

Charlton School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 123597 |
| Local Authority | Telford and Wrekin |
| Inspection number | 380697 |
| Inspection dates | 12–13 October 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Michelle Parker HMI |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1175 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Peter Lisney |
| Headteacher | Nick Renshaw (Principal) and Lee Tristham Headteacher (Secondary phase) |
| Date of previous school inspection | 11 March 2009 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 31 lessons and 31 teachers were observed. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of students, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at whole-school development planning, teachers' planning of work and school policies. In total, questionnaires returned by 238 parents and carers were analysed. The team also analysed the responses of 120 student and 37 staff questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The achievement of all groups of students in English in both key stages to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging.
- The achievement of middle and higher attaining students to determine whether they are sufficiently challenged and make better than satisfactory progress.
- The achievement of boys relative to girls to determine whether the school is closing the gap between them.
- Whether the school's leaders and managers have acted with sufficient speed to improve teaching and learning and, thus, are improving students' progress and attainment.

Information about the school

Charlton is a larger-than-average secondary school which is over-subscribed. A lower-than-average proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. There is a lower-than-average proportion of students with statements of special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some have complex learning and emotional needs. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. The school became a specialist science and mathematics college in 2005. In September 2008 the school entered into partnership with its neighbouring primary school as part of a 'learning community' that aims to provide a more closely integrated education from the age of two to 16.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Charlton is a good school where students attain above-average standards and achieve well. One parent expressed the view of the large majority. 'They've grabbed the things in him that he was good at and brought them out – he's loved every minute.' This reflects the hard work of school leaders and staff and their shared vision of putting the needs of the students first.

The consistently effective leadership of the Principal and headteacher, together with the senior leadership team, has ensured that the school has improved upon the previously satisfactory progress of students. Leaders have secured good progress for all groups. The school correctly identified weaknesses in English and has ensured students' improved attainment and progress in this subject, although performance is still weaker than that in mathematics. Attendance is high because students enjoy coming to school.

Teaching throughout the school is good. However, teachers' use of assessment information is not consistent in matching the level of challenge presented to students with different learning needs. Opportunities are missed to encourage students to expand on their answers or to gain greater independence in their learning. Curriculum developments have increased the range of students' options. Care is taken to ensure that all students can take their choice of subjects to accreditation through a wide range of pathways. Care, guidance and support systems are good and ensure that students who join the school at any stage are well supported. Partnerships with parents and carers are satisfactory, and many parents and carers expressed their concern about communication with the school. The school is aware of this and is currently reviewing and improving its systems of communication. Wider partnership working, especially with local primary schools, is a strength. This is developed well through the school's specialist college status.

The school has worked assiduously to build its capacity to improve, through accurate self-evaluation leading, for example, to students' accelerated progress. Together with the governing body, leaders and managers have ensured that the school provides good value for money and maximises the use of resources. Thus, the school is well positioned to sustain its improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in English to match those in mathematics by ensuring that in all

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subjects:

- students' oracy skills are developed through effective questioning to encourage them to explain their thinking
 - students are provided with opportunities to write at greater length and complexity.
- Ensure that assessment information is used to challenge students and promote greater independence in their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Students' attainment on entry to the school is average. By the end of Key Stage 4, it is above average. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Standards achieved in subjects taken by all students, including English and mathematics, are strong and have steadily improved. Most students gained five A* to C grades at GCSE in 2011. There was also a further improvement in the proportion of students achieving this with English and mathematics included.. The school has identified that too few students previously gained A* and A grades at GCSE. The latest data indicate that these results have steadily improved. All students are set challenging targets which are reviewed regularly.

In lessons observed, all groups of students made good progress. Teachers ensured that all students had opportunities to answer questions. However, opportunities were sometimes missed to encourage them to expand and develop their answers. The low level of confidence of some students to speak and explain at length limits their development of a key workplace skill, although they are rarely absent from school. In the best lessons observed, students were invited to develop answers and, as a result, teachers had a very clear picture of students' understanding. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the carefully thought-through interventions. Some students with complex learning and emotional needs achieve well, gaining GCSE C grades in English and mathematics in 2011. Those students known to be eligible for free school meals and looked-after students make progress similar to that of other groups.

Students report that they feel safe and are encouraged to make healthy choices. Some parents and carers feel that the healthy options provided by the school are expensive and, as a result, are not taken up by some of their children. Behaviour both in lessons and around the school is good. Students behave with maturity and consideration moving around a cramped building with minimum fuss and they arrive at lessons punctually. A very small minority of parents and carers are concerned about poor behaviour disrupting learning. The school has worked effectively to tackle any poor behaviour to minimise disruptions in lessons.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers use their subject knowledge well to motivate and interest students in their learning. Teachers use student tracking data effectively to identify those students who need support and use ‘lesson seven’ as an extra session to go over work that is not understood or needs further practice. Students are very positive about this support. Students at greatest risk of missing their targets have a mentor to work alongside them. This is helpful, as mentors encourage the students and set precise targets for their pathway to success. Students spoke very positively about these arrangements. The school’s tracking system has been developed to give a clear visual picture of students’ progress. Staff use this information effectively to ensure that all students are making expected progress. Great care is taken to support students in preparing for external examinations. For example, in history a well thought-through revision guide supports students in working independently and helps parents and carers understand how they can support their child. The school has developed a reward system to encourage students to improve their progress. This is working well and increasing numbers of students are successful and are rewarded with trips. However, a few of the higher-attaining students would like, and would benefit from, a system that reflects the progress they are making too.

