



# Charters Ancaster College

Independent School

Inspection report

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DfES Registration Number	845/6042
Unique Reference Number	131279
Inspection number	296792
Inspection dates	16-17 January 2007
Reporting inspector	Steffi Penny HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Age group 2 1/2 - 11	Published 09 February 2007	Reference no. 296792
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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

Charters Ancaster College is a co-educational primary school set up by a parents' committee in 1996 and is a charitable trust. The school provides education for children aged two and half to eleven years. There are 56 children on roll. It is situated just outside Bexhill-on-Sea in East Sussex and serves a wide catchment area, with children coming from Bexhill and many surrounding villages. The aims of the school include to:

- enable each child to fulfil his or her potential, whatever it may be
- give opportunities for a child to participate in a wide range of activities
- create confidence and self-esteem and develop consideration, tolerance and respect for others
- create links with a wider community to which the school can contribute.

The nursery opened in 1996 and now occupies a separate building within the school grounds.

## Evaluation of the school

The school meets its aims well, providing its pupils with a good education in a caring, friendly, family atmosphere. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils demonstrate in their good behaviour and attitudes that they really enjoy school. As a result they make good progress and reach high standards. Pupils are happy confident learners. They are well prepared for the next phase in their education. Parents are rightly confident and positive about the work of the school. The school meets all of the regulations.

## Quality of education

The curriculum, which incorporates all aspects of the National Curriculum, is good. Particular strengths are drama and music. The approaches taken to develop pupils' social and academic skills are well balanced and highly effective. Adequate time is allocated to cover the demands of the different subject areas including physical education and French. All pupils participate in entertainments, sporting teams, choral speaking and the choir.

The quality of teaching is good and as a result the pupils make good progress. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and provide appropriate challenge and support to cater for the individual needs of pupils in their classes. Pupils with learning difficulties and those who have encountered problems in other schools are supported well to progress at their own pace. Staff plan lessons which are designed to give pupils the opportunity to consolidate learning and understanding as well as to acquire new skills and knowledge. In the best lessons stimulating resources and teaching driven at a brisk pace result in pupils working enthusiastically and conscientiously. The school recognises that staff need to keep up their professional development, for example by visiting and sharing practice with other schools.

The school makes good informal assessments of pupils' progress. Teachers know the pupils well and how well they are performing. Formal assessment records are not incisive enough in some subjects. The school does not currently have concise data, which would help prospective parents gauge the value added by the school.

The school provides extremely well-structured routines which provide a high degree of emotional security. This helps pupils to settle into the school and to experience success. Pupils are articulate, self-confident and really enjoy their lessons, particularly the wide range of extra-curricular activities.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a key feature of the school. Parents are rightly proud of the provision and the way in which pupils respond.

Opportunities for spiritual and cultural development are provided, for example through assembly, music and the arts. The curriculum also supports the development of appreciation of other cultures, especially in humanities and art.

The school is a highly caring environment. Close attention is paid to promoting good behaviour and eliminating any forms of bullying, prejudice or harassment. Teachers provide good role models, demonstrating by example good manners, courtesy and care for others. Pupils replicate this. The conduct and relationships between the adults create and foster a sense of community with a shared vision and expectations. Pupils are provided with choices and responsibilities which help to develop a mature attitude towards life as well as serving the common good.

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## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school carefully safeguards and effectively promotes the welfare of all its pupils. Welfare is good. There is a full range of policies and practices that minimise the health and safety risks to pupils. The high staffing ratio enables pupils to be closely supervised, supported and safeguarded at all times. Child protection procedures are robust. There is no serious misbehaviour, due to the ethos of the school, shared expectations and good behaviour of pupils. The school has a very effective anti-bullying policy. The school meets its responsibilities to provide access to the premises and to the curriculum for pupils who have disabilities.

Packed lunches from home are not permitted. This is because the school provides delicious, nutritional hot lunches. They are carefully prepared and cooked on the premises by the school cooks. Vegetarian alternatives are available as are meals that comply with religious needs. Pupils enjoy them very much and readily eat them, often asking for seconds and thirds. This supports the other work, particularly through the curriculum, that the school does to ensure that pupils gain understanding of, and engagement with, healthy lifestyles.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

There are appropriate safeguards to ensure that pupils do not encounter unsuitable adults. Staffing and recruitment procedures comply with the latest guidance and are followed well.

## School's premises and accommodation

The school has good facilities which allow pupils to learn in an environment that is conducive to learning and safe. The premises and accommodation are immaculately clean and well-maintained. Rooms are light and bright. Furnishings and decoration are in good order. There is good specialist accommodation for information and communication technology, music and science. The school also benefits from a spacious hall and a library. Classrooms are appropriate in size. There is good access to the buildings for those with disabilities, along with suitably adapted toilets. There is a good area of well enclosed ground for games, recreation and exploration. The site does not have a hard outdoor play area for physical activities when the weather is poor. The school is aware of this need and this is a main feature for fund raising during the coming year.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a good range of information for parents, pupils and carers, inspectors, Ofsted and the DfES that complies with the regulations; this

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includes an attractive and informative website. Responses to the parents' pre-inspection questionnaires indicated that parents are well informed about their children's progress at school and feel welcome to contact the school if they wish to discuss any matter.

