



# Charters School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 110046  
**Local Authority** Windsor and Maidenhead  
**Inspection number** 288572  
**Inspection date** 12 December 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Paul Armitage HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Charters Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Sunningdale
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19		Ascot SL5 9QY
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01344 624826
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	1554	<b>Fax number</b>	01344 875182
<b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>	332		
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr M Cooper
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs M Twelftree
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 October 2001		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–19	12 December 2006	288572

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Charters is a large mixed comprehensive school. It became a specialist sports college in 2002. 88% of students are White British; the remainder come from a wide range of ethnic groups. Five percent of students are eligible for free school meals; this is below average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. The school houses a unit for 18 students with physical disabilities. Just over 4% of students use English as an additional language. The school is in an area of social advantage with some significant pockets of deprivation. Students' standards when they start at school are just above average.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

A brief report such as this fails to do justice to Charters. It cannot adequately convey the atmosphere of everyone busily learning and enjoying it. Students' attitudes are excellent. So too are the school's resources - the teachers, the curriculum, the extra-curricular activities, the buildings and their facilities - and the way they are used by students and by the local community.

As a result, young people of all abilities and with a wide range of needs are helped and encouraged to do the best they can. Standards are high and students make excellent progress both academically and in their personal development. Teaching is of a high standard resulting in excellent learning. There is a real sense that all staff want students to get as much as they can from the school.

Central to the success of the school is the headteacher supported by an able senior management team and friendly but critical governors. Together, they have a clear vision and are ambitious for their students and school. They communicate well with all staff so that everyone shares the same high objectives. They monitor performance carefully and act swiftly to maintain quality. The new system for assessing students' work and linking this to learning should improve monitoring still further. The school has been right to trial it in Key Stage 3 and is also right that it is ready to introduce across the school. Managers are open to new ideas but treat them with appropriate caution to protect standards. They are progressively giving students more responsibility for their own learning but correctly think that Charters' students are mature enough for this to go much further.

Students feel safe. There is little bullying but when it occurs, it is dealt with effectively by staff. Students are well aware of how to stay healthy and there is visible evidence that they are acting on this. The high quality of their academic work and personal development are ensuring that they are acquiring knowledge and skills that will serve them well in later life.

Specialist school status has had many positive results. For example, it supports more-able sports students well; is encouraging the introduction of improved assessment procedures; has introduced improvements in the way that the school encourages students' personal development; and has provided benefits for the community.

Parents and carers play a big role in the life of the school. This was very clear from the large number of questionnaires returned. While a number raised critical points which were discussed anonymously with staff and taken into account when reaching inspection judgements, the overwhelming view was that Charters is an excellent school.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 1**

The points made above apply equally to the sixth form. Particularly impressive is the range of courses on offer and the alertness of the school to keeping this constantly under review to meet new needs as they arise. Monitoring of performance is very good

as is the school's response to this monitoring. A good example is the way in which sixth-form management is analysing and responding to differences in results between subjects and between Years 12 and 13.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Provide more opportunities for students to take greater responsibility for their own learning.
- Extend the use of the school's improved assessment procedures, linked to learning, across the whole school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

In Key Stage 3, the standards achieved by students are well above average. Results have been consistently high in recent years making the school one of the country's best performers. Standards are also high in Key Stage 4 with over 80% of students attaining 5 A\* - C grades in 2006. In 2005, the school received recognition for its high standards by being included in the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust most improved schools list. In the sixth form, A-level standards are above average; at AS they are lower but still just above average, and in vocational subjects, they are excellent. There is variation in standards in different subjects but the school monitors well and takes effective action where necessary.

While there are individual differences, overall, students make excellent progress which is significantly higher than average. This judgement applies equally to all groups of students. This excellent progress is due to a combination of students' very positive attitudes, excellent teaching, and strong parental support.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Their confidence and self-awareness is developing well, encouraged by their success in academic work, extra-curricular activities and their involvement in the many opportunities provided by the school to take responsibility. The pilot programme leading to the Young Leaders' Award (developed from the school's specialist sports status) is particularly impressive. Students are able to articulate clear moral values and act upon them in school; for example in their relationships with each other and in the way older students mentor younger ones. As a result, their social development is excellent; they work very well together and have excellent relationships with staff throughout the school. Students' cultural development is also very good. For example, students recently went to Sri Lanka to participate in the international relief programme and what they did was shared with

the whole school. There are active links with a school in South Africa and a large number of students will participate in a music tour to South Africa in July 2007.

Students make excellent contributions to the community through an extensive programme of events strengthened by its specialist sports status. So, for instance, all football, Community Sports Leadership Award and dance leader students work as coaches in the community. Other good examples include sixth formers leading a week of activities in Wales for students with learning difficulties and disabilities and, in Year 10, Theatre in Education performances in local schools on bullying and health issues. Well over a hundred students have representative roles in school either as mentors, prefects, coaches, tutor group or year representatives.

