

# Charlestown Community Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105405
<b>Local Authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	308849
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Eithne Proffitt

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	312
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ken Power
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs S Starkey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 April 2004
<b>School address</b>	Pilkington Road Blackley Manchester M9 7BX
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 7403529
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 7956151

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a large primary school situated in North Manchester. The majority of pupils live locally in an area of social and economic challenge. The vast majority of children are of White British heritage with a small number from minority ethnic groups. A very high proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals and the percentage of children identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above national averages. The school is a 'Barrier-Free' School and welcomes pupils with physical disabilities. It is part of the local Education Action Zone, Excellence in Cities and Behaviour Improvement Programme. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Gold Award, Eco School Bronze status and is credited with the Manchester Inclusion Standard.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Charlestown Primary School provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education and provides satisfactory value for money. However, with the vision and drive of the leadership team, the culture of the school is changing. The desire to improve the quality of education provided is noticeable.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. Children start school with knowledge and skills well below those expected of children of their age. Nonetheless, they have a settled start to their school life and make satisfactory progress through the Foundation Stage. Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 have been well below national expectations in recent years but rose considerably last year to a little below average. At the end of Key Stage 2, whilst well below average for the past three years, standards have been steadily rising and in 2007 were broadly in line with national averages, although the number of pupils attaining the higher levels is low. Current progress across the school is satisfactory overall and is variable across year groups. Better achievement takes place in the lessons where teachers clearly plan activities to match the needs of individual pupils and provide pupils with quality feedback that helps to move their learning forward.

The outstanding level of pastoral care in school and strong links with outside agencies help to ensure that all pupils are safeguarded well. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are particularly well supported. 'I am very, very pleased with the whole ethos of the school regarding inclusion.' typifies the views of many parents. Pupils are treated as individuals and their welfare is paramount. They have an outstanding appreciation of the importance of healthy and safe lifestyle choices and feel safe and secure in school. As one pupil explained, 'I like it here because I'm minded.' These factors contribute significantly to pupils' personal development.

The vast majority of pupils are well behaved, courteous and cooperative learners who enjoy school, work hard and respect their teachers. In some classes however, a minority of pupils behave immaturely. Where this is not competently managed, the learning and progress of these and other pupils are slowed. The school judges teaching to be good; the inspection found it to be satisfactory overall as there are inconsistencies in its quality. In some classes, the tasks provided to help pupils to practise and improve their skills are not always sufficiently well matched to their needs. Moreover, silly behaviour is not well managed and disrupts other pupils. Marking is not used effectively as a tool to guide pupils forward in their learning. This is why pupils make better progress in some classes than in others and the reason why academic guidance is only satisfactory overall.

The curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory. It places sufficient emphasis on literacy and numeracy and provides increasing opportunities for pupils to develop skills through activities that bring together learning from several different subjects. Pupils really enjoy this new approach.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and the headteacher's drive for improvement is having a positive effect. Areas requiring development are correctly identified by the leadership team and greater rigour is now being injected into monitoring the work of the school. Sophisticated systems for checking the progress of individuals and groups of pupils are in place but do not provide an accurate picture of short-term progress, as the data required are not sufficiently complete. The management of the curriculum by subject leaders is

inconsistent. While some subjects are carefully monitored and the coordinators are clearly focused towards whole school improvement, others have not yet assumed an active role in raising standards and achievement in their subjects. Governance of the school is satisfactory and supportive. The school has taken effective steps to promote improvement since the last inspection and its capacity for further improvement is satisfactory. The judgements that the school makes about its performance are not always accurate. This is because incomplete data are not providing leaders and managers with an accurate picture of current pupil progress.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

When children start Nursery, their skills and understanding are typically well below those expected of children of their age, especially in language, communication and personal and social development. They make satisfactory progress across Nursery and Reception but many children enter Year 1 not yet skilled to cope with the National Curriculum. With encouragement, the children settle into the routines of the Foundation Stage and make good use of the activities presented to them. Staff have high expectations and, in a caring, family environment, patiently teach the required personal and social skills. The children's progress in this aspect of learning is a strength of the provision. Effective use is made of all adults to support focus groups alongside continuous learning opportunities. The Foundation Stage leader has an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the provision. For example, the school is in the process of investing heavily in the outdoor curriculum area to extend creative and imaginative play after identifying this aspect as a weakness.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all teachers plan and deliver work that motivates pupils and is well matched to their individual needs.
- Improve the consistency of marking and feedback so that all pupils know precisely how well they are doing and what they need to do next to progress further.
- Ensure that all subject leaders take responsibility for the rate of pupils' progress in their subjects, particularly for pupils capable of higher attainment.
- Ensure that the school compiles accurate data to effectively track pupils' progress and to provide a clearer picture of the school's current performance.

