

Charford First School

Charford Road, Charford, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 3NH

Inspection dates

5–6 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, governors and staff work together successfully to ensure that Charford First School is a happy and welcoming place where pupils flourish.
- All staff are committed to the care and welfare of pupils. Strong relationships encourage pupils to try hard and not worry about making mistakes. This enables pupils to make good progress.
- Leaders work in strong partnership with staff to develop and improve teaching. They make effective use of training and external partnerships to ensure that teaching is good.
- Leaders make regular checks on teaching and pupils' progress. As a result, leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and what could be better.
- Pupils' progress from their starting points is good. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make progress which is in line with other pupils, and sometimes better.
- The curriculum is broad and interesting. It is effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Children in the early years make a strong start to their education. Well-planned activities ensure that children make good progress and develop the skills they need to be independent and enthusiastic learners.
- Arrangements for keeping pupils safe are effective. As a result, pupils say that they feel safe in school and that staff care for them well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are confident learners and conduct themselves well around school.
- Parents are positive about the quality of education and care provided for their children. They have confidence in leaders and staff. The vast majority of parents say that staff support their children well to make good progress.
- Leaders' improvement plans are thorough but lack the precision needed to enable governors to hold them rigorously to account for pupils' outcomes.
- At times, there is a lack of challenge for the most able pupils or work provided for pupils who are working below age-related standards is too difficult. This slows the progress these pupils make.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently plan learning opportunities which match pupils' abilities, particularly the most able pupils and pupils who are working below age-related standards.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - further developing assessment systems to more effectively identify pupils who are making rapid progress
 - setting out clear, measurable targets for school improvement planning so that leaders and governors can judge more precisely the impact of their actions on pupils' achievement
 - ensuring that governors rigorously hold leaders to account for pupils' outcomes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders use their knowledge of the school community and pupils' needs to ensure that the quality of teaching and level of care at Charford First School enables pupils to make good progress.
- Leaders make frequent checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They also make effective use of external partnerships to evaluate teaching and pupils' achievement. Consequently, leaders know the school's strengths and what needs to be further improved.
- Leaders hold regular progress meetings with teachers to identify pupils who are not making enough progress or who have previously underachieved. Teachers then plan carefully targeted interventions to enable these pupils to catch up. As a result, more pupils are currently working at the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Staff value the many opportunities for professional development. A comprehensive programme of training is in place, and teachers share and learn from good practice in their own school and in other schools. Teachers take part in coaching and leaders hold them to account for their performance. As a result, teaching is good.
- Effective use is made of pupil premium funding to help disadvantaged pupils overcome barriers to their learning. The headteacher and deputy headteacher carefully consider the individual needs of disadvantaged pupils and provide tailored support. Leaders regularly check the progress of these pupils and adapt provision if progress is not rapid enough. As a result, the differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils are reducing.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is good. The SEN coordinator has a detailed and accurate understanding of individual pupils' needs. Well-trained staff deliver additional support to address pupils' specific needs and leaders carefully monitor the impact of this support on pupils' progress. This bespoke approach enables pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to make good progress towards their individual targets.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils are able to deepen their knowledge and understanding in a range of subjects. Teachers effectively develop pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics in different subjects. Work in pupils' books demonstrates that they regularly apply their writing skills in history and geography, and use mathematics skills while undertaking investigations in science.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Teachers incorporate these aspects into the curriculum and promote them through topics studied in each year group. Pupils learn about different faiths and religious festivals, and reflect on cultures from around the world. Purposeful opportunities to vote and make decisions ensure that pupils have a good understanding of democracy. For example, pupils vote for which extra-curricular clubs they would like.
- Physical education and sport premium funding is used effectively to increase the opportunities pupils have to enjoy sporting activities. Pupils have access to a wide

range of sports and participation in physical activities is high.