### Procedures for handling complaints

The school's complaints procedures meet all the requirements for registration. The procedures are clear, fair and understood by the school community.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

### What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- increase opportunities for staff to see other schools in action to further share good practice
- develop a more concise central record of assessments to demonstrate the value added by the school
- consider ways of creating a hard surface play area for use when the weather has been inclement.

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## School details

Name of school	Charters Ancaster College
DfES number	845/6042
Unique reference number	131279
Type of school	Preparatory
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1996
Age range of pupils	2.5-11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 31      Girls: 25      Total: 56
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,458-£5,811
Address of school	Charters Ancaster College Woodsgate Place Gunters Lane Bexhill-on-Sea East Sussex TN39 4EB
Telephone number	01424 216670
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@chartersancaster.com">office@chartersancaster.com</a>
Headteacher	Mrs Diana Overbury
Proprietor	Charters Ancaster College 1995 (Charitable Trust)
Reporting inspector	Steffi Penny HMI
Dates of inspection	16-17 January 2007

## Charters Ancaster College

### Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY343756
Inspection date	17/01/2007
Inspector	Sue Taylor
Setting address	Charters Ancaster College, Gunters Lane, BEXHILL-ON-SEA, East Sussex, TN39 4EB
Telephone number	01424 216670
E-mail	<a href="mailto:office@chartersancaster.com">office@chartersancaster.com</a>
Registered person	Charters Ancaster College 1995
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

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## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The provider must give a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must give a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Day Care and Childminding (inspection) (England) Regulations 2005 No 2300 Regulations 5 and 6).

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding:* this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

*Good:* this aspect of the provision is strong

*Satisfactory:* this aspect of the provision is sound

*Inadequate:* this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

## WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Charters Ancaster College nursery and out of school scheme was registered in 2006 and operates from a purpose built building in the school grounds. Nursery children have daily use of the school hall; they may also use other rooms within the school however, these are generally used for out of school care. A maximum of 50 children may attend at any one time, with a maximum of 40 in the nursery building. The provision is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 during school term times and during school holidays from 08:30 to 15:30. Nursery children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 57 children aged from two to under eight years on roll (with numbers for the out of school provision varying). Of these, 44 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. A parent and toddler group operates on a Wednesday afternoon during term time.

The nursery employs seven members of staff who all hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The environment in which children are cared for is very clean and well maintained. The rooms have a light and airy feel with good ventilation, as the nursery rooms open on to covered decking areas where children can play. The nursery policy concerning sick children is shared with parents. The records for medication and accidents are clear and make sure parents are aware about matters involving their child.

Daily routines followed by the staff ensure children learn the importance of hygiene. Tables are wiped with anti-bacterial spray before meals and children wash their hands before eating. The older children need little prompting to wash theirs after using the toilets. Children can easily access liquid soap and the use of paper towels helps reduce the risk of cross contamination. Children develop an understanding about the importance of keeping healthy through planned topics or from visitors to the nursery, such as the dental nurse.

Children have a mid session healthy snack of different fruits and a drink. Lunch

times are in the nursery and children enjoy the nutritious home cooked meals. Fresh ingredients are used and the menu is well balanced. Children's individual dietary needs are noted and met well. Drinking water is available throughout the day, though it is not easy for children to access themselves. This limits the control they have over their own thirst needs.

The children enjoy a range of physical play activities indoors and outside. The use of the school hall ensures children have opportunities for energetic play even if the weather restricts outdoor play. For example, they play circle games, use balls and hoops, take part in country dancing as well as music and movement.

The nursery education children move with confidence and control. They practice skills such as jumping, climbing and balancing. Their hand and eye coordination is good. The development of their fine motor skills is well supported as children competently use a wide range of resources such as scissors, pencils and glue sticks along with activities for threading and using peg boards.

Children's emotional well-being is promoted through the very good and caring relationships they develop with staff.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The newly built, attractive nursery building is set in the school grounds and has its own fully enclosed, fenced outdoor play area. The children also benefit from the covered decking areas that they can safely access from their group rooms. A clear process that monitors safety issues with hazards minimised is in place. However, although the main nursery door is secure during sessions there are times when people from outside can open the door. This issue and the fact that other areas of the nursery may be accessible by children are being addressed to ensure greater safety and security for the children. Vigilant staff closely supervise the children at all times.

Thought is put into the provision of age appropriate resources in each of the group rooms. The resources are of good quality, providing a mix of plastic and wooden toys and games. The layout of the rooms and low shelves enable children to access their own choices safely. Storage boxes are small allowing children to move them easily to a table or the floor.

