

Charlton Primary School

Charlton Village Road, Wantage, OX12 7HG

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leadership and management are good. The expertise and strong partnership of the headteacher and new senior leaders with the academy trust have effectively and quickly improved teaching.
- Standards are rising rapidly and the large majority of pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers plan work that engages pupils' interests and builds on what they already know.
- Teachers' high expectations ensure that pupils' behaviour is consistently good. At times, pupils' conduct is outstanding. There is a highly positive climate for learning.
- Leaders track pupils' progress effectively and put in place interventions to ensure any underachievement is quickly reversed.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes. Children settle quickly and make good progress.
- Pupils' learning is supported by the strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Excellent relationships exist between pupils and staff.
- Parents and carers agree that the care and welfare of pupils are strengths of the school. Staff know the pupils well.
- Pupils benefit from an excellent range of clubs, regular visits and other activities which the school offers.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. This view is supported by parents.
- Governors, in partnership with the academy trust, have clear responsibilities and ways of working. As a result, they are better at holding the school's leaders to account for its performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Achievement in mathematics, although good and improving, is not as strong as in reading or writing. A few older pupils lack confidence in using their basic skills.
- Some teachers do not provide enough problem-solving and reasoning opportunities in mathematics or use basic skills in other subjects.
- Teaching is not outstanding. Pupils are not always given enough time to respond to teachers' comments in marking in order to improve their work.
- Some parents would like more effective communication with the school and more information on their children's progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons, of which three were observed jointly with school leaders. In addition, the inspectors made a number of shorter visits to lessons.
- The inspectors held discussions with school leaders, including the executive headteacher of the academy Trust, staff and governors.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including improvement plans, the systems for tracking pupils' progress, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and samples of pupils' work. They heard groups of pupils reading and spoke with pupils about behaviour and the safety arrangements at the school.
- The views of 117 parents were analysed through the online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, inspectors spoke with some parents.
- The views expressed by the 37 staff who responded to the staff questionnaire were also considered.

Inspection team

Michael Bartleman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janet Satchwell	Additional Inspector
Liz Kissane	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is larger-than-average-sized primary school, where most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Charlton Primary School converted to become an academy school on 1 October 2013. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the Vale Academy Trust, which includes a secondary school and four local primary schools. The school has a local governing body under the multi-academy trust board.
- Since the formation of the multi-academy trust, there have been some staffing and leadership changes. In September 2014, a deputy headteacher and a special educational needs coordinator were appointed and the senior leadership team was reorganised.
- One pupil in ten is supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after. This is below the national average.
- One pupil in seven is disabled or has special educational needs. This is broadly in line with the national average.
- A new Chair of the Local Governing Body was elected in February 2015.
- A breakfast club and after-school care are provided in the school by a private provider. This provision is inspected separately.
- A pre-school provider, Charlton Acorns, shares the school site. This provision is inspected separately.
- Early years provision is full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics, so that it is typically outstanding in order to ensure that more pupils make better than expected progress by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to practise and develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills
 - using mathematics skills in other subjects to develop confidence in using and applying basic skills
 - ensuring that pupils have time to respond to teachers' marking and comments and improve their work.
- Develop successful strategies to communicate with all parents effectively, including through the school's website, and to inform them better of their children's progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The establishment of the multi-academy trust in partnership with local schools has made a significant contribution to the quality of the leadership and the management of the school. The senior leadership team promotes a strong sense of ambition that every pupil and member of staff can be successful. Leaders have created a culture where good behaviour can flourish and effective teaching is the expectation. Staff and pupils have risen to the challenges they set, and are proud to be part of the school.
- The pace of improvement has increased significantly over the past year. Recent changes to the staff have strengthened teaching and, as a consequence, pupils' achievement is now good. Leaders make effective use of the expertise from all of the schools within the academy trust to ensure that improvements are secure and sustainable.
- Regular checks are undertaken to measure how well pupils are performing. Teachers from within the school and the academy trust check that their assessments are correct. The information is used to hold teachers to account and to plan additional support for pupils who may be in danger of underachieving. Pupils understand these systems and say their targets help them to focus on what aspects of their work they need to improve.
- Self-evaluation is robust and gives leaders a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use this information as a basis for focused improvement planning. Senior and middle leaders, together with governors, check precisely on progress, making adjustments to what the school provides to increase the impact on pupils' achievement. However, leadership and management are not yet outstanding overall as there has been insufficient time for leaders' actions to ensure that teaching and pupils' achievement are outstanding, particularly in mathematics.
- Leaders at all levels give teachers precise and regular feedback on the strengths of their teaching and where they need to improve. There are clear links between pupils' success and salary progression to ensure that only good practice is rewarded.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted well and there have been no incidents of harassment in recent years. The provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well targeted to ensure that their needs are met.
- The funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively and they make good progress due to carefully tailored individual and small-group teaching. The additional support is very well managed by the special educational needs coordinator.
- Teachers plan together in year groups, ensuring consistency in what is taught. The topics in the curriculum are broad and balanced, provide many opportunities for pupils to learn outside the classroom, and strongly promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Regular celebrations of national festivals help pupils to appreciate the values shared by the wider community. The curriculum is enriched through a wide range of educational visits, visitors to the school, use of the outdoor areas, and themed weeks. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school uses the primary physical education and sport premium effectively to promote a healthy lifestyle for all pupils. Specialist teachers help pupils experience a wide range of sports and the numbers who take part in competitive sports have increased. Teachers are better trained and are now more confident in physical education so that this provision can be sustained more effectively.
- Leaders have maintained the trust of parents, who are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. However, a few parents stated that they would like further information on their child's progress and that communication with the school, including through the school's website, is not always effective.
- The academy trust has provided very effective support for teacher training and for checking assessments, which has resulted in the effective tracking of pupils' achievements and raising the quality of teaching.
- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. Systems are securely in place and staff training is up to date in areas such as child protection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have worked with their partners in the Vale Academy Trust to review their work. This has resulted in each governor taking on specific responsibilities and has led to a much better understanding of their role in supporting and offering challenge to school leaders. The governing body is now better informed about the performance of the school when compared with others and leaders are now held to account more effectively. Governors have been closely involved in the appointment of suitable staff.
 - The governing body has helped to ensure that robust procedures are in place so that teachers are rewarded with pay increases only when their pupils make good progress. The governing body has supported leaders in tackling weaker teaching and has used the budget wisely to support improvements

