

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Charlton Primary School

Charlton Village Road, Wantage, Oxfordshire OX12 7HG

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 October 2024

Outcome

Charlton Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The head of school of Charlton Primary School is Samantha Campbell. This school is part of Vale Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Richard Evans, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Beth Taylor. There is also an executive headteacher, Steven Rose, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has high ambitions for all its pupils. Pupils flourish here. They learn well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The way that the school builds pupils' character and prepares them to be active citizens of the future is exceptional. The school ensures that all pupils consistently benefit from what the school offers.

The school places great emphasis on encouraging pupils to be happy, kind and responsible. Pupils understand and apply these traits to their conduct in school well. There are high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave extremely well. They demonstrate respect for each other consistently. Pupils' happiness, coupled with strong attitudes to learning, permeates lessons. Pupils love celebrating the success of others, such as in weekly 'celebration assemblies'.

Pupils embrace the wide range of leadership opportunities that the school offers. This includes the school council, the 'light up your day' crew and the Rights Champions. Pupils love to come up with their own ideas for leadership opportunities. The litter-picking squad, which make such a difference to the school environment, is a clear example of this.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has put much thought into improving its curriculum since the previous inspection. It is now on the second cycle of refining each subject further. Subjects that the school has reviewed more recently clearly state what pupils need to learn and remember. In these subjects, pupils remember particularly well what they learn over time. Teachers know exactly what content to focus on in lessons. However, in a few other subjects, the school has not identified the most important content sufficiently well. The checks that teachers use on pupils' learning in these subjects are sometimes too broad. This affects how well pupils recall and retain important ideas.

In the past, pupils have not made secure progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2. The school has made many successful changes to improve pupils' outcomes, including the introduction of a new writing curriculum. Current pupils learn well. The school has given careful thought to the structure of lessons and the techniques that teachers use. Teachers use a wide range of strategies in lessons to get the best from pupils, including modelling and approaches that promote discussion. Pupils see how these strategies really help them to understand, boost their ideas and practise what they have learned. The school identifies and knows the needs of pupils with SEND well. Teachers are well trained to adapt the delivery of the curriculum to support these pupils effectively.

Reading is an important priority. Pupils become confident and fluent readers who love books. This starts from the school's Nursery. Nursery children experience a wide range of stories and rhymes. They join in known books with enthusiasm. Staff teach phonics and the school's fluency programme confidently. They match pupils' reading books to the sounds pupils learn accurately. Pupils who are at the early stages of reading get the help they need to learn to read swiftly. Teachers use exceptionally sharp skills to highlight any gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge. Strong support helps pupils to catch up. However, those pupils who are at the early stages of writing in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2 do not routinely have enough opportunities to practise writing using the phonics they know. This slows their progress and lowers their confidence.

Pupils' behaviour is very positive indeed. Systems and routines are understood well and applied consistently. Attendance is in line with the national picture. Playtimes are active, with much on offer. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the school noticed that pupils' imaginative play had dwindled. Pupils now benefit from a unique playground experience, with much on offer for them to use. Pupils love the 'zone choices', such as the dance, agility, archaeology and reading in the story garden.

Pupils benefit from a wealth of carefully considered extra-curricular activities that help them to be positive citizens. The school gives rewards to encourage pupils to try new experiences, be globally aware and appreciate difference. Pupils learn about equality, discrimination and the rights of children. The school encourages them to understand the importance of respect for others.

Trustees and the local governing committee fully understand their roles and responsibilities. They use their wide range of expertise to good effect to support and

challenge the school. Staff appreciate the school's efforts to support their workload, professional development and well-being. This has resulted in high team morale and staff who can focus on doing their jobs well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the curriculum does not clearly identify the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn. Sometimes, in those subjects, the checks that teachers use on what pupils know are too broad and lack precision. This means that, at times, pupils do not have a secure understanding of key content and their misconceptions may persist. The school should make sure that the refinements made to the curriculum highlight key knowledge that pupils should learn and give teachers effective strategies to check that pupils have learned it.
- The school does not ensure that some pupils who are at the early stages of writing get enough of a chance to practise and embed their writing skills. When this happens, this slows their writing development and affects their confidence. The school should make sure that the writing curriculum supports all pupils to practise and embed their early writing skills so that all pupils learn to write fluently.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in June 2015.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	140237
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10341756
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	451
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Beth Taylor
CEO of the trust	Richard Evans
Headteacher	Steven Rose (Executive Headteacher) Samantha Campbell (Head of School)
Website	charltonprimary.ovw10.devwebsite.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The head of school took on their role in September 2023.
- The school is part of The Vale Academy Trust.
- Since the last inspection, the school has become responsible for the on-site pre-school, Acorns. This means that the school now has Nursery provision for three- and four-year-olds.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and the senior leadership team. They met with the CEO and other leaders from the trust. They also met the chair of the trust and four members of the local governing committee, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Throughout the inspection, the inspector met with groups of staff. They also considered the opinions expressed through the online staff survey.
- The inspector considered the responses to the confidential pupil survey. They also took account of the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View and parents' free-text comments, as well as additional parent correspondence.

Inspection team

Lea Hannam

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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