

# New Charter Academy

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135508
<b>Local Authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	361306
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Patrick Geraghty HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1337
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	37
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ian Munro
<b>Principal</b>	Mr George Lloyd
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Greenhurst Campus Greenhurst Road Ashton-under-Lyne OL6 9DX
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 3304965
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 3442629
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors spent the majority of their time visiting 45 lessons observing 43 teachers. They held meetings with staff, groups of students, the Chair and other members of the governing body. Documentation was scrutinised including: information related to the tracking of the academic and personal progress of students; detailed analysis of students' attainment and progress; academy self-evaluation; minutes from meetings of the governing body; and evidence to demonstrate how the academy supports students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Inspectors also examined evaluations undertaken by the academy to ensure that it meets statutory requirements with regard to safeguarding. In addition, 280 parental questionnaires were scrutinised along with questionnaires returned by a representative sample of staff and students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the academy's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Students' attainment and progress to determine the effectiveness of strategies used to improve outcomes.
- If teaching and learning are sufficiently challenging to promote better outcomes for students.
- The impact of curriculum development on increasing engagement and improving students' outcomes.
- The effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation by leaders and managers at all levels to drive improvement.

## Information about the school

The New Charter Academy opened in September 2008 in the town of Ashton-under-Lyne in Greater Manchester. It houses students from two predecessor schools, Stamford High School and Hartshead High School. This is a larger than average size academy. The Silver Springs site houses Years 7 and 8, while the Greenhurst site houses Years 9, 10, 11 and 12. In September 2011, the academy will move to a new campus with state-of-the-art facilities designed around its needs. The academy's sponsor is New Charter Housing Trust, a large housing association in Greater Manchester. The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with a statement of special educational needs are also above the national average. About 27% of students come from homes where English is not spoken as the first language. The academy has dual specialism in Business and Enterprise and Sport and Health.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a satisfactory and improving school. At its inception, the academy inherited a legacy of underperformance, poor behaviour, low attendance and high exclusion rates. Central to the sponsor's vision for the academy was the establishment of an ambitious, aspirational and inclusive educational community. Under the exceptional leadership of the Executive Director, progress towards these objectives has been significant. Central to this transformation has been the establishment of positive and trusting relationships at all levels. Leaders, members of the governing body, staff, parents, carers and students are committed to the new ethos of improvement. Across a broad range of subjects, students now make satisfactory progress by the end of Key Stage 4. Exclusion rates have been significantly reduced and attendance is now at the national average. Relationships throughout the academy are good and behaviour is satisfactory and becoming embedded. Results in GCSE English and mathematics remain below the national average; however, the gradual improvement in these subjects over three years is beginning to accelerate. The academy recognises the need to further accelerate improvement rates in GCSE English and mathematics.

Students enjoy their learning and feel safe within the academy. While there is a significant amount of outstanding and good teaching too much remains satisfactory. The academy acknowledges that the outstanding features of the best teaching need to be embedded and shared so as to reduce the proportion of satisfactory teaching. The curriculum matches students' needs well. The specialisms of business and enterprise and sport and health have had a positive impact on evolving curricular opportunities. Dedicated curriculum initiatives at Key Stage 4 have contributed to improved attainment across all groups of students. Student progression rates to the academy sixth form and to other further education or work-based learning providers are improving. NEET (not in education, employment or training) rates have significantly reduced. Care, guidance and support are good with a growing focus on those whose circumstances may make them most vulnerable and at risk of not achieving their full potential.

The Executive Director has a strong commitment to embedding a culture of continuous improvement and challenge. He is supported by an enthusiastic senior management team. The use of data to inform improvement planning has been appropriately developed. However, the academy acknowledges that it now requires a more razor sharp application in its use to further enhance improvement planning and to accelerate attainment and achievement trends. Equality of opportunity for all is well promoted. Parents and carers are supportive of the academy and its ethos. Safeguarding is good. Members of the governing body provide highly effective links with the local community and are supportive of the academy. The academy has a good capacity to improve because of sustained improvement trends over three years. Value for money, set against outcomes, is satisfactory.

