

Charlton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123069
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	340271
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Graham Lee

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	299
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Goodman
Headteacher	Jenny de la Coze
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons, and held meetings with governors, members of staff with management responsibilities and two groups of pupils. They also talked to parents at the school gate. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation, including its self-evaluation, school improvement plan and records of pupils' progress. They also took into account the views of parents, pupils and staff expressed in questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at:

- the extent to which pupils are challenged to achieve well in writing
- the effectiveness of support for vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the extent to which leaders set challenging targets for improvement.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average primary school which has grown significantly in recent years. Most pupils are of White British origin and no pupils with English as an additional language are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in its two Reception classes. There is provision on the school site for breakfast and after school care. This is managed by a private provider and will be inspected separately. The school is accredited with Eco School and Healthy School awards and has gained an Activemark for its work in sport.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Charlton Primary provides a good education for its pupils and has built upon many of the strengths identified at the last inspection. The school has a caring and welcoming atmosphere which enables pupils of all backgrounds and abilities to thrive and achieve well. This is recognised by pupils and parents alike. Many pupils said that they were proud of their school and one parent, typical of many, commented, 'I have total confidence in the care, support and educational growth the school offers children of varying ages and abilities.'

Children get off to a good start in the stimulating environment of the Early Years Foundation Stage. As they move through the school, pupils do well because the teaching is good and the outstanding curriculum provides them with many opportunities to be creative and to develop their talents and interests. Sport and music, for example, have a high priority in the curriculum. The school also makes very good use of its extensive grounds to enhance pupils' learning. Consequently, pupils are proud of their status as an Eco School and are very aware of environmental issues. All of these activities considerably enhance pupils' enjoyment of their education and their personal development. Most are enthusiastic about school and this is reflected in high levels of attendance.

Teachers usually pitch lessons effectively to suit the needs of pupils of different abilities. This is particularly effective in mathematics lessons in Key Stage 2, where learning proceeds at a lively pace, enabling pupils to consolidate skills effectively. Consequently, pupils are attaining very well in mathematics by the time they leave the school. They are also doing particularly well in reading and science. Progress is slower in writing than it is in other key areas. While teachers' marking often gives pupils useful feedback, it does not always tell them precisely enough how their writing might be improved.

An outstanding feature of the school is the way that it works closely with parents and other organisations to support the learning and welfare of its pupils. Most parents feel that the school works in partnership with them and, as one put it, 'the school is always approachable and open to suggestions which they act upon'. The school also works very effectively with other partners, notably in supporting its vulnerable pupils. Several parents commented on how well the school had supported their children with particular needs. Consequently, vulnerable pupils and those who have moderate special educational needs and/or disabilities are able to thrive and make good progress.

The headteacher has led the school successfully over several years. Aably supported by other senior leaders, she has created a strong team ethos and a shared commitment to raising standards and improving provision still further. This is illustrated by the success

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of the recent focus on raising attainment in mathematics. The school acknowledges that strategies to improve writing have been less successful and have not been monitored as rigorously. Challenging targets have been used by the school to raise expectations and provide a spur for further improvement. School leaders use data well to track pupils' progress and identify trends in achievement. However, systems have been cumbersome and not as effective as they could be. Consequently, potential underachievement has not always been identified at an early enough stage and progress has been variable between classes. The school has recognised this and has introduced a new system to overcome this weakness. The school's track record of improvement, accurate identification of its key strengths and weaknesses and commitment to improvement indicate it has good capacity to improve still further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment and accelerate progress in writing by July 2010 through: - ensuring that pupils are given precise guidance on the features they need to improve - checking pupils' progress in writing and the quality of teaching more regularly.
- Embed new assessment systems to ensure that data are used more effectively by all teachers to: - identify potential underachievement at an earlier stage - ensure that all pupils are making good or better progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils really enjoy school and have very good attitudes to learning, applying themselves diligently to the tasks they are set. They make thoughtful responses to teachers' questions and work effectively together in pairs and in groups. They respond very well to the school's provision and one pupil wrote, 'This school inspires us to do our best and work hard', which summarises the views of many. Consequently, all pupils are making good progress. Boys and girls do equally well and the few pupils of minority ethnic origin also do very well. Higher-attaining pupils are challenged effectively and do better than is the case in most schools, except in writing. There was a dip in attainment and achievement at the age of 11 following the last inspection owing to some disruption in staffing. This has now been remedied and levels of attainment are on an upward trajectory. Pupils also develop good skills in information and communication technology (ICT), which together with their good basic skills prepares them well for secondary education and the world beyond.

In classrooms, pupils' behaviour is often exemplary. Behaviour on the playground, however, is sometimes over boisterous and rough. Consequently, while pupils have every confidence in the adults around them and know how to stay safe in a variety of situations, a few are apprehensive about the playground. Pupils' enthusiastic participation in a range of sport activities and understanding of dietary issues contribute to their outstanding understanding of the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Pupils take their responsibilities around the school, as council members, for example, very seriously,

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although some would like more! They also raise money for a variety of charities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and manage their classes very well. They explain the purpose of lessons and make very good use of ICT to engage and motivate learners. Teachers check carefully how well pupils understand and mostly use this knowledge well to plan challenging work in the classroom. Marking is much improved since the last inspection but is not always effective in helping pupils to improve their writing. Teachers invariably make learning interesting and fun. They link aspects of the curriculum together in a way that enables pupils to see the relevance of their learning. For example, in a Key Stage 1 lesson some pupils enjoyed re-enacting a Victorian school room while others were writing instructions about how to get from home to school. Hence, they used their literacy skills well to deepen their understanding of other aspects of the curriculum.

