

Charlton School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133400
Local Authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	294088
Inspection date	12 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Kiran Campbell-Platt

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	139
6th form	36
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Roger Ballaster
Headteacher	Mr Mark Dale-Emberton
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002
School address	Charlton Park Road London SE7 8HX
Telephone number	020 8854 6259
Fax number	020 8317 8053

Age group	11–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Charlton School is a school for pupils aged 11-19 with Statements of Special Educational Need. Pupils have a range of complex needs including severe learning difficulties (SLD, autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) with recent increases in numbers of those with social, emotional and behaviour difficulties (SEBD). It has a small number of looked after children. About a fifth of the pupils come from minority ethnic groups and nearly half are eligible for free school meals. The school operates on two sites, about 4 miles apart, with a new building being constructed at the main site for co-location in 2008. The school has a residential unit. It has extended school status and manages the North Greenwich School Sports Partnership on behalf of the Local Authority (LA). The school manages the LA's Centre for Micro-assisted Education which provides outreach support for pupils across the London area.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Charlton is a satisfactory school with some good features. It has a caring ethos which is reflected in the good quality of its residential provision and the care, guidance and support provided for pupils. As a result, the personal development and well-being of pupils is good. One parent said, 'My child and I really love the school and staff.' The headteacher is an effective leader with a clear vision focused on school improvement. He has steered the school successfully through a difficult period of time, during which the school's budget deficit restricted the recruitment of senior staff for the past four years. This, along with ongoing refurbishment on the main site, has slowed the pace of school improvement. The recent appointment of an experienced deputy headteacher has strengthened the leadership of the school. However, more is needed to develop the leadership skills of senior and middle managers to drive forward the school's plans for improvement. The school has made satisfactory progress on most of the issues from the last inspection. Middle managers are now involved in monitoring provision in curriculum areas and a new assessment system is being implemented. The school has made a good start in using information gained from initial assessments of the pupils in literacy to identify underachievement. The staff use these assessment well to design suitable interventions to support pupils' learning. Improvements have been made to the curriculum and planning is now consistent across the two sites. However, the school still has some way to go in setting up systems for tracking pupils' progress in all subjects.

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils enter school with low starting points and make satisfactory progress. The school is accurate in its judgement that teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good relationships and the positive ethos for learning are strengths of the teaching. Teachers and learning support assistants are generally effective in matching work to the needs of the different groups of learners. However, the recent increase in the number of pupils with challenging behaviour has had a negative impact on progress in lessons when learning is disrupted. Some staff do not have the necessary skills to meet the needs of these pupils. The situation is exacerbated by a lack of suitable spaces for small groups which would be appropriate for focused work with some pupils when they have difficulty in coping in the classroom.

The curriculum is good. It is well-matched to pupils needs and promotes their personal development well. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They enjoy school, feel safe and participate actively in sporting and other extra-curricular activities. They make a very strong contribution to the school community and make good progress in developing life and work-related skills. Although the school works well with local services to promote pupils well-being, it recognises that it is not fully effective in planning for the transition of students in Post-16 who are in transition to the next stage of their education. Some of these students do not have appropriate placements to match their needs.

The staff and governors have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Resources are well deployed but the lack of sufficient and suitable teaching spaces, especially for small groups on both sites have had an adverse impact on provision in addition to taking up management time. The school is not yet effective in its partnerships with local providers to ensure that transitional planning for Post-16 students is carried out smoothly to promote students' well-being and prepare them for future lives.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Provision in the sixth form is satisfactory. Students make sound progress in developing communication, life and independence skills through a good range of curriculum activities which are well-matched to their needs. The school is currently reviewing its provision for work related learning to improve its match to the needs of the increasing numbers of students with BESD. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Although the school works effectively with a range of external services to meet students' needs, it has met with difficulties in securing appropriate placements for some of its most vulnerable students. The school has not established consistent relationships with local providers to ensure the smooth transition of Post-16 students to the next stage of their education.

Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision

Grade: 2

The boarding provision within the school is good. Pupils enjoy staying at school and have good relationships with staff. Care plans are comprehensive and take good account of pupils' needs. The provision makes a strong contribution to promoting healthy life-styles through the healthy eating programme and an excellent range of sporting and other activities. Health and safety procedures are good. Care staff support pupils very well with their homework. The service continues to comply with the required national minimum standards. The house has been redecorated since the last inspection. Improvements are needed to ensure privacy in the shared bedrooms. The school is not regularly updating staff files.

What the school should do to improve further

- Take rigorous action to develop the leadership skills of senior and middle managers to improve the quality of monitoring and self-evaluation.
- Ensure that teachers and support staff have the necessary skills to meet the needs of the different groups of pupils, particularly those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- Develop stronger partnerships with outside agencies and improve the quality of teaching spaces in the main site, and ensure the smooth transition for students at Post-16.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Pupils' attainment when they enter the school is low compared with other learners of the same age because of their learning difficulties and complex needs. Despite their low starting points they make satisfactory gains in developing their confidence as learners. They make good progress in improving their personal, social and communication skills. They participate well in learning activities and in one lesson observed, most pupils were able to take part in a discussion about 'celebrities' and offered sensible ideas about how the lives of people changed once they became famous. Older students make steady progress in developing basic and life skills. More able pupils are successful in achieving a range of accreditation including General Certificate of

Secondary Education (GCSE) in art, entry level in Maths and ASDAN Awards. There is no significant difference in the progress made by different groups of learners.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Older pupils converse readily with visitors and are able to share their views, for example, about the subjects that they enjoy most. They are confident and positive about learning. An older pupil said, 'I like everything about school.' Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in good attendance rates. The positive ethos of the school is reflected in good behaviour and the courtesy pupils show towards each other and staff. Relationships between pupils and teachers are a strength. A small number of pupils with challenging behaviour find it difficult to be attentive in lessons and sometimes disrupt others' learning. Pupils across the school know the difference between right and wrong and learn about spiritual and moral issues in religious education and personal, social and health education (PSHE). They develop socially and culturally through paired and group work in lessons and through subjects such as dance, music and art. One pupil said, 'We are learning about Indian dancing.' They are proud of their recent performance of Romeo and Juliet at the Globe Theatre. They feel safe and say there is no bullying in school. They know about healthy lifestyles and like the healthy options offered in school meals. They make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community through the school council and fund-raising events, for example, in support of a local hospice, MacMillan Nurses and Children in Need. They make good progress in acquiring communication, ICT and other skills for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers use a wide range of methods and resources to involve pupils and to enable them to understand what they are doing. For example, they make good use of computers and interactive white boards to add visual and practical examples that help pupils' learning. Teachers plan lessons that build on what pupils have learned before. Teachers and learning assistants are patient in managing students who find the work difficult. Praise is used effectively to encourage hesitant or less able students. As a result most pupils make satisfactory progress. In some lessons teachers use questioning skills effectively to develop pupils' understanding of concepts. The school has correctly identified assessment for learning as an area for development. It is also aware that the increase in the number of pupils with challenging behaviour slows the progress of pupils' in some classes. The school is aware of the need to ensure that teachers and support staff have the necessary skills to meet the needs of the different groups of pupils, including pupils with behavioural, social and emotional needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school provides a good curriculum which is well-matched to the needs of all pupils. For younger pupils it is based on the National Curriculum and enriched by a good range of creative and multi-sensory activities which promote their enjoyment and communication skills. PSHE, sporting and other clubs support the development of communication, personal and social skills and raise pupils' awareness of healthy and safe lifestyles. More able pupils follow GCSE courses at the Royal Hill site of Charlton School or at a partner secondary school. The school offers Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) courses leading to the bronze award in addition to Entry Level exams in Literacy and Numeracy. Pupils with severe learning difficulties and disabilities have access to well planned multisensory teaching and learning, which use a wide range of alternative communication strategies such as the picture exchange communication system (PECS) as well as Makaton signing and symbols. The well developed curriculum provision enables all pupils to make at least sound progress as they progress through the school. The recent review of the Post-16 curriculum has identified much good practice as well as some areas for development, for example, work related learning which the school is in the process of improving.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Staff are highly committed to providing a safe and caring environment for pupils. The school works with a wide range of agencies, including local authority services to meet pupils' needs. It has developed strong links with speech and language, music and drama therapists to enhance provision. The school provides effective counselling services for pupils, including an educational social worker who works with vulnerable pupils and their families. The team of learning support assistants work well with teachers to help pupils with their learning and to promote their well-being. Communication with parents is good. Targets on pupils' Individual Education Plans are carefully monitored and evaluated to show the progress that pupils are making towards meeting those targets. The school has made a satisfactory start in using assessment data to analyse differences between boys and girls in reading skills and to design appropriate interventions to improve achievement. There are thorough systems in place that safeguard pupils and include robust risk assessments and checks on adults who work with the pupils. Child protection procedures are good and pupils know who they can turn to in times of trouble or anxiety. They feel confident that they are well cared for and guided. There are appropriate health and safety assessments.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has led the school effectively since the previous inspection during a difficult period where financial constraints limited the recruitment of staff to the leadership team. Difficulties arising from the building work currently

