

Inspection of Charters School

Charters Road, Sunningdale, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 9QY

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this school. They learn well and have access to a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills and talents. They recognise that their teachers have high expectations of them, and this motivates them to think ambitiously about their futures. One parent summed up the views expressed by many: 'Charters feels like an exciting place to study, with lots of opportunities for children regardless of academic ability. The teachers work hard to achieve high standards, and pastoral support is good.'

The behaviour of most pupils is very good and reflects the school's values of unity, respect and excellence. Pupils feel safe in school. They know that there are lots of adults they can go to if they need help or advice. Although there is some unkind behaviour and bullying, it is dealt with effectively by leaders once reported.

Pupils appreciate that, even though this is a large school, they are known well by teachers and leaders. Pupils enjoy being a part of the Charters community and experiences, such as trips, sports days and concerts, form a particularly important part of their time here.

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

Pupils achieve well here in a broad range of subject areas. Leaders have thought about what they want pupils to learn and how this should build over time from Years 7 to 13. Teachers use a range of different methods skilfully to check that pupils are learning what they intend, and to identify any gaps in understanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn well as a result of recent improvements to the way their needs are identified and met in the classroom. When pupils fall behind, they benefit from additional help outside of their usual lessons to help them catch up with their peers. This includes effective support for struggling readers. Students in the sixth form learn particularly well. Teachers use their impressive subject expertise to inspire students and motivate them to be curious.

Behaviour in lessons is calm and focused. Off-task behaviour is dealt with quickly by teachers, so that it does not prevent anyone from learning. At breaktimes, the majority of pupils behave well. However, the behaviour of some pupils is boisterous at times. There are also a small number of pupils who are disruptive and sometimes defiant. Leaders have identified this and have put in place effective plans to help these pupils improve their behaviour.

Pupils' wider development is a clear priority at this school. Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from an extensive programme of clubs and enrichment activities. Opportunities include sports, music and drama as well as competitions and events linked to particular subject areas. This is especially strong in the sixth form, where students have extensive enrichment opportunities built into their timetables. Many use this time to provide service to the school or their local community, for example,

by visiting elderly residents in a nearby nursing home. Some take on student leadership responsibilities on the school council and its committees.

Leaders have made recent improvements to the curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. The plans they have introduced provide good coverage of the things pupils need to know to prepare them for life in modern Britain. However, these have been introduced very recently and have not yet had time to be fully effective. Some pupils' experience of PSHE lessons has been repetitive or disjointed. Leaders have rightly identified that some groups of pupils do not feel well represented within the PSHE programme, particularly in the way that equality and racism is discussed.

Throughout their time at Charters, pupils are helped to make important choices about their futures. Leaders make sure that, although the sixth form is the most popular option after Year 11, pupils know about alternatives, such as apprenticeships and vocational routes. The guidance and support given to students in the sixth form to identify and secure their next steps is highly beneficial because it is closely matched to their interests and ambitions.

Leaders and trustees know their school well. They have an accurate understanding of its strengths as well as those areas which could be developed further. Trustees bring a range of expertise to their roles. They understand their responsibilities and provide effective support and challenge to leaders. They use a range of methods to make sure that the information they are given by leaders matches what is happening in school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that adults in school receive effective and regular training, so that safeguarding remains a priority. Staff report any concerns about pupils' welfare, even if they seem small. Leaders take timely and appropriate action and help is secured quickly when needed. This includes working with external agencies and mental health professionals as required. The necessary checks are carried out on new staff and any concerns are handled well. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe through the newly improved PSHE curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although pupils generally behave well, behaviour at breaktimes is sometimes boisterous. A small minority of pupils are sometimes defiant or disruptive. Leaders should make sure that staff are consistent in addressing behaviour which falls below the expectations set out in the school's behaviour policy.

- Leaders' recent improvements to the curriculum in PSHE are not fully embedded. Some pupils do not remember what they have learned in these lessons. Their learning over time does not build consistently on what they already know. Leaders should evaluate the impact of the PSHE curriculum, so that they can continue to refine their plans.

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.

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	138823
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	10256327
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1729
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	353
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Evans
Headteacher	John Fletcher
Website	www.charterschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Charters School converted to become an academy in October 2012. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2009 it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- This school is a single-academy trust and has a board of trustees who are solely responsible for governance.
- The school's current headteacher joined the school in September 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The school makes use of three registered and on unregistered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires leaders to ensure that pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive impartial advice about technical education, qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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.

- Inspectors held meetings with a range of leaders, including the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team. They also met with subject leaders, pastoral leaders, a range of non-teaching staff and teachers early in their careers.
- Inspectors spoke with trustees about their roles.
- Inspectors carried out six deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, physical education, history and languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered survey responses from parents, pupils and staff. Inspectors also spoke to a wide range of pupils throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors judged the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures by meeting with leaders, scrutinising the single central record, sampling safeguarding records and talking with pupils, teachers, non-teaching staff and leaders about this aspect of their work.

Chris Ellison, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Susan Willman

Ofsted Inspector

Julie Summerfield

Ofsted Inspector

Mike Serridge

Ofsted Inspector

James Rouse

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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