which in turn creates the best possible environment 'fit' for the pupil to achieve their potential. We intend to ensure that our pupils are ready for the move to post 16 education or employment, with the ability to show resilience and the competence to interact with peers within society post 16 and beyond.

'School can be changed from a negative experience to one in which he or she can achieve, and in which his or her self-esteem can be enhanced. These experiences increase resilience and hopefulness'. Heather Geddes, *Attachment in the Classroom*, 2012.

To ensure the individual needs of Cherry Tree pupils are met we will:

- provide for individual needs; responding to age, aptitude and additional educational needs
- provide access, at an appropriate level, to a relevant curriculum
- promote learning and personal growth and development within the context of the extremely complex lives the pupils have so far experienced
- meet the needs of young people, promoting care and respect and expecting high standards in all aspects of school life which continues into their home life
- prepare pupils for their adult and working life both with skills and knowledge but most importantly with their personal development and independence skills

The focus on meeting individual needs is based on the context of each pupil's entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum set within developing positive relationships and improving behaviour.

If a pupil develops the skills needed to be able to return to a larger more mainstream school, Cherry Tree will work closely with the pupil and their parent or carer to ensure they are fully supported for this to happen.



Moving On

Some pupils need more time than others to catch up, work through their learning barriers and to be ready to engage in bigger groups and / or mainstream schools. However, some pupils may be ready to move on faster than others. To ensure that Cherry Tree continues to be the right provision for pupils, discussions will take place at every PEP and EHCP review to identify and start planning any future potential moves. This will not only ensure that there is a smooth transition plan in place but that everyone including the child, is involved in the decision making about their future.



Consultation and Training

Are you looking to start your own independent school, or do you want to take your school to the next level? Do you need an objective observer to clearly define what you need to do? Do you need to revisit your ethos and intentions and create a more adhesive culture? Do you have a time scale?

Whatever your need, our creative team and 'can do' approach can help you. We have many years of experience in setting up schools and provisions, designing and implementing whole school systems, writing policies and procedures and implementing training and support. Our team will work with you to ensure your school can meet its targets and ultimately your pupils can reach their potential.

Some of the areas we can offer consultation and training on are:

Bespoke Assessments

Reflective Practice and Self-evaluation

Whole School Improvements

Whole School Assertiveness

Behaviour Management Systems and Procedures



What people say about us.....

“The pupils are always the top priority. The school and especially the leaders support pupils and families outside of the normal working day and go over and above with

supporting the whole family. Cherry Tree leaders will challenge when needed for the best outcome for the young person and are pro-active in the wrap around service for the family. We will carry on developing the school and continue to adapt to the needs of the young person.” (Staff member Dec 2020)

“It’s amazing. I was very nervous before I started and didn’t want to mess up. It is what I thought it was going to be but thought it was too good to be true!” (Pupil January 2020)

“I would never have thought the words “I enjoy school” would come out of my mouth until this school.” (Pupil Dec 2020)

“The school’s strengths are holistic approaches to learning, promotion of confidence in learning and social situations, providing a calm environment that is crucial to learning, having friendly and approachable staff who are always willing to listen to any concerns myself or my child may have. All of these have made very positive effects on my child’s development. I can’t think of any area that the school could improve on with the exception of providing a sixth form!” (Parent Dec 2020)

“The school’s greatest strengths are the ability to, not only accept that each student’s needs are different, but to be able to provide support for each of them. The school values everyone’s views and does everything and more to create a calm, caring and encouraging environment.” (Staff member Dec 2020)

“The school is amazing in everything they do. The way the school deals with pupils is brilliant and enforces a healthy and progressive way of helping all pupils to evolve. The school has helped me develop into a good young man. I am maturing at a level I never would have at any other school. All pupils are calm and collected thanks to the school.” (Pupil Dec 2020)

“The school is amazing” (Pupil Dec 2020)

“The school’s strengths are patience, meeting my child’s needs, a friendly safe environment and their commitment.” (Parent Jul 2020)

“I am more confident in my work and will now give it a go when I would not before.” (Pupil January 2020)

“Cherry Tree is brilliant at looking and focusing on individual need of both pupils and staff. Leadership is great and supportive. At Cherry Tree, individuality is encouraged. We are all adaptable as a team.” (Staff member Dec 2020)

“All staff are doing amazing with the changes during these times with coronavirus.” (Pupil Dec 2020)

“The communication is what makes the school beyond excellent. These last few terms have been so well managed; they could not do a single thing to improve this school” (Foster parent Jul 2020)

“Everybody has the opportunity to be heard. This includes staff and pupils, nobody is ever judged and everybody is given the opportunity to reach their full potential.” (Staff member Dec 2020)

“I was getting into fights and arguments before and now I don’t ever NOT want to go to school at Cherry Tree. Other schools had given up.” (Pupil January 2020)

“I have worked with Soo Finn professionally for over 14 years, both as a colleague and education advisor, mostly recently in an independent school for 'looked-after' children with attachment issues and complex needs and consequent serious psychological and behavioural difficulties. Soo is very creative in her thinking and developing of both

staff and pupils and works tirelessly to create an exciting and differentiated curriculum and activities to motivate and engage hard to reach pupils and young people. The school was deemed to be 'outstanding' as a result of the hard work and dedication of Soo, as recognised by myself and a consultant Ofsted inspector. Soo is an outstanding leader of a school, with an expertise in vulnerable, hard to reach learners of any age and has shown over the years to be able to engage these children in education and give them a positive outlook for their future.” (Retired Ofsted Additional Inspector, Retired Deputy Principal of a specialist school and college, and Education Consultant and Advisor 2020)



Contact us

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