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**

Standards, by the end of Year 2, have been falling over recent years but made a substantial recovery in 2007, bringing them to just a little below average. Pupils performed better because of the many practical activities that had been planned to support their learning, particularly in mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 6, although considerably below the national average since 2004, have been rising steadily to broadly average in 2007, with a better pupil performance in mathematics than in English and science. The performance of higher achievers across all subjects in both key stages was below national averages. Pupils are at present making satisfactory progress through the school. There are pockets of slower progress where teaching and guidance

are weaker. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily overall within the school's inclusive and supportive environment.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' knowledge and understanding about healthy lifestyle choices and their keen involvement in a wide range of sporting and keep-fit activities is outstanding. This is endorsed by the school's achievement of the Healthy Schools Gold Award. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that systems for dealing with bullying or racist incidents really work. Behaviour around the school is good and the outstanding work of the learning mentors and family support workers has brought about vast improvements in pupils' personal development, although some erratic behaviour still exists. Pupils enjoy school and the range of extra activities that are on offer. Attendance is below the national average but the school, with the support of the mentors and through family liaison is doing all that it possibly can to sustain and improve levels of attendance. Pupils gladly take on responsibility in school, for example, through the school council and the buddy systems. Spiritual, moral and social development is good. However, limited opportunities to promote cultural awareness and narrow experiences of enterprise schemes do not effectively support pupils' understanding of life and work in our culturally diverse society. The school has identified these relative weaknesses and has begun to tackle them.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers plan their lessons carefully but do not always base the activities closely enough on what they know of pupils' abilities. This is because the school lacks a complete record of pupils' past achievements. As a result, in some cases the work is too hard, as when younger pupils could not read the sentences to which they were meant to be adding punctuation. On other occasions it is too easy, as when older pupils were all using dice to investigate probability when some pupils could have undertaken a more demanding challenge. Teachers generally organise lessons suitably and teaching assistants provide helpful support for identified pupils. In a number of classes across the school a minority of pupils, largely boys, persistently seek attention and behave in a silly manner. Some teachers skilfully nip such behaviour in the bud, using questioning, humour, interesting activities, interactive whiteboards and a brisk pace to keep pupils working hard. Elsewhere, some teachers' management of this behaviour is less effective and pupils fail to achieve as well as they could. Throughout the school teachers' marking is often supportive but it does not provide pupils with sufficiently clear, accurately written guidance to help them move their learning forward.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum places a suitable emphasis on literacy and numeracy. The increasing links being made between subjects help to develop pupils' skills in a range of different contexts and bring their learning to life, such as the complex computer generated animations that were created by older pupils in their topic on outer space. Information and communication technology is used well by both teachers and older pupils in a number of different subjects but less fully by younger pupils. This relative shortcoming prevents the curriculum from being good. At Key

Stage 2, the recent introduction of Spanish and the opportunity for all pupils in Year 4 to learn guitar add a cultural dimension to pupils' learning that broadens their horizons. Pupils greatly enjoy the opportunities to visit places of interest that spark their enthusiasm for learning about, for instance, the ancient Egyptians or life in Victorian times. A good range of additional activities, particularly sports, during lunch-time and after school adds extra interest for pupils and extends their skills.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is good, with some outstanding elements of pastoral care. All adults know the pupils and their families well. The outstanding work of the learning mentors and family support workers has ensured that pupils feel safe and happy in school and they express high levels of trust in the adults who care for them. Pupils know there is always someone to whom they can take their worries. These features make a crucial contribution to the personal development and well-being of all pupils and are valued by pupils and parents alike. Induction procedures for pupils starting this school are strong, supportive and family-friendly. The smooth and well managed transition to secondary school ensures that older pupils look forward with confidence to their transfer. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are secure. The personal and learning needs of the most vulnerable pupils are very well understood. Teachers and support staff, in partnership with parents and health professionals, are very successful in removing any barriers to learning and raising pupils' self-esteem. Pupils know the targets that have been set for their learning and where they need to go next. However, their academic guidance, through marking and feedback does not consistently inform pupils about how well they are doing, where to focus their efforts in order to improve their work and how to achieve the 'next steps' in their learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Under the sensitive but determined leadership of the headteacher, the management of the school has developed considerably over recent years. The leadership team has a clear and shared vision of what they want pupils to accomplish. They have worked hard to improve many aspects of the school's work and have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development, such as the weakness associated with the recording and analysis of assessment data. The structures for providing leadership and management at different levels are in place and in most cases are working effectively. Some subject leaders are very well informed and knowledgeable owing to their evaluation of the curriculum and pupils' progress. However, others do not yet play a full part in helping to raise standards and achievement in their subjects. Governors are supportive of the school and they hold the school appropriately to account for its performance. They have a satisfactory understanding of the challenges the school faces and of their role in improving it.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

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

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you all for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and are very grateful to all of you who chatted to us - I know you are proud to be part of Charlestown. Your school is currently providing you with a satisfactory education. This means that there are some things that your school does well and others that need some improvement.

Here are some of the good things about your school:

- you are very polite, friendly and obviously enjoy coming to school
- you get on really well with your teachers and your friends
- you feel safe in school and your teachers, teaching assistants and all your other helpers look after you very well
- you work hard in lessons, especially when your teachers give you fun but challenging activities to complete
- you know a great deal about staying healthy and keeping fit
- your school gives you lots of exciting activities outside the classrooms.

To help you to do even better in your work, I have asked your headteacher and governors to make sure that:

- the school has a complete record of your past achievements, which is then kept up to date
- subject leaders and class teachers keep a careful check on the progress you are making, particularly those of you who can manage harder work
- teaching provides you with activities that are exciting and challenging but not too easy or too hard
- your work is marked carefully and you understand what your next steps are.

You can help yourself to achieve by continuing to work hard in your lessons. Thank you once again for being so kind and friendly, I really enjoyed watching you at work and play!