in teaching with the help of academy trust partners. The building programme has been well managed. The governing body ensures that robust checks are made on all finances.

- Governors have a good knowledge of how the pupil premium is spent and how this benefits disadvantaged pupils. They are also rightly proud of the way that the primary physical education and sport premium has boosted the school's participation and successes in many local sports competitions. It has a clear oversight of the important aspects of the school. All statutory requirements are met, including those with regard to safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Attitudes to learning have been transformed as pupils are clear about what they have to do to be successful.
- Pupils cooperate extremely well together and settle quickly to work without any fuss. Pupils are enjoying the increased levels of challenge in their work and are eager to learn. They concentrate for sustained periods on their learning and discuss their work together in a mature way.
- Pupils are very supportive of each other, particularly of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, demonstrating the school's effectiveness in fostering good relationships and tackling discrimination.
- Behaviour around the school, in the playground and in the dining room is exemplary. Due to well-targeted support, there have been remarkable improvements in the behaviour of some individuals whose behaviour gave rise to concerns. A few pupils still require adult support to maximise their progress, which is why behaviour and safety are not outstanding.
- Pupils make a strong contribution to the decisions made in school about their learning and their well-being. They say that good account is taken of their views. For example, pupils were able to contribute their ideas when the new behaviour policy was developed. The older pupils are keen to take responsibility. They talk enthusiastically about the school council, peer mediators and buddies. Pupils have a great pride in their school and are welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain through a strong focus on the development of the skills and understanding pupils need to become good citizens. Older pupils demonstrate impressive maturity in the way they look after the younger pupils and encourage their social development.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe because the adults provide a calm and orderly environment in which to work and play, and they are kind to each other.
- Parents agree strongly that their children are well looked after at school, and that they feel safe and happy.
- Pupils are very clear that bullying and derogatory or aggressive language are rare. Pupils are very knowledgeable about the different forms that bullying can take, such as cyber bullying or sexism. They are confident that, should it occur, it would be dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Pupils know how to stay safe as they are well prepared to maintain their personal safety through training in areas such as road safety.
- Attendance is above average and pupils enjoy coming to school. They told the inspectors that they liked everything about the school and are looking forward to the completion of the new building. They enjoy other activities such as sports, outdoor learning, and the many clubs and trips, including residential visits.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is now typically good. The scrutiny of work in pupils' books, data about progress and lesson observations confirm the school's own view that teaching is good for all age groups. Records show this has improved rapidly during the last year, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Teaching has a positive impact on learning and achievement including in reading, writing and mathematics. Overall, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and develop very effective working relationships. For most pupils, the work is increasingly challenging, which is leading to higher achievement.