in progress have required considerable attention from the headteacher and governors. Although the school has maintained its focus on pupil achievement and supporting the teaching, staffing and recruitment difficulties have hampered the pace of progress made since the school's last inspection. However, progress has been satisfactory. New assessment systems and a good curriculum have been carefully tailored to ensure that all pupils make satisfactory progress. It is too early for the impact of these improvements to be fully realised. Self-review is developing well and information from monitoring of teaching and learning is beginning to be used effectively to plan staff training to improve teaching quality. The senior leadership team has recently been strengthened by an experienced deputy with a second deputy headteacher taking up post at the start of the new school year. Although senior leaders are committed and focused on making further improvement, the school has yet to develop the team's leadership skills to ensure that implementation of school targets is managed effectively and at a faster pace than in recent years. The school seeks the views of pupils, parents and staff to inform its priorities for development through annual surveys. There are effective financial systems in place which have supported budget recovery. Governors are well informed and play a strong role in supporting school development. They are well placed to develop their role as 'critical friends' to the leadership team. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. It provides satisfactory value for money.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	3
The effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
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	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	3

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3	
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	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
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

22 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Charlton School, London, SE7 8HX

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school this week. We enjoyed seeing you in your lessons and talking to you. I was impressed by the courteous way in which you treat each other and your teachers in lessons and around school. I was pleased to meet with some of your fellow pupils and to hear what they thought about the school.

I am writing to let you know my main findings. Charlton School provides a satisfactory education for you. You make satisfactory progress well in most areas of your learning. You make good progress in developing social and personal skills. You told me that you enjoy lessons and feel safe. You have very good relationships with each other and with your teachers. You behave well in lessons and at in break times. Your school provides you with a good range of learning activities in lessons. You benefit from the many after-school clubs like dance and swimming. Your contribution to the school and local community is outstanding. Many of you are involved with the work of the school council to improve the work of the school. Many of you also take part in other activities to raise money for local charities. All the staff are very committed to helping you to learn and make good progress in your personal and social development.

There are some things that the school could do better. I have asked the school to help senior teachers to check the work of the school and develop their leadership skills. I have also asked your school to help teachers and classroom helpers to learn about the different ways that they help all the pupils to learn well, especially the pupils who find it difficult to control their behaviour in lessons. Finally, I have asked the school to work more closely with other organisations so that the classrooms at Charlton are improved and so that the transition of Post-16 students to the next stage of their education is smoother.

Thank you again and I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Kiran Campbell-Platt

Lead inspector