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Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment more rapidly for GCSE at A\* to C grades in English and mathematics by:
  - tailoring work more sharply to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students
  - building on existing best practice in the academy to improve the quality of feedback through marking
  - raising further the attainment and achievement of distinctive groups of students.
- Share outstanding features of the best teaching so as to reduce the proportion of satisfactory teaching further by:
  - promoting a greater focus on independent and group learning skills across the curriculum and reducing too much 'teacher talk' in some lessons
  - ensuring that questioning is used effectively to challenge individual students according to their needs
  - ensuring consistency in the use of data for lesson planning across the curriculum
  - involving the best teachers in the dissemination of their outstanding and good practice so that the quality of teaching and learning are further strengthened and outcomes for students improve.
- Improve the use of data to inform on the planning, monitoring, evaluation and action planning for improvement so that all aspects of academy provision are at least good.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

When students join the academy in Year 7, their attainment is well below average. The current quality of work in students' books seen during the inspection is at least satisfactory and some is good. Students in the best lessons demonstrated high levels of engagement and enjoyment. These qualities were exemplified in an outstanding English class where students scurried productively between groups exchanging information and descriptors on the comparative characteristics and language of dictators and poets. They buzzed with excitement as they in turn became 'teachers in learning', welcoming new ideas, challenging each other and developing their language skills. Inspectors noted much good learning and progress across Years 7 and 8. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support and make similar progress to their peers. The proportion of students gaining five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE has risen significantly over three years to just above the national average. Gaps in performance between groups of students are narrowing as a result of better focused intervention. However, when GCSE English and mathematics are included results are below national averages, with a slower rate of improvement between years. Evidence from the observation of teaching and learning indicate that attainment is now rising in English and mathematics. The academy

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recognises the need to further accelerate attainment at Key Stage 4 in English and mathematics

Students report that they feel safe and that any issues of safety and behaviour raised are dealt with quickly. Behaviour around the academy and in classrooms is satisfactory and reflects improving relationships between students and with staff. Students understand many of the diverse factors which affect different aspects of their health. The specialism of sport and health has impacted positively on the wide and popular range of extra-curricular activities. Students make a good contribution to the academy and wider community through fund-raising activities and numerous community links. Attendance has improved over three years and is now satisfactory. Effective literacy programmes at Key Stage 3 are impacting on students' attainment, progress and ambition. The percentage of NEET has been significantly reduced and progression to the academy's sixth form or other further education or training providers is improving. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching is satisfactory. In the best lessons, teaching is very well planned with clear objectives and outcomes referenced to levels or grades. Consequently, students make good progress. These lessons are characterised by good pace and challenge. Students are engaged in a wide range of productive activities, including group and pair work. Teachers

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use well planned questioning to encourage students, particularly the more-able, to extend their thinking. In the good or better lessons, learning is well tailored to individual needs and is informed by assessment data. In the less effective lessons where progress is slower, objectives are unclear and opportunities are missed to increase students' motivation and develop their ownership of learning. Teaching is primarily teacher led and there are few opportunities for collaborative learning. In these lessons, questioning is not used effectively to challenge individual students. Work is not sufficiently tailored to meet all students' needs and progress is satisfactory at best. More-able students are not sufficiently challenged in these lessons and often remain quietly disengaged. Approaches to learning are not informed by assessment data. In the best lessons, students have opportunities to assess their own work and there is evidence in their exercise books of levelled marking with detailed feedback. However, this is not the case in all lessons where opportunities are missed to use assessment to develop appropriate learning opportunities.

Curricular provision is good. The academy provides a broad and developing range of courses and wider learning experiences that meet statutory requirements. Significant and effective steps have been taken to provide suitable opportunities for students in Years 10 and 11 to achieve to their potential and gain wider accreditation that matches both their varied interests and capabilities. These include academic and vocational courses within the academy and in partnership with a local college of further education. Students are responding well to these opportunities which provide clear purpose to their learning, including for those at risk of disaffection. Provision for students with significant learning needs has been strengthened with the development of a nurture group in Years 7 and 8. This very effective provision is enhanced by the good programme of literacy intervention for all students in Years 7 and 8 through the integrated humanities course. The curriculum is well supported by a good range of popular extra-curricular opportunities, including an impressive range of Saturday morning revision classes for Key Stage 4 students.

Care, guidance and support for students are good and a strength of the academy. Students speak with confidence of their trust in staff and the high value they place on their guidance and help. Sensitive and wide ranging support is provided for students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The academy links very effectively with external agencies to ensure that students receive constructive individual help and support. Close links with feeder primary schools greatly smooth transition. Older students receive thoughtful guidance about their subject choices, career aspirations and post-16 educational direction. Good use is being made of data systems in tracking students' academic and personal development. Parents and carers are highly satisfied with the good level of care provided by the academy.