- Pupils arrive calmly and happily in the morning. Teachers have good classroom routines and have successfully established positive learning atmospheres. The calm and focused start sets the tone for the day.
- The clear improvements in the teaching of literacy, reading and mathematics since the formation of the academy trust ensure that pupils are making good progress. In some year groups, pupils are making outstanding progress in their reading and writing as a result of outstanding teaching. This is not yet consistent across the whole school.
- Teaching of writing is particularly strong because teachers develop pupils' vocabulary and skills before commencing with the task, often linked to subjects other than English. In reading, pupils develop a good knowledge of phonics (letters and their sounds) and have many opportunities to read to adults and to develop their comprehension skills.
- Every six weeks, teachers evaluate the progress pupils make with school leaders. They quickly identify any pupils who are not progressing in their learning. Teachers deploy their teaching assistants effectively in order to enable all pupils to make the best progress possible. All adults take responsibility for pupils' learning and progress. As a result, all pupils including the most able, those supported by the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good or better progress.
- Teachers make clear what is expected in learning. The 'step approach', which breaks down the learning into small steps, ensures that pupils are clear about what they need to learn. This allows pupils to evaluate the quality of their work to see if it meets the objectives set and then make further improvements. This is leading to faster progress, particularly in writing.
- Teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly and accurately. They use this information with increasing precision to set work that is at the right level for most pupils. They question pupils effectively to elicit understanding and to encourage pupils to think more deeply about their learning.
- The marking of pupils' work is of good quality, particularly in writing, although pupils do not always have the time to respond to the teacher's comments and so improve their work.
- Teachers benefit from sharing good practice with colleagues from within the academy trust. They work well together to share effective practice and introduce new ideas from training events.
- On occasions, the work set in mathematics does not extend all pupils' opportunities to develop problem-solving and reasoning strategies. Teachers do not require pupils to use their number skills in subjects other than mathematics. This limits their confidence in the use of their basic skills.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- From broadly average levels of attainment at the formation of the academy trust, there has been a sharp rise to above national levels. This is largely due to the decisive action taken by senior leaders to raise the quality of teaching. Highly effective systems to track pupils' progress help the school to identify pupils who are not doing well enough and to ensure these pupils receive the support they need to help them catch up. This is a strong factor in accelerating progress across the school.
- The school's internal assessment information shows that all groups of pupils currently in the school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching which is now more consistent means that pupils are making faster progress than they were.
- In 2014, standards in Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics were at national averages. School information for the current Year 6 pupils shows improvements, with standards above expected levels.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 in 2014 were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the check on phonics in Year 1 was above the national average.
- Virtually all parents who voiced an opinion thought that their children made good progress.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 was seven terms behind other pupils in the school in mathematics and five terms behind in reading and writing. Compared with other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were seven terms behind in mathematics, four terms behind in writing, and five terms behind in reading.
- This year, school information shows that strategies to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils have been very successful. This group of pupils is currently reaching the same above-average level of attainment in all three subjects as all other pupils in the school. Their attainment exceeds that of other pupils nationally. Throughout all year groups, they are making accelerated progress from their various starting points, catching up quickly with other pupils and rapidly closing any gaps with their peers.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given good support in class and when they work in small groups out of the classroom. This helps them to keep up with their peers so they make

good progress, often from lower starting points.

- Since the formation of the academy, the school has significantly increased the demands made on the most-able pupils in all subjects. They are given additional work to challenge them at the right level for their individual needs. This results in the most-able pupils making good progress throughout the school. The proportions attaining the higher levels at the ends of Year 2 and Year 6 are rising rapidly.
- Pupils achieve well in reading and writing because teaching is effective in developing key skills. It provides many opportunities for pupils to read widely and to practise their writing across different subjects. Daily reading workshop activities help pupils to read fluently and write imaginatively.
- Pupils' competent basic skills and developing confidence and maturity since the formation of the academy prepare them well for transition to secondary education.

The early years provision

is good

- Children join the school with skills that are broadly typical for their age, although some children's personal and social skills are not as well developed. Good transition arrangements with the high number of pre-school settings ensure that children make a good start. The vast majority of children make good progress so that, by the end of the Reception Year, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. A broadly average and increasing proportion of children reach a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year.
- Teachers track children's progress carefully to identify any children who are not making the progress they should. Parents are involved early on and contribute to their child's development through the open days, the school's electronic tracking system and the learning journals.
- Relationships are strong. This ensures that children engage well with all activities. Staff guide the children very effectively and give them good support through constant discussions and side-by-side talking together in order to improve their vocabulary and ability to respond to questions.
- Children enjoy learning and are safe and well cared for. Their behaviour is good; they play well together, taking turns and cooperating effectively.
- Adults work effectively in the early years and are well supported by the coordinator, who provides strong leadership. They meet regularly to plan activities so that children have a consistently good educational experience.
- Good use is made of the extensive shared outdoor area. Children develop confidence in physical skills and role play. Teachers create imaginative opportunities for the children to write. For example, the children produced their own information book after finding a 'dragon's egg' in the classroom.
- Children have good attitudes towards learning and the most successful learning occurs when adults lead small groups, for example in phonics or number work. Children sometimes engage in play without learning from it and adults do not always extend children's thinking when they have chosen the activities.
- The focus on boys' writing is paying dividends, particularly in children's interest and positive attitudes towards writing.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	140237
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	450356

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	344
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alistair Clooney
Headteacher	Jenny de la Coze
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
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