- Leaders' improvement plans accurately identify school development priorities. They provide detailed information about the actions leaders are taking to improve pupils' achievement. However, improvement plans do not identify measurable targets or success criteria. As a result, leaders and governors are not able to evaluate precisely the impact of their actions on pupils' outcomes.
- Systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are accurate and comprehensive. However, these systems do not enable leaders and governors to efficiently identify pupils who are making rapid progress.
- Relationships with parents are strong. Nearly every parent responding to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors are proud of Charford First School. They are committed to providing a good quality of education and high level of care for pupils.
- Leaders provide governors with detailed information about the quality of teaching and how well pupils are doing. Governors also visit the school regularly to see for themselves the activities provided for pupils and how effective these are in meeting pupils' needs. As a result, the governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Although governors know that raising pupils' achievement is a priority, they have not challenged leaders sufficiently about the impact of school improvement actions on improving pupils' outcomes, particularly in key stage 1.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Ensuring that pupils are safe is a central thread that runs through all aspects of the school's work. All staff take their responsibilities for pupils' welfare seriously. During the inspection, one member of staff commented: 'Keeping children safe is everybody's responsibility. Everything matters, no matter how small.' This characterises the culture of safeguarding at Charford First School.
- Staff take part in regular safeguarding training and are aware of local risks. As a result, all staff are confident in applying the school's policies and guidance to keep children safe. They know the signs that might indicate that a child is at risk of harm and are able to confidently explain how to make referrals should they have concerns.
- School documentation shows that leaders follow up concerns quickly and with close attention to detail. Where necessary, leaders refer concerns to external agencies while continuing to provide high levels of support for pupils and families in school.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and who to go to if they have any concerns. They confidently talk about how to keep themselves safe, including online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good because teachers have secure subject knowledge and skilfully question pupils to check their understanding and move learning forward. As a result, most pupils make good progress during lessons and over time.
- Staff have strong relationships with pupils. Consequently, pupils respond well to teachers' expectations. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour help them to make good progress from their starting points.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons which are mostly matched to pupils' needs. They accurately model learning for pupils and provide clear explanations. Teachers and teaching assistants regularly check pupils' understanding through effective questioning. As a result, pupils have a secure grasp of key learning.
- Teachers provide pupils with valuable feedback while they work. This helps them to understand what they are doing well and what parts of their work they need to improve. Pupils are encouraged to check and edit their work in response to teachers' feedback. Most pupils do so diligently and this helps them to improve the quality of their work.
- Accurate assessments enable teachers to track pupils' progress and identify gaps in pupils' learning. Teachers organise additional interventions to swiftly address these gaps and support pupils in catching up with their classmates.
- Good use is made of targeted teaching to provide pupils who are working below age-related standards, including pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, with extra time and help to practise the basic skills they have not yet mastered. Pupils make rapid progress in these sessions, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Carefully planned approaches support disadvantaged pupils in overcoming barriers to their learning. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning behaviours and the progress they make in lessons. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make progress that is similar to other pupils, and sometimes better.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Teachers and teaching assistants have secure subject knowledge and teach phonics in a systematic way. High-quality instruction and accurately modelled sounds support pupils in making good progress in the development of their phonics skills. Consequently, pupils decode new words confidently and apply their phonics knowledge securely to help them to spell.
- While teaching promotes good rates of progress, it does not consistently enable the most able pupils to learn at greater depth. Teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for the most able pupils to move on in their learning or apply their knowledge, skills and understanding in more advanced ways.
- Within lessons, the progress of pupils who are working below age-related standards slows. This is because work is often too difficult and pupils become over-reliant on adult support. Consequently, these pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop resilience and independence in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- Pupils' personal development and welfare are good. This is because leaders and governors have successfully created a culture in which promoting the well-being of pupils is given high priority.
- Leaders and staff provide a positive, calm and welcoming environment where pupils feel happy, safe and supported. Staff are committed to the welfare of pupils and have developed a number of initiatives to ensure that pupils are ready and able to learn.
- Pupils are encouraged to try hard in lessons and to learn from their mistakes. Staff praise pupils' efforts. As a result, pupils become confident learners who are keen to tackle new challenges and take risks.
- Pupils speak with enthusiasm about the many opportunities for them to hold posts of responsibility, for example as prefects, school council representatives, digital leaders or members of the eco-club. Pupils attach high importance to these roles and recognise the qualities needed to be a good leader.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They understand the different forms of bullying and are confident that staff will deal with any bullying incidents that may occur.
- Parents who responded to Parent View are extremely positive about how safe and happy their children are at school. Pupils agree that the school is a safe place to be and that everyone in school looks after them well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons, pupils work hard and cooperate well with one other. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils play happily together. Pupils move around the school in a sensible and orderly manner.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are strong. There are also strong relationships between pupils. Pupils are polite, friendly and courteous to one other, and to adults.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They listen attentively to teachers and respond enthusiastically.
- Pupils are proud of their school and the work that they do. They are confident and keen to discuss their achievements with visitors.
- The before- and after-school clubs provide pupils with a positive start and end to the school day. Adults provide a safe and caring environment for pupils. They skilfully support pupils to play and interact well with one another. As a result, pupils enjoy the clubs and behave well.
