

Inspection of a good school: Charles Warren Academy

Old Groveway, Simpson, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK6 3AZ

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 January 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The principal of this school is Danielle Barnes. This school is part of Academies Enterprise Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Rebecca Boomer-Clark, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Hall.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school and the values that they are taught. They feel cared for by warm and nurturing staff who embody the school value of being 'big hearted'. The strong and trusting relationships between staff and pupils mean that all pupils feel safe. They are confident that there is help available whenever they need it.

The school has high aspirations for all pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils enjoy their learning, especially when work is challenging. However, currently pupils do not achieve as highly as they should. The school knows this and is working swiftly and tenaciously to ensure that every pupil does the best that they can at every stage.

Behaviour across the school is calm and orderly. Playtimes are full of fun and glee. There is something for everyone to enjoy in this inclusive environment. Pupils are kind to each other as they explore new games together.

Pupils prize the leadership roles they can hold. They love the opportunity to share learning and take on responsibilities. For example, 'reading champions' help other children to understand the importance of reading, share amazing books and lead school assemblies.

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

The school's curriculum is designed carefully from the early years, where staff prepare children well for future learning. The school, supported by the trust, has rightly introduced some new curriculums for key subjects so that pupils' knowledge builds in small steps in all years. There is an emphasis on developing precise vocabulary, making sure there are good levels of both challenge and support.

Staff mostly have secure subject knowledge across the curriculum. In subjects where the curriculum is newer, training and resources help staff know what to teach and when. There is, however, inconsistency in how well the curriculum is taught. Pupils are not always able to practise what they have been taught with accuracy and their knowledge is less secure. The school has coaching and training for staff in place to improve this.

Reading is embedded in the school's culture. Pupils develop an understanding of a wide range of texts. From the early years, children are read to daily and they love this time where books come to life. The school, rightly, prioritises early reading and phonics provision is well established. Where pupils with significant needs struggle to read. They are provided with bespoke support that equips them with the reading ability and wider skills that they need. The school also encourages parents to enjoy reading with their children, using the library, having books to take home to read for pleasure and attending sessions on how to support their children with reading.

Although the curriculum is designed to build pupils' secure and deep knowledge, this is not yet having the intended effect for enough pupils. Staff do not routinely check for gaps in pupils' knowledge consistently well. This means that pupils' misconceptions are not identified or are not addressed promptly enough. Therefore, pupils do not build the secure knowledge or vocabulary that they need so that they can achieve well overall.

Pupils behave well in lessons. Children in the early years demonstrate high levels of concentration for sustained periods of time. The newly introduced behaviour system is working well, although this is not yet used consistently across the school. While the school is a calm and purposeful learning environment, too many pupils miss too much learning, particularly those most disadvantaged. The school is working hard with families to improve attendance and ensure these pupils are in school more regularly.

All pupils are valued and differences are celebrated. Pupils learn about faiths and cultures in the local community and beyond. They benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities and are supported to try new things such as '50 things to do'. The school knows its pupils very well and encourages everyone to uncover talents, be responsible and feel prepared for their next stages of education.

The trust and school leaders care deeply about the pupils at this school. They actively seek to create strong links with parents and the wider community. Those responsible for governance have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and current priorities for development. Under new school leadership, there have been meaningful changes to improve the curriculum so that pupils learn well and achieve well. Staff value these improvements and greatly appreciate the care and sensitivity with which changes are

made. They are proud to work in a school that places all pupils at the centre of any decisions that are made.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum is new and pupils have gaps in their understanding. As a result, pupils are not able to connect new learning to what they have studied previously. This means they are not able to recall or use learning as the curriculum intends. The school should ensure that staff accurately check pupils' understanding and use this information to inform their future teaching, so that pupils achieve well across the curriculum.
- The curriculum is not always implemented effectively. This means that pupils do not develop skills or acquire knowledge effectively in some subjects. The school should ensure that they maintain a careful oversight over how well the curriculum is being implemented and provide support so that it is of a consistently high standard in all subjects.
- Too many pupils miss too much school, including some more vulnerable pupils. This has a negative impact on their achievement and their personal development. Although leaders have improved the attendance of some pupils, their efforts need to intensify to reduce levels of absence more.

Background

When we have judged good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2014.

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' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	138440
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10288026
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Hall
CEO of the trust	Rebecca Boomer-Clark
Principal	Danielle Barnes
Website	www.charleswarrenacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The principal started her current post in April 2023.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school runs a specially resourced provision for pupils with speech, language and communication needs as well as pupils with autism. There are currently six pupils using this provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in this evaluation of the school.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, looked at samples of work and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector also looked at samples of pupils' work in art, geography and writing.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents. These included the school improvement plan, the pupil premium statement and minutes from governing body and trust meetings.
- The inspector observed behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime and in lessons.
- The views of parents and staff were considered through Ofsted's online surveys and from conversations during the inspection.

Inspection team

Ally Aldridge-Gibbons, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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