The outstanding curriculum is very effective in ensuring that pupils achieve well and develop good personal qualities. The personal, social and health education programme,

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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for example, is very effective and encourages pupils to reflect on their rights and responsibilities. In a very lively lesson in the lower juniors, pupils were reflecting maturely on the need for rules and what life would be like without them. The curriculum also makes a strong contribution to pupils’ very good understanding of issues connected with their safety and health. This has been recognised by the Activemark and Healthy Schools awards. The school’s swimming programme also makes a good contribution to these aspects of pupils’ personal development. Many pupils commented on how much they appreciated the extensive range of clubs in the school. The curriculum is also considerably enriched through the ‘Forest schools’ programme, visits and visitors, and the teaching of French throughout Key Stage 2.

Good provision for pupils’ care and welfare is underpinned by excellent relations between adults and children. Parents are appreciative of the very good transfer arrangements from class to class and then on to secondary school which helps to smooth the transition process. Currently, for example, the school is giving particular attention to the needs of children moving from Early Years Foundation Stage into Year 1. Although this is at the early stages it is helping pupils to adjust more easily. Arrangements for the support of vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or with behavioural problems, are very effective in helping them to achieve as well as their peers. Current arrangements for supervising pupils at playtime, however, have not been effective in eliminating the anxieties of all pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination very effectively. It ensures that all pupils have every chance to take part in all of its activities and, as a result, all groups of pupils achieve well. The school also makes a good contribution to community cohesion. It has developed an understanding of the needs of its community and actively promotes cohesion through its extended school provision and the multicultural dimension of the curriculum, for example. Plans to promote the national and global dimensions are a priority in the school improvement plan.

The school’s commitment to raising achievement is evident in its ambitious targets, which were largely met in 2009 and are even higher for 2010. This reflects the high expectations the headteacher has of pupils and staff. The leadership team has been

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restructured, with key staff having clear responsibilities for raising achievement and improving teaching and learning in their areas. Leaders are well supported by the very committed and knowledgeable governing body. They have a very good understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses and have developed largely effective systems for holding school leaders to account and for ensuring that they fulfil all of their statutory duties. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are good and the school ensures that pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Resources are deployed effectively to ensure that outcomes for pupils are good and that good value for money is achieved.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children arrive at school with skills and understanding that are much as expected for children of this age. They quickly become confident and eager learners because of the warm and welcoming learning environment. Good planning ensures that they are able to develop their skills in all areas of learning, both through direct teaching and through structured opportunities to explore the world for themselves. While the outdoor area is used to promote learning, it is not always used to its full effect. Children develop good levels of independence and rapidly acquire very good social skills, learning to share and work and play together very effectively. Consequently, they make good progress and reach above-average levels in all areas of learning by the time they move into Year 1. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. A particularly strong feature is the very effective links established with parents, who are very complimentary about how the induction arrangements have helped their children to settle to school life. The leader

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acts as a very good role model in promoting good practice and has a very clear picture of the progress of every child. However, a clear overview of achievement has not yet been established to help the school track trends and patterns in children’s achievement. The move to new electronic data systems will further support this tracking.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Responses were received from 88 parents, which represents nearly a third of the school population and is a higher-than-average return. Those responding were overwhelmingly positive about the school. All believe that their children enjoy school and very few indicated concerns in any area. Parental comments commended the safe and welcoming ethos of the school, the sense of community, the high quality of the headteacher and staff and the wide range of clubs and additional activities. There were very few negative comments and most of these were expressed as a caveat on otherwise positive responses. A very small number of parents expressed concerns about their children’s progress but these were not borne out in the inspection. One or two expressed concerns about behaviour in the playground, which inspectors found to have some substance.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Charlton Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 88 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 299 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	67	28	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	57	65	30	34	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	42	46	52	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	50	39	44	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	28	29	33	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	48	41	47	2	2	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	57	36	41	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	50	57	33	38	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	51	37	42	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	22	41	47	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	45	41	47	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	58	66	28	32	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	77	17	19	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



17 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Charlton Primary School, Wantage OX12 7HG

You may remember that I visited your school recently with two other inspectors. I am writing to thank you for being so welcoming and helpful. I thought you would like to know what we found out.

You and your parents are rightly proud of Charlton Primary because it is a good school. Most importantly, the staff look after you really well so that you feel safe and this helps you to make good progress. You told us how much you like school and how your teachers help you to improve. You particularly enjoy all the extra things you get to do. We were really impressed by your politeness and enthusiasm for learning. Well done! Your behaviour was also very good in class, although some of you get a bit rough on the playground. Try to think about this as it does worry a few of you.

Your teachers try very hard to make lessons interesting and fun. They mostly set work for all of you that is not too hard but nor is it too easy. This makes you think and make good progress. This means that when you leave the school many of you are doing very well in science, maths and reading by the time you move on to secondary school, although some of you are not quite as good at writing. You are also very lucky to have so many clubs to take part in. I was really impressed with the school grounds and the important work you are doing as an 'Eco School'.

Your headteacher leads the school very well. She gets a lot of help from the other staff and governors. They are always looking at ways to make the school even better. We have suggested two things that we think might help:

- We want the school to help you do even better in your writing. We have asked the teachers to give you very clear guidance on how you might improve it. We have also asked them to check regularly to make sure that you are improving.
- The school is using a new system to help track your progress. We want all teachers to use this to make sure that you are all making good progress and to help you if you start to fall behind.

With best wishes to all of you,

Yours faithfully

Graham Lee

Lead inspector

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