- Leaders use a range of approaches to improve levels of attendance. They have successfully addressed the regular absence of some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. As a result, levels of attendance are rising and fewer pupils are regularly absent from school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for pupils are good because current pupils are making strong progress. Leaders' checks on progress and the quality of work in pupils' books show that the vast majority of pupils make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. The overwhelming majority of parents responding to Parent View agree that their children are taught well and make good progress.
- In 2016, standards at the end of key stage 1 were broadly in line with national averages. In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards fell to below the national average. However, scrutiny of the school's assessment information shows that these pupils made secure progress from their starting points.
- Leaders analyse pupils' progress regularly and hold teachers to account for the progress pupils make through pupils' progress meetings. Teachers then promptly put in place actions to close gaps in learning.
- Work in books shows that pupils in Years 3 and 4 have largely made up for any underachievement in previous years. Consequently, increasing numbers of pupils are working at age-related standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- From their starting points, pupils make good progress in developing their phonics skills as a result of the good teaching they receive. Consequently, over the last two years, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has risen.
- Observations in lessons and pupils' work show that actions taken to improve the teaching of early literacy skills are effective. Pupils in key stage 1 make good use of their phonics skills to read and write. As a result, the proportion of pupils currently on track to achieve the expected standard in reading and writing at the end of key stage 1 demonstrates improvement compared with previous years.
- Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive extra help which is closely matched to their needs. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make progress that is similar to, and sometimes better than, their peers. Additional sessions for reading and mathematics support disadvantaged pupils who are working below the expected standard to make rapid progress and close the differences with other pupils who have similar starting points.
- The majority of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress through effective tailored support, particularly in reading and mathematics. Individual case studies illustrate that support with social and emotional needs and speech and language has also improved rates of progress. However, in lessons, pupils who are working below age-related standards do not consistently have work which is matched to their needs. As a result, the progress of these pupils slows.
- Too few of the most able pupils achieve the higher standards at the end of key stage 1 and by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4. This is because teachers do not consistently challenge the most able pupils with work that requires them to think deeply.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the early years with knowledge, skills and understanding that are below those typical for their age. Assessments of children currently in the early years demonstrate that they are making at least good progress from their starting points and some are making rapid progress. As a result, an increasing proportion of children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Staff know children well and skilfully plan stimulating activities to meet their interests and learning needs. This enthuses children and promotes their learning. For example, while children excitedly wrapped Christmas presents to go under the tree, they developed their fine motor skills.
- Staff ensure that children receive high-quality attention as individuals and as part of small groups. They show children how to complete tasks and work alongside them to help improve their skills quickly. Children benefit from lots of praise and respond well to the adults who work with them. As a result, children make strong progress in their learning and development.
- Children settle to learning quickly and sustain good concentration from an early age. This is because staff provide opportunities for children to make choices and follow their interests. Staff promote learning at every opportunity and children display pride in the skills they develop.
- Staff use assessment information effectively to plan activities which meet children's individual needs. As a result, children become confident learners who are keen to take on new challenges. They show increasing independence when completing reading, writing and mathematics activities, and persevere with tasks even when they find them difficult.
- Staff are skilled at talking with and questioning children. They use questioning well to reinforce and develop children's vocabulary. This improves children's understanding and their confidence in speaking and listening.
- Clear routines, high expectations and strong relationships ensure that children behave well and develop their social skills effectively. The youngest children listen attentively and give polite responses when adults speak to them. Children in Reception work and play cooperatively in pairs and small groups.
- Leaders have developed effective approaches for parents to become involved in their children's learning. For example, through weekly 'look and learn' sessions, parents have regular opportunities to work alongside their children and find out about what they have been learning. Parents speak very positively about the support their children receive to make good progress in the early years.
- Leadership of the early years is good. The early years leader has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses across all the settings. Well-planned professional development has enhanced the skills of staff and contributed to improving children's outcomes.

School details

Unique reference number	116659
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10037890

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	520
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Hart
Headteacher	Anita McLaren
Telephone number	01527 873 778
Website	www.charford.worcs.sch.uk
Email address	head@charford.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 June 2013

Information about this school

- Charford First School is larger than the average-sized first school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average. The number of pupils with statements of special educational needs, or education, health and care plans, is below the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The early years comprises three Reception classes and a morning and afternoon Nursery class. There are also separate morning and afternoon classes for two-year-olds and rising three-year-olds.
- There are three classes in each year group in Year 1 to Year 4.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 26 lessons. Fourteen of these observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher and senior leaders. One inspector visited the before-school club.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally with two groups of pupils as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about their reading. They also observed learning that took place in small groups outside lessons.
- Inspectors extensively examined the quality of work in a wide range of pupils' books, including English, mathematics, topics and science. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, three assistant headteachers, the SEN coordinator, other leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector met with two governors and the chair of the governing body. A conversation was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, information about pupils' progress, records relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour, minutes of meetings of the governing body, reviews from external partners and the school's website.
- Inspectors took into consideration 120 parents' responses to Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to parents on the first day of the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke to staff and took account of their views through 22 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

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