

Charleton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113391
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311247
Inspection date	9 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Laurie Lewin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	30
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicky Lambel
Headteacher	Ken Crabtree
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2003
School address	West Charleton Kingsbridge TQ7 2AL
Telephone number	01548 531275
Fax number	01548 531275

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school with all of the pupils coming from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs. The school roll has been declining significantly over recent years due to parents choosing to send their children to other nearby schools. The last substantive headteacher left the school in December 2006. During the interim period, the school has had two acting headteachers. A new substantive headteacher has been appointed from the beginning of next term (January 2008).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The school's overall effectiveness is judged inadequate because pupils' progress is unsatisfactory and too many of them underachieve in English, mathematics and science. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement and standards reached in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.

Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Over the last two terms, the acting headteachers, staff and governors have worked hard in collaboration with the support from the local authority. As a result, the decline in pupils' achievement and standards reached has been arrested and the first 'green shoots' of improved progress are now evident in the work carried out. For example, the work this term shows sound teaching that is now enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress. However, there remains a lot to do to help all pupils catch up and remove the legacy of underachievement. The acting headteachers have done a good job of helping staff clearly recognise the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance. They have ensured that solid plans for improvement are established, that staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and that expectations for pupils' achievement are set high. Staff have responded well by involving themselves in training and writing clear 'position statements' for subject areas for which they are responsible. Basic systems for assessing pupils' progress have been installed. Using this information, a good start has been made with setting pupils' personalised targets in Years 1 and 2. However, this good practice has not yet permeated throughout the rest of the school. Generally, teachers are not making enough use of assessment information to help guide their planning and set precise targets for pupils' performance.

Typically for a small school, standards and the results in national tests fluctuate widely from year to year. The most recent tests show standards being below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in English and mathematics. Work seen confirmed this and that standards are also below average in science in Year 6. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has been unsatisfactory. However, as with other groups of pupils, recent improvements ensure that they are now getting the right kind of support to help them progress satisfactorily.

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum and pupils say they appreciate the efforts of staff to make work interesting and enjoyable for them. The care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory. In particular, staff do a good job of supporting pupils' pastoral needs. This results in pupils showing good personal development, including, good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils behave well and are polite and friendly. Through the strong focus on daily exercise and eating good foods, pupils know a good deal about keeping themselves fit and healthy. Their determined efforts with fundraising and discussions in the school's 'Talk Teams' mean they become involved well with contributing to the immediate and wider community.

Sound leadership and management are demonstrated by the effective action plans that have been drawn up and the improved awareness and skills of staff. This has allowed the school to turn itself around and set itself firmly on a course of improvement. The school recognises the importance of building on subject leaders' newly-clarified roles and responsibilities to enable

them to drive forward with improvement plans in different subject areas. Staff and governors now have a clear understanding of what works well and what needs improving in the school. They are all involved in evaluating the school's performance and do so with reasonable accuracy. They show a strong determination and commitment to pushing forward with initiatives to drive up standards and achievement. Parents are supportive and appreciate the work of staff in confronting recent difficulties. There is an atmosphere of optimism in the school to build on the initial improvements and carry things forward under the leadership of the newly-appointed headteacher next term.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 9

The school currently has no children in the Foundation Stage, but has all the appropriate structures and facilities in place to cater for children of this age. Over recent years, the attainment of children starting school has varied widely from below the level expected at this age to above.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve pupils' standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science
- ensure that all teachers make full use of assessment information to guide their planning and set precise targets for pupils
- build on the skills of subject leaders to enable them to drive forward with improvement plans.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory by the end of Year 6 and standards are mainly below average across the school. Although sound teaching and progress are apparent in work carried out this term, many of the pupils have not made the progress they should have done in the recent past. In their writing, pupils' spelling, use of vocabulary and sentence construction are particular weaknesses. The school has recently put good strategies in place to improve things with, for example, much greater emphasis on pupils gaining a solid grounding in phonics work. In mathematics, teachers working closely with a local authority adviser have identified particular gaps in pupils' calculation skills and are working hard to cover the ground necessary to correct this. Science work seen at Year 6 was below average and, because all pupils do the same work, it does not always provide sufficient challenge for individuals.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school. A few spoken to said ... 'We really like it here because everyone knows each other and we are all really friendly!' Pupils maintain good fitness and healthy eating regimes during the school day. They feel safe and they have no qualms about talking to an adult if they experience difficulties. Pupils show a confident approach and concentrate well in lessons. They have a clear view of the school's aims and the behaviour expected of them and, as a result, they behave well in the classrooms and the playground. They have good relationships with each other and the staff. Through topics and discussions, pupils develop a good awareness of issues in the world around them. However, they have a limited knowledge about how people from other cultural backgrounds live. Pupils have good experience of charity fundraising and