Teachers’ use of assessment to support learning in lessons varies in quality across the school. Marking is regular and detailed but does not always clearly explain what the student needs to do next. Where students are encouraged to write at greater length and explain their ideas, they are able to achieve higher levels. This approach supports students to improve the quality of their work but is not consistent across the school.

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

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The curriculum has been carefully developed to address the needs of students and ensures that there is an appropriately wide range of different pathways to gaining qualifications. In this respect, students are well supported for their next phase of training or education. The school’s specialism has been used to good effect in developing cross-curricular strategies to strengthen students’ understanding of how subjects link together. Partnership working has supported this initiative well. Curriculum enhancement days have enabled students to think more deeply about tasks they are set and these experiences feed well into their follow-up work in class.

The school works effectively with a range of agencies to ensure potentially vulnerable students are safe and enabled to learn effectively.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers at all levels actively promote success for all and, consequently, students take pride in their learning. The principal and headteacher set high expectations for all staff and everyone rises to the challenge. All staff are encouraged to take responsibility for improving teaching and learning. Staff are able to undertake middle leadership training or participate in ‘the learning community’. The new departmental review system encourages the participation of every member of staff in evaluating their effectiveness and understanding the priorities for change. This has already created a culture of sharing of ideas and best practice. The departmental review system has also increased the rigour of school self-evaluation. The governing body plays an active role in evaluating the work of the school and has a clear view of its strengths and areas for development. Members use this structure effectively to hold the school to account.

Safeguarding procedures are robust. Staff are effectively trained to recognise any concerns about individual students, and potentially vulnerable students achieve well. Almost all parents and carers endorse the school as a safe place for their children to be. The school is rigorous in tackling inequalities and ensuring all students achieve their potential as learners and responsible members of the community. Racist incidents are rare and are dealt with swiftly. The school works effectively with the local community and students are engaged in a wide range of activities, such as mentoring younger members within the ‘learning community’, acting as sports ambassadors and fund raisers. Students’ action reflects their responsible contribution

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to their community and their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These strengths form part of the school’s broader community cohesion plans, which are detailed. However, planning to meet community needs is not related closely enough to recent analysis or evaluation of needs. Consequently, successful promotion of community cohesion is not yet fully secure.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers are very positive about the school and their children’s education. Parents and carers who spoke to the inspection team commented favourably on their children’s experience of school and the care and support they received. In the questionnaire, they expressed average levels of satisfaction in all areas. Parents and carers expressed a number of individual concerns about behaviour, being healthy, communication between school and home and the amount of homework. Inspectors investigated all parental concerns, and confirm that the school has acted upon any issues raised by parents and carers or students and followed them up assiduously.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Charlton 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 inspection team received 238 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1175 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 79 | 33 | 139 | 58 | 13 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 72 | 30 | 151 | 63 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child’s progress | 40 | 17 | 157 | 66 | 27 | 11 | 3 | 1 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 51 | 21 | 132 | 55 | 28 | 12 | 4 | 2 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 56 | 24 | 146 | 61 | 13 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| The school helps me to support my child’s learning | 43 | 18 | 134 | 56 | 36 | 15 | 3 | 1 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 33 | 14 | 144 | 61 | 38 | 16 | 4 | 2 |
| 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) | 51 | 21 | 135 | 57 | 12 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| The school meets my child’s particular needs | 51 | 21 | 140 | 59 | 19 | 8 | 3 | 1 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 55 | 23 | 133 | 56 | 21 | 9 | 4 | 2 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 33 | 14 | 134 | 56 | 27 | 11 | 7 | 3 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 56 | 24 | 151 | 63 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school | 67 | 28 | 140 | 59 | 10 | 4 | 4 | 2 |

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 | 43 | 47 | 10 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 6 | 46 | 42 | 6 |
| Secondary schools | 14 | 36 | 41 | 9 |
| Sixth forms | 15 | 42 | 41 | 3 |
| Special schools | 30 | 48 | 19 | 3 |
| Pupil referral units | 14 | 50 | 31 | 5 |
| All schools | 10 | 44 | 39 | 6 |

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 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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"> ■ 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 pupils' 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.



14 October 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Charlton School, Telford, TF1 3LE

Thank you for the warm and friendly welcome you gave to the inspection team. We appreciated the insights into your school that you gave the team. We agree with you that you go to a good and improving school. We were impressed with your high levels of attendance, your maturity and courteousness.

We were pleased to see your positive attitude to learning in lessons. Thank you for sharing your views about the school's progress-reward system. The school has effectively supported you in making better progress. The school's improved tracking systems and the additional support, including the 'assertive' mentoring, are all helping you to focus on what you need to do to improve. The Principal and the headteacher have fostered a positive work culture in the school and they are ably supported by the senior leadership team and all the staff.

Teaching and learning are good. Attainment in English has risen. However, we have asked the school to improve this further so that it is in line with the better standards you achieve in mathematics. We have also asked your school to help you to expand your spoken answers in class and to give you more opportunities to write at greater length and complexity to gain higher grades in all your subjects. Teachers' marking has improved but it does not always enable you to develop your skills as independent learners. We want you all to be fully challenged so each of you is able to take your learning forward. You can help by being willing to take on more responsibility for your learning for yourselves.

Your school provides you with a good curriculum which is well matched to your needs and interests. It provides a wide selection of opportunities to prepare you for the next stage of your life. We were impressed with your involvement in your local community and hope you will continue to be active citizens after you have left school.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker
Her Majesty's Inspector

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