Staff have an understanding and awareness of child protection, supported by the available guidance. The policy, shared with parents, includes information about the nursery's role in safeguarding children's welfare.

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## Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, relaxed and enjoy their time at the nursery. Planned activities are varied and interesting. Children have good opportunities for free play and making choices. The staff are very good at enabling independent play and offering positive support to extend children's learning. Links to the Birth to three matters framework are made to ensure the young children's development is promoted. The staff of the younger children note their progress in line with the framework. However, at times this detail is not up to date. The staff listen and value what children say, they talk with them about what they are doing and have positive expectations of what they can achieve.

### Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are progressing well, supported by the staff's secure knowledge of how children learn. The staff team have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage. Planning covers all areas of learning and the balance is monitored to ensure all children benefit. Staff ask open questions that encourage children to think. Children get great pleasure out of showing what they know and what they have achieved.

Staff make observations on children's achievements and from these they identify the next steps in their learning. Children's progress to the early learning goals is linked to the stepping stones and recorded in their assessment profiles. However, these are not all up to date so limiting the available information about a child's stage of learning. The staff meet weekly to discuss planning and how children's individual needs can be promoted through play or planned activities.

Children concentrate on activities for long periods of time and make choices about their play. The staff work hard to praise and encourage children to try things for themselves. This helps develop children's independence skills. They relate well to adults and to each other, showing care and concern. Children help care for the African snails and treat them gently.

Children communicate well and with confidence. They know they are listened to and that what they say is valued. They enjoy stories whether in the larger group or one to one with an adult. They participate by asking questions and repeating familiar lines. Various activities and input from the staff enable children to learn letter sounds. Children are keen to start writing and some form good letter shapes. They count regularly and join in enthusiastically with number rhymes, showing their understanding of simple calculation with their fingers. Children use size language in their play and know about shapes and patterns.

They learn about other cultures and religious festivals, gaining an awareness of

others in the community. From following the life cycle of the frog and growing runner beans they learn about time and the natural world. Children have ready access to the computer and some competently use the programmes and printer to create pictures for the wall. Craft activities, such as making models from recycled materials, enable them to be creative. Their imagination is well supported through activities, with their ideas valued by staff. Children get very involved in the role play areas and negotiate with their friends. They enjoy singing and playing musical instruments.

### Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The nursery is effective at meeting children's individual needs. Good detail from parents is available to ensure needs are valued and respected. The nursery offers a warm and caring environment where children flourish. Children gain a sense of belonging, as they know the routines, are cared for by a consistent staff team and are listened to. Children develop an awareness of the wider world through activities and some available resources. However, resources that positively reflect disability are limited.

Behaviour management is very good and children's behaviour is excellent. Strategies used are age appropriate. With an emphasis on clear explanations and descriptive praise, staff help children learn about acceptable behaviour. They listen and respond well to staff requests. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

There is a positive relationship with parents and carers. Parents see the nursery policies and procedures. There is information on the notice board and in the rooms, including some detail about the Birth to three matters framework. Parents are able to settle their children and information about themes and activities is on display. As a result, they are able to talk about the day with their child. Recent questionnaires show that parents appreciate the friendly and caring nursery where children are happily occupied and making progress.

Partnership with parents of the nursery education children is satisfactory. They receive some detail about the Foundation Stage curriculum. They are able to access their child's progress records. However, some records are not as up to date as others, limiting the value of the detail. Parents have general ideas provided on how to support their child's learning at home, though these do not necessarily relate to their child's next steps. There is a good level of verbal information sharing about their child's progress though they are not fully contributing to the assessment process.

## Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a well-organised environment. Activities are planned for that help children make progress and have fun, with an emphasis on learning through play. The recruitment process helps ensure employees are suitable. The management team are looking at devising a more rigorous check to improve assurance about the mental and physical fitness of staff to care for children. All required records and documentation are in place. For example, the complaints procedure reflects recent changes to the Children Act regulation. The record of attendance is being improved.

There is a clear induction programme in place for new staff. Regular appraisals and staff meetings enable the staff's professional development to be supported through discussion and training. The staff team work very well together with effective communication. They all know their roles and responsibilities that assist with the smooth running of the day.

Leadership and management are good. There is an effective two way sharing of information between the nursery and the school. The Board of Directors are involved and provide valuable support. There is a strong focus on the personal development and achievement for all children. The nursery education provision is monitored to ensure children are encouraged to make good progress. The nursery is committed to continual improvement and has development plans in place. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints about the childcare provision

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

#### WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

##### *The quality and standards of the care*

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- enable easy access to drinking water throughout the day for all children

##### *The quality and standards of nursery education*

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- continue to develop the partnership with parents with an emphasis on sharing information about children's individual progress and identified next steps in their learning
- ensure children's progress records are up to date (also applies to care)

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)