organising stalls at events. However, their below average academic achievement means they are not as well equipped to promote their future success as they could be.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Staff have been busy over the last two terms refining their skills through training as a means of helping them improve the quality of pupils' learning. This has been successful and the work currently seen in pupils' books generally points to sound teaching and learning. Work is mostly provided to match pupils' ability levels. The introduction of clearer systems for assessment has helped staff more exactly pinpoint pupils' learning needs. However, improvements here are 'work in progress'. Teachers do not currently make enough use of assessment information to fine-tune their lesson planning and to ensure that work is as precisely matched as possible to the needs of the pupils. Teaching assistants provide solid backup for the teachers and effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provides satisfactorily for a full range of work for pupils. A good emphasis on promoting personal, social and health education makes a firm contribution towards promoting pupils' personal development. The way in which staff plan topics and projects ensures that pupils find the work interesting and often enjoyable. The sound range of extra activities, visitors and trips also helps to boost pupils' learning. However, not enough opportunities are provided within different subject areas to promote pupils' writing and mathematical skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff know pupils well and cater very sensitively for individual needs. This makes pupils feel confident that they can always get help and support if they need it. The school is vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety. It has a rigorous approach towards ensuring that all health and safety procedures and child protection procedures are fully adhered to. Parents feel welcome in the school and they feel that staff do a good job of looking after their children. There is a friendly and supportive atmosphere around the school that helps all individuals develop a confident approach to learning. Teachers and teaching assistants give pupils appropriate support and guidance in lessons. However, not enough use is made of assessment information to set accurate targets for pupils, and pupils are not sufficiently involved in the process of assessing their own work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The two acting headteachers have worked well over the last two terms to ensure that the school gets firmly back on track, with improving standards and achievement. Links have been strengthened with all outside support agencies. Good quality action plans have been devised and opportunities for staff to upgrade their skills have been developed. Basic assessment

systems have been established and national test results analysed to give staff a much clearer picture of the progress that individual pupils are making. With this knowledge and all of the actions taken, staff are now in a much better position to move forward with plans for improvement because they know where weaknesses in performance lie.

Coordinators are now clear about their individual roles and responsibilities. They rightly recognise the need to fully develop their roles and to push forward urgently with action plans to drive up standards and achievement. Governors carry out their roles satisfactorily and fully support the staff. Although they are all fully informed and involved, they lack formalised systems to help them monitor standards and provision on a regular basis.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	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
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	4
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	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Charleton Church of England Primary School, Kingsbridge TQ7 2AL

- I am writing to let you know how much I enjoyed coming to visit your school. Thank you for making me so welcome and helping me during the school's inspection. In many areas of its work the school is doing a satisfactory job, but it needs to improve the standards you reach and your achievement in English, mathematics and science. Here are some other things I noticed:
- Your teachers have worked hard to improve things recently and they do a satisfactory job. Your work for this term showed me that you are making sound progress but there are some areas in English, mathematics and science where your teachers are keen to help you catch up.
- Your behaviour is mainly good. You get on well with staff and with each other.
- I was impressed by how much you know about the need to keep yourselves fit, healthy and safe.
- You have a satisfactory curriculum and you told me that you think staff go to a lot of trouble to make work interesting for you.
- The school does a good job of taking care of you.
- The staff work closely and effectively together and they have got lots of good plans to help the school improve even more in the future.

The things your school now needs to do:

- Improve the standards you reach and the progress you make in English, mathematics and science.
- Use the information about how well each of you is progressing to help teachers plan work that matches your needs as closely as possible. Also, use the information to make really precise targets for you.
- Ensure that your teachers who are in charge of different subjects have the chance to move forward with all of the exciting plans they have made to improve things for you. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when I came to see you.

Best wishes for the future

Laurie Lewin Lead inspector