

Inspection of Charlbury Primary School

Crawborough, Charlbury, Oxfordshire OX7 3TX

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 March 2024

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

The headteacher of this school is Charlie Barwell. This school is part of the River Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Paul James, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jeremy Long.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel valued at this caring and vibrant school. They are taught to appreciate each other's unique qualities and treat everyone with kindness and compassion. Leaders are highly ambitious for pupils, leading by example on the school motto 'to be the best we can be and do the best we can do'. This positive outlook influences every aspect of school life. The school is determined to give pupils the very best start to their education.

The school teaches pupils how to be ready for learning, how to recognise their emotions and to know what to do if they are feeling angry or anxious. As a result, pupils concentrate well in lessons and behave calmly and politely around school and at social times. Pupils learn how to contribute to society through roles of responsibility in school and, for example, through caring for the environment. They visit places of natural beauty in the local area. For example, in geography, they consider with great interest how the amount of plastic waste entering rivers could be reduced. Pupils achieve well and are ready for their next stage of education. As one parent commented: 'Charlbury is a welcoming and inclusive school where children feel happy and safe. They progress well both academically and in their personal development.'

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

Leaders have a highly astute understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support. Leaders communicate the school's highly aspirational vision very well, and staff are proud to be part of this team. They feel well supported by the school, saying that recent, necessary changes have been well considered and carefully carried out. Everyone is determined to do their very best for pupils so that barriers to learning are overcome and all pupils achieve highly.

The school has worked hard to create a culture where pupils are inspired to find learning interesting. As soon as children start in Reception, they learn the school's high expectations and quickly develop a strong interest in learning. They are encouraged to be curious and creative. Adults expertly weave children's interests through the curriculum, for example introducing the concept of forces while children explore what makes boats float or sink. Children sustain concentration for long periods of time, for example role playing in the classroom vet surgery play area or practising using scissors, sticking and making models. Children become confident learners, independently working out spellings of new vocabulary to incorporate into sentences when writing, and explaining their reasoning in mathematics.

Leaders have worked tirelessly to ensure there is an ambitious, purposeful curriculum in place. Expectations for pupils' achievement are clearly set out. These goals are broken down into smaller steps that are sequenced in logical order. Leaders have carefully identified the most important knowledge and technical

vocabulary pupils must understand to build their learning securely from Reception to Year 6.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They explain ideas and model new concepts well. Teachers adapt activities and the use of resources so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported to learn the same curriculum. In some subjects, particularly where the curriculum is newer, the school is aware that some pupils have gaps in their prior learning and therefore do not achieve as well as they could. The school is working hard to ensure assessment is used systematically so pupils build new learning on solid foundations and make secure links with larger ideas.

The school places a high priority on reading. Pupils are surrounded with stories, songs and rhymes as part of the curriculum. They start learning phonics straight away in Reception and enjoy reading widely across the curriculum. Any pupils who struggle are supported expertly by teachers, and they catch up quickly. The books pupils read are well matched to the sounds they are learning so they experience success and enjoy practising reading. Adults and pupils share their favourite stories regularly, creating a positive and encouraging reading culture.

The school is ambitious about developing pupils' characters so they become kind and responsible citizens. It helps pupils to explore the curriculum more broadly through visits to local places of interest, such as to Blenheim Palace, when learning about history and science. Pupils widen their interests through attending the many after-school clubs on offer. Pupils are taught about diversity. They know the fundamental British values and their importance in modern Britain. They learn about different religions, building respect and acceptance of others' beliefs and views. In assemblies, pupils are invited to engage with topical issues, considering the social and moral implications from different points of view.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Adults do not always systematically check pupils' understanding. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and do not achieve as well as they could. The school should continue to support staff so that the use of ongoing assessment is consistently effective.

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 special educational needs and/or disabilities (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	147640
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10296461
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	177
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jeremy Long
CEO of the trust	Paul James
Headteacher	Charlie Barwell
Website	www.charlburyschool.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is sponsored by the River Learning Trust and became an academy in 2019.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, senior leaders and governors.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, music and geography. For each deep dive, they 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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 inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documents, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of local governing body meetings and behaviour incident logs.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at playtimes. They spoke with pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders' expectations of pupils' behaviour.

Inspection team

Jo Brinkley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ian Howie

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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