



Charlton Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123069
Local Authority Oxfordshire
Inspection number 292574
Inspection date 13 October 2006
Reporting inspector Christopher Parker

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Charlton Village Road
School category	Community		Wantage
Age range of pupils	4-11		OX12 7HG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01235 762861
Number on roll (school)	264	Fax number	01235 762861
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Mary Hallam
		Headteacher	Mrs Jenny de la Coze
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2000		

Age group 4-11	Inspection date 13 October 2006	Inspection number 292574
--------------------------	-------------------------------------------	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is slightly larger than average. The pupils are predominantly from white British backgrounds. Fewer pupils than usual have learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is very small and well below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for the pupils. Its drive for improvement has resulted in some outstanding features. The range of opportunities provided during and after school is excellent. This has a direct impact on the pupils' outstanding personal development.

The very carefully constructed curriculum has also contributed significantly to the improvement in academic standards. Pupils are provided with interesting tasks that encourage them to write to a high standard in history or science, as well as in English. The teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) extremely effectively to engage pupils in learning, for example, in mathematics or geography. Pupils enjoy lessons. Consistently good teaching is a key factor in the school's success. Expectations are high, pupils know what is expected of them and are increasingly included in assessing how well they have done. As a result, achievement is good.

The children make a good start and most reach the goals set for the end of the Reception year. In Years 1 and 2 they do equally well, except in writing where their progress is not as rapid as in other areas. From Years 3 to 6 they make good progress in all areas reaching high standards by the end of Year 6. In the national tests in 2006 standards were well above average, with six out of ten pupils reaching the highest level in English, mathematics and science.

The pupils' progress is very carefully monitored through annual tests and day-to-day marking of their work. Some of the marking is excellent and sets out very clearly and precisely what the pupils need to do next to improve. In other cases, teachers' comments are not as helpful and do not provide sufficient guidance to generate rapid improvement, particularly for younger children.

The headteacher provides very clear direction for the school. She has generated extremely effective partnerships that have brought improvements to both the curriculum and the standards the pupils achieve. Strong links with higher education and industry have contributed to higher standards in science. Learning networks with local schools have added momentum to the use of ICT across the curriculum.

One parent commented that, 'communication with parents is extremely good'. A recent consultation on homework arrangements prompted another to say how she appreciated, 'the way the school staff have listened to parents' views on homework and made changes'. Despite extensive consultation not all parents fully agree with the outcomes of the homework review. Older pupils are particularly pleased with the stronger links with learning in school, greater variety of work and the increased independence and responsibility they are given to learn at home.

The school has enjoyed considerable success in raising standards in the last two years. It has a robust approach to evaluating its own performance. Detailed plans for further improvement put the school in a strong position to get even better.

What the school should do to improve further

Improve standards in writing by the end of Year 2 by ensuring marking consistently helps pupils to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Many children start school with the skills expected for their age. They make good progress and more children than usual reach the goals set for the end of the Reception year in almost all areas of learning. In communication, language and literacy the proportion reaching the goal is broadly average. In Years 1 and 2 the pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics. As a result standards are above average by the end of Year 2. In writing, progress is not as rapid and fewer pupils are reaching higher levels. There are some weaknesses in spelling and punctuation. As a result, standards in writing are not as high as they should be.

Progress in Years 3 to 6 has increased in the last few years and is now consistently good. Improvements to teaching, the curriculum and work in partnerships with other schools and institutions have come to fruition. Standards in English, mathematics and science are high.

Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because they are well supported.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. The pupils benefit from the wide range of opportunities provided for them. They talk with considerable enthusiasm about how much fun they have in lessons. They enjoy solving problems in mathematics and making extensive use of ICT. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The older pupils willingly take on responsibilities to help the school to run smoothly. The school council makes a strong contribution to the school community.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Behaviour is consistently good and pupils are respectful. Older pupils listened attentively to some of the youngest children talk about their work during a class assembly on the Victorians. In lessons they are eager to contribute and concentrate well on their work. Older pupils speak with a mature understanding about environmental issues. They know how important it is to maintain a healthy diet and they take regular exercise. Pupils say they feel safe and that any disagreements on the playground are dealt with speedily.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The headteacher's accurate monitoring of the quality of teaching identifies where and how it can improve. As a result of the actions taken, there are many aspects of the teaching that are consistently strong.

In the Reception class good teaching of phonics lays the foundations for pupils' later learning. In Years 1 to 6 lessons are well planned. Teachers make sure the pupils know the purpose of the lessons. They set out clearly what pupils must, should and could achieve in a lesson. They also challenge the pupils solve problems for themselves.

The quality marking is inconsistent. In some classes, notably in Years 5 and 6, it is excellent. The teacher clearly states how the pupil should improve their writing: 'NEXT - use pronouns more (he, she, they) instead of a person's name'. In others weaknesses are pointed out without further guidance.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. The breadth of work on display and the pupils' enthusiasm for a wide range of topics illustrate very well the extent and high quality of the curriculum. Pupils talk about exploring the work of Andy Goldsworthy in art and applying learning about the human body in science to physical education lessons. They greatly enjoyed and benefited from a residential to Derbyshire.

The very well planned curriculum makes interesting links between subjects. Opportunities to write in a wide range of contexts contribute significantly to the high standards achieved by the end of Year 6. The extensive use of ICT generates great confidence for pupils to apply their skills and solve problems in different contexts. Activities for the youngest children now make full use of the outdoor area and its resources.

The school provides an extensive range of after school clubs and activities which pupils enjoy and appreciate.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Appropriate steps are taken to ensure the safety of the pupils on the school site. Some parents expressed concerns about the absence of a crossing patrol. Attempts to recruit have so far proved fruitless. The pupils are currently designing advertising leaflets to encourage local residents to apply for the job.

Pupils are well supported in lessons, particularly those with learning difficulties. Teaching assistants provide good additional explanations, individual and small group

teaching. In many respects the teachers provide good guidance for the pupils but some of the marking does not help the pupils to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management are good. The headteacher and the leadership team provide a very strong and clear direction. Their work has led to a significant rise in standards by the end of Year 6. The school's performance is carefully monitored and evaluated. Detailed plans for improvement set out challenging goals. In most respects the school has been very successful in reaching these goals but standards in writing by the end of Year 2 remain lower than they should be.

The role of subject leaders has increased significantly since the last inspection. The ICT co-ordinator, for example, is extremely active in ensuring the school's resources are used to full effect to stimulate and encourage the pupils. Through training and very useful partnerships the school now provides the pupils with high quality opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum.

The governors have reviewed their role and are now very effective in steering the work of the school and challenging its effectiveness. They are playing an increasing role in the school's well established cycle of self review.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	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

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to me. You go to a good school that is getting better and better. You feel safe, behave very well and listen carefully to each other. You benefit from an excellent curriculum that includes a very good range of after school clubs. Your work on the environment and healthy lifestyles has given you an insight into important issues. You are making changes to your school so that you receive a 'green' award.

You are doing well in lessons because the teachers make them interesting and you know what is expected of you. You concentrate on your work and make good progress. The teachers have been successful in raising standards. Some of your writing is very good. I have asked the teachers to make sure everyone, throughout the school, does really well in writing. Some, but not all, of your work is marked with very detailed comments to help you to improve. I would like the teachers to mark all of your writing in this way so that you all reach the standards you should.

The older children I spoke to really welcome the opportunities to take responsibility. They particularly value the school council, which represents your views well.

I enjoyed being in your school. I hope that in the future it is even more successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Lead Inspector