

Inspection of Charmouth Primary School

Lower Sea Lane, Charmouth, Bridport, Dorset DT6 6LR

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils do not benefit from a coherent curriculum. As a result, they often find it difficult to acquire the necessary knowledge to be well prepared for the next stage in their education, including in the early years foundation stage (EYFS). Pupils have gaps in their knowledge or sometimes struggle to connect what they know to new or different situations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are not consistently learning as well as they should.

Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils in lessons. Consequently, some pupils have developed poor attitudes to learning. Pupils are not routinely motivated to do their best. This reduces the quality of work they often produce. Nevertheless, pupils enjoy coming to school. They learn through a range of different activities, such as using the beach in history lessons.

Pupils enjoy harmonious relationships with each other and adults. This helps to create a positive feel at school. Pupils feel safe. They say that bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that adults tackle any bullying, if it happens. Parents hold very differing views about the school. As a result, leaders are taking steps to improve communication and relationships with all parents.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have struggled to gain the momentum needed towards becoming a good school. Their intentions have been interrupted by the pandemic, but other factors have also played a critical role. For example, for too long, senior leaders and governors lacked the necessary challenge and rigour in holding teachers to account. This led to an overly positive self-evaluation and unidentified weaknesses which leaders are now having to address. However, following the involvement of the local authority, the appointment of a supporting external headteacher, and some recent appointments to the governing body, the school is refocused and energised. Leaders are taking the right steps and have got the school 'back on track'.

Staff have confidence in the school's leadership. Leaders, including governors, are mindful to help staff manage their day-to-day workload. Staff are positive and feel well supported to continue making the improvements that this school still needs.

Senior leaders and those responsible for SEND did not previously have the right systems and processes to ensure that pupils consistently got the timely help they needed. This was a failing that went undetected for too long. However, senior leaders and governors are now taking effective action to ensure that the right staff, who have the capacity to complete referrals, assessments and diagnoses are securing the necessary improvements. Pupils are being identified, referred and supported appropriately through a range of internal and external services. This is a much-improved picture, although there are still some pupils whose individual plans

are not good enough. Some support plans lack the necessary precision or detail to ensure pupils can make the best possible progress.

The school's curriculum is not planned and sequenced well enough, including for children in the EYFS. Some pupils find it difficult to learn new knowledge or apply this to different situations. Leaders do not ensure that individual subject knowledge is broken into small and logical steps to help pupils deepen their knowledge and further their understanding. This holds pupils back and sometimes leads to confusion, including in the core subjects, such as mathematics and science. The weaknesses in the curriculum model and its implementation prevent pupils from being consistently ready for the next curricular challenges they face.

Leaders ensure that the school has an appropriate early reading and phonics programme in place. This is suitably ambitious. Most pupils have a book that matches their phonics knowledge. However, teachers do not implement the scheme with fidelity, including how they assess pupils. Assessments are not completed in a timely or thorough manner. This means the needs of some pupils are not spotted or met well enough. The organisation of the daily phonics sessions prevents some of those who have fallen behind from catching up quickly, including a few pupils with SEND. This is because learning is not always matched closely to all pupils' needs. However, reading is widely celebrated and promoted. For example, pupils enjoy reading for different reasons and pleasure. They like hearing stories and using the library during the school day.

Pupils are kind, tolerant and respectful. They enjoy learning about different cultures and how to make the world a better place. For example, they talk passionately about key historical figures and events from the civil rights movement in the United States. Pupils show a great understanding of the different kinds of prejudice that exist and how these cause harm. However, they lack knowledge of different religions, which is a barrier to their understanding of life in modern Britain and the world beyond.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors, fully understand their safeguarding responsibilities. As a result, they ensure that safeguarding procedures, including staff training, pre-employment checks and arrangements for reporting concerns are implemented appropriately. Staff are tenacious in undertaking their safeguarding duties to keep pupils safe.

Leaders ensure that pupils know how to stay safe. This includes teaching about the school's local context, such as beach safety, and the process for making emergency contact with the coast guard.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The early reading and phonics programme is not implemented well enough, including the use of assessment. As a result, some pupils do not get off to a strong start in reading. Leaders must ensure that the phonics programme is implemented effectively so that all pupils can quickly become fluent and confident readers.
- The curriculum is not planned and sequenced well enough, including in the EYFS. This leads to confused or disconnected knowledge for some pupils. Leaders must make sure that the curriculum is designed well to enable pupils to acquire deep knowledge in each subject.
- Leaders' recent actions have led to some vital but early improvements for pupils with SEND. Previous weaknesses mean that the school is still catching up. The identification of pupils' needs and the effectiveness of targeted support is still not good enough. Leaders must continue to implement strong processes and systems so that all pupils with SEND are swiftly identified and get the support they need, as quickly as possible.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning. Consequently, pupils do not take pride in their work and sometimes lack motivation. Teachers must have high ambitions so that pupils can produce high-quality work and achieve well across the curriculum.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	113662
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10227352
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	117
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mark Carter
Headteacher	Laura Cornish
Website	www.charmouth.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 – 4 July 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is located in Charmouth, close to the towns of Bridport and Lyme Regis in Dorset.
- The school is organised into mixed year groups, including a combined Nursery and Reception Year.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. The lead inspector also considered science on the second day of the inspection.
- For each deep dive, the inspectors met with the curriculum leader and subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, spoke to teachers and some pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Lesson visits were not

conducted in the history deep dive but additional evidence was included from other elements of the deep dive.

- The inspectors scrutinised individual plans for pupils with SEND to evaluate how well these are being implemented.
- The inspectors spoke with different pupils about their personal, social, health and economic education and well-being.
- The lead inspector looked at the single central register and checked the school's systems for monitoring and reporting safeguarding concerns. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead, who is also the headteacher.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher to discuss the provision for special educational needs in order to help evaluate the effectiveness of SEND provision and practice in the school.
- The lead inspector met with a representative school improvement adviser from the local authority.
- The inspectors spoke with different staff and met with groups of pupils to find out what it is like to be a pupil, or to work, in this school.
- The lead inspector met with a representative group of governors which included the chair and vice chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector reviewed key documentation, including the school's self-evaluation form, school action plans, the SEND action plan, and governors' minutes and monitoring records.
- The lead inspector checked survey responses, including those from pupils, staff and parents. This included taking all 57 responses to Ofsted's free-text service into account.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Bradley Murray

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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