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The Executive Director provides incisive and inspirational leadership. He, along with the sponsor, is the driving force behind raising ambition, establishing an inclusive culture and setting challenging targets for the academy. Successful strategies to improve behaviour, reduce exclusions and build a harmonious and successful learning environment have impacted on the attitudes of staff and students alike. This is a learning community that is improving and confidently moving forward. Attainment and achievement, especially at Key Stage 3, have improved. GCSE results have been raised although only gradually in English and mathematics. The management of teaching and learning is better and some outstanding and good teaching has emerged: this now requires to be embedded across all provision. Data is accurate but is not always fully utilised to plan and drive further improvement across whole-academy planning. Subject leaders are enthusiastic and determined to raise standards. Self-evaluation is accurate and self-critical. Governance is good. The governing body has a comprehensive understanding of the challenges for the academy and possesses a wide range of experience and expertise in education, business and the wider public sector. These valuable assets are fully tapped to the benefit of the academy. The members of the governing body are highly supportive, critical and constructive in their monitoring of the academy's work.

Partnerships are developing and offer innovative possibilities but have yet to fully impact on improved outcomes. The business and enterprise and sport and health specialism are making a positive contribution to establishing community links and towards broadening academy provision. Parents and carers are supportive of the academy and links with them are good. Links with a variety of other agencies add to the good quality of care, support and guidance for students. There is good and effective promotion of equality of opportunity through pastoral programmes and the broad and balanced curriculum. Gaps between the performances of different groups of students are narrowing. The academy offers outstanding community cohesion. Inspired by the ethos of the sponsor, excellent links have been formed with the local community. A member of the executive team acts as Community and Regeneration Director. A comprehensive, rigorous and incisive audit of the context of its community informs all aspects, including curriculum, of the academy's work. Safeguarding is good. Policies and procedures are comprehensive in range and coverage. Given its record of sustained improvement and transformed culture the academy has a good capacity to achieve further improvements. The academy's value for money, set against outcomes, is satisfactory.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Sixth form

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. The sixth form was opened in September 2010. It currently has 37 students who are studying GCE AS levels. The first set of examination results will be published in August 2011. Inspection observations and academy records indicate that teaching in the sixth form is at least satisfactory. Students receive good feedback on how to improve. Pastoral care, support and guidance are good. Students feel confident in their teachers and relationships are good. The leadership of the sixth form is satisfactory. Managers demonstrate a developing understanding of the sixth form's strengths and areas for development. They have formed positive external partnerships to support the development of an academic sixth form offering high quality provision. Monitoring and tracking systems are being developed. Enrichment activities are good.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

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## **Views of parents and carers**

An analysis of responses to the questionnaire indicates that the majority of parents and carers are happy with their child's experience at the academy and that appropriate steps are taken to ensure that their child is well prepared for the future. A small minority of parents and carers felt that the academy does not deal effectively with behaviour. Inspectors found no evidence to support these concerns. However inspectors have noted these parental concerns and have asked the school to continue to look at this area.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at New Charter Academy 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 inspection team received 280 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1337 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	83	30	178	64	19	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	104	37	164	59	11	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	126	45	144	51	10	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	101	36	157	56	18	6	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	81	29	182	65	14	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	85	30	174	62	15	5	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	61	22	189	68	21	8	4	1
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)	97	35	166	59	7	3	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	80	29	173	62	18	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	84	30	152	54	30	11	6	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	57	20	179	64	26	9	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	82	29	179	64	10	4	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	112	40	152	54	12	4	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 all 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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



20 June 2011

Dear Students,

**Inspection of New Charter Academy, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL6 9SD**

Thank you for the warm and friendly welcome that you gave my colleagues and me when we inspected your academy recently. We would particularly like to thank those of you who spoke with us.

Our inspection found that yours is a satisfactory and improving academy. You are making satisfactory progress throughout your time at the academy. Your GCSE results are improving but pass rates in GCSE English and mathematics need to improve further and more rapidly. There is good teaching in the academy; however, we found too much that was satisfactory. In the good lessons, you respond well to the teachers' high expectations but many of you are not sufficiently challenged to do better in the satisfactory lessons. Your curriculum options are good. The teachers and support staff care for you and give you good support.

The leaders in your academy worked with us to decide on some ways in which your provision could be better. We decided that to achieve this, the academy should:

- improve your results in GCSE English and mathematics examinations, so that you all make better progress
- improve the proportion of good and better teaching so that you are all challenged and achieve your best
- improve the use of data to plan for further improvements so that you all can make good and better progress.

You can help your academy to improve further by ensuring everyone focuses on the pursuit of excellence for all of you and trying hard in your studies so that you can achieve your full potential in life. I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Patrick Geraghty

Her Majesty's Inspector

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