Through their academic work, the wide range of vocational courses offered, and the rich provision in careers and enterprise education, students acquire good knowledge and skills to support their future economic well-being.

Students' attendance is well above average as a result of the very positive attitudes of students, parents and staff. Behaviour is excellent; there is a very low incidence of bullying and students report that it is dealt with effectively when it occurs. Students are safety conscious and feel safe. They are well aware of health-related issues and take full advantage of the excellent range of well-prepared and presented food available.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

The quality of teaching is outstanding. The content of lessons is well matched to students' needs, not least because of the careful monitoring of students' understanding. Specialist sports status has had a positive impact. The physical education department has established a new tracking and assessment system to provide more effective target setting and elements of this are now being rolled out throughout the school. Teaching Assistants are well employed to support learning and departments offer extra tuition outside regular school hours. There is an effective programme of continuing professional development for teachers.

The quality of learning is outstanding. Students' attitudes are excellent; they want to learn and know how to use the excellent resource that is the school. They respond very positively to the many opportunities teachers give them to take more responsibility for their own learning both in school and at home, though the school has rightly identified that this is something that should be developed further. Parents and carers are very positively involved in all aspects of their children's schooling and many help in community activities linked to the school.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The curriculum matches the needs of students very well. In Key Stages 3 and 4, it covers the subjects of the National Curriculum and in the sixth-form, provides a good range of AS and A-level courses. A good range of vocational courses have been introduced in Key Stage 4 and the sixth-form. The school has maintained a broad and balanced curriculum and so, for example, 66% of students study a modern foreign language. Provision for 'gifted and talented' students is especially strong with Latin, additional technology, ICT and mathematics available. There are master classes and an Oxbridge preparation course. Booster lessons for all students are provided in English, mathematics and science. Students with learning difficulties are very well supported by the availability of flexible programmes to support their individual needs. There is a substantial programme of extra-curricular activities in breaks, before and after school ranging from specialist training for more able sports students to simple relaxation activities such as lunch time basketball and table tennis. The school again received the Sportsmark Gold and Artsmark Gold awards in 2006.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

It is very clear that all staff want their students to do well. The support they give them, both academically and linked to their personal development is impressive. A key feature in this is the fact that students stay in their tutorial groups from Year 7 through to Year 11 so that tutors know them well and how they are doing. Heads of Year also act effectively in this capacity, aided by the school's effective methods of collecting data on students' performance.

Another key feature is the way in which students care for each other; for instance, 80 Year 11 students act as mentors to Year 7 students and help with reading, writing and other matters. The school provides good information about careers and further and higher education. It has been awarded the CfBT Enhanced Careers Award as recognition of this. There are effective links with outside agencies such as Education Welfare Officers, Educational Psychologists and other professionals. The security status of all staff is properly checked.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The headteacher is inspirational in her drive to ensure that all students achieve the best they can academically, in extra-curricular activities and in their personal development. She is

at the root of the school's excellent ethos which supports this. Together with her impressive senior management team and managers at all levels, she shares a clear vision for the school, now and in the future. There is good contact between staff; policies, practices and innovations are well understood by all.

The quality of monitoring and self-assessment is very high; for example, the way the school monitors examination results and responds accordingly. The quality of planning, based on the self-assessment, is of an equally high quality. The school has excellent staff; all resources including the buildings and equipment are well used - by the school and the wider community. Governors are very active; they know the school and the needs and interests of parents and the local community very well. Effective steps have been taken to address all the recommendations for improvement in the last inspection.



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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	1

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	1
The behaviour of learners	1	1
The attendance of learners	1	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

### Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

You know that we recently inspected your school. We met many of you. I would like to thank you for sharing your opinions with us. They are important because you are the school's 'customers'. You helped us make our judgements.

We have judged that your school is Grade 1. Using Ofsted's words, this means that we think your school is 'outstanding'. Few schools in the country are judged to be outstanding so this means that we think your school is special.

There are many reasons for our judgement - the results you get in examinations, the progress you make in school, the quality of your teachers, the curriculum which offers you lots of opportunities, the school's links with the community, its resources, its specialist sports status, the high quality of your headteacher and other managers, the level of support from your parents and carers and so on. What really impressed us was your attitude; you are keen to learn and you use the school well to help you. There is a real buzz in your school and that is down to you.

In our full report which you can read at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk), you will see that we say many good things but we have also made some suggestions for further improvement. One is for you: it is about you taking even more responsibility for your learning by asking more questions, finding out more answers and telling people about them. The others are for the teachers and are about checking on how well you are doing. They already do these things well but they agree with us that they can do them even better.

I would like to wish well for the future and once again, my thanks for helping us.

Yours sincerely

Paul Armitage

Her Majesty's Inspector