

Charter Primary School

Mitchell Avenue, Coventry, CV4 8DW

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement in mathematics requires improvement as it is not yet good. This is because the quality of teaching over time has been inconsistent.
- Not all teachers have sufficient skills to teach mathematics as effectively as they do English. They do not always make it clear to the pupils what the purpose of the lesson is about.
- Pupils who find reading difficult are sometimes given books to read which are too hard for them.
- Teachers do not always make sure that questioning deepens pupils' understanding or that more able pupils are challenged in lessons and this slows their progress.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to work out things for themselves and talk to each other about their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Standards are rising and the rate of progress made by pupils is improving, particularly in English.
- The school is successfully closing the gaps between different groups of pupils.
- Behaviour in the school is much better than it used to be, and is now good.
- There is a strong and effective leadership team and governors provide effective support and challenge.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons taught by ten different teachers and one session, led by a specialist teacher, that provided extra help for pupils. Of these, five observations were carried out jointly with the head of school and executive headteacher.
- One inspector carried out a short walk around the school to look at aspects of the school's work.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and talked to other pupils in lessons, in the playground and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books during lessons and also with the head of school.
- Inspectors heard some pupils read in Key Stage 1 and talked to other pupils about their reading.
- Meetings were held with the head of school and executive headteacher, other school staff, members of the governing body and the school's improvement advisers from the local authority. Inspectors spoke informally with other members of staff.
- There were no responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors took account of the school's surveys of parents' and carers' opinions and spoke to some parents and carers as they brought their children to school at the start of the day. The questionnaires completed by seven members of staff were considered.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents including: the school's check on how well it is doing and its plans for improvement; evidence about how teachers are set targets to improve pupils' progress; records of observations of the quality of teaching; minutes of meetings of the governing body; the school's information about pupils' progress over time and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sandra Hayes, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mike Williams

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- Charter Primary is smaller than the average-sized school.
- The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the pupil premium (extra funding from the government) is high. There is a small number of pupils who are looked after by the local authority for whom the school also receives the pupil premium.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is lower than in other schools. The proportion who need specialist support or who have a statement of special educational needs is much higher than average. The pupils' needs relate mainly to moderate learning difficulties, speech and language problems, behavioural and emotional difficulties, and autistic spectrum disorders.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is slightly higher than in other schools, as is the number whose first language is not English.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school part way through the school year is much higher than in most schools.
- Two voluntary breakfast clubs are held on site; both of these are managed by the school.
- There have been a number of changes since the last inspection. The previous headteacher has left and the school has become federated with a larger primary school. The two schools operate separately under one governing body and an executive headteacher. There is a head of school, responsible for day-to-day leadership and management. The executive headteacher is a National Leader in Education.
- The school currently meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is good or better by making sure that teachers:
 - plan lessons that build up pupils' knowledge through the course of each lesson and over a series of lessons
 - carefully check how well pupils are learning during lessons, give them guidance to improve their work, and ensure that the work given is suitable for their differing abilities
 - provide pupils with more opportunities to explore, investigate and talk about their learning.
- Increase rates of pupils' progress in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that the development of a whole-school focus for the teaching of mathematics is a key focus in the school's plans for improvement
 - providing training for teachers on specific aspects of mathematics
 - ensuring that pupils regularly use their knowledge of number to solve mathematical problems in a range of subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although many children start the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are well below those expected for their age, a proportion are working at higher levels. Other children join the school in the Reception class with skills that are generally below those expected for their age group. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes and are ready to start the National Curriculum when they enter Year 1.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and achieve above average standards. Pupils who are given extra help in reading make good progress and catch up quickly. Most pupils use their knowledge of the sounds that letters make (phonics) to spell or read new words. Nevertheless, some lower-ability pupils do not manage this successfully and sometimes they are given books that are too hard for them to read.
- The school has worked hard to encourage pupils to read more. Pupils say they enjoy reading. Older pupils are reading more at home than before. The school is looking for ways to help younger pupils read more. Pupils write confidently in a range of subjects.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 are average in English but below average in mathematics. Pupils' achievement in mathematics requires improvement as it is not yet good; over the past few years, pupils in Years 3 to 6 have not achieved well enough. While pupils' progress over time in English has improved and is now good, in mathematics it remains uneven, ranging from good to requiring improvement.
- Occasionally, progress in some mathematics lessons is inadequate. Extra help for pupils who need it for mathematics have been less successful than that provided in English. Pupils apply their mathematical skills less well because they do not have many opportunities to solve problems or use their knowledge of number.
- The progress made by disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and minority ethnic pupils mirrors that of their classmates; it is better in English than in mathematics.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium were one and a half years behind other pupils in English in 2012 and about a year behind in mathematics. These gaps are closing.
- Pupils know how well they are doing. They say their targets give them a useful 'quick fix' to improve their work in lessons. Marking shows them what to do next time to make their work even better.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not good or better in all classes, particularly in Years 3 to 6. This explains why pupils' progress is variable.
- Teachers are sensitive to pupils' personal needs and so relationships are strong. Pupils feel able to learn and enjoy being challenged. Pupils say that teaching has improved over the last year. They now feel they are taught well and teachers are 'more experienced'. Parents and carers, too, say that teaching has improved.

- Confident teachers build up pupils' understanding carefully and develop it over a number of lessons. Sometimes teachers lack understanding about what they are teaching, particularly in mathematics. The work in these lessons does not move pupils to the next step in their learning, and so they do not make good enough progress.
- In the best lessons, teachers and teaching assistants use questions to check pupils' learning. They adjust activities to help pupils understand better or to move on to new learning when ready. In some lessons, pupils' progress slows down because teachers do not ask the right questions to deepen their understanding or to challenge them.
- In good lessons, there is a shared understanding of what pupils will learn and how they will learn it. Teachers expect pupils to work quickly and challenge them to do their best; pupils try hard and make good progress. This was seen in Year 6 where pupils built up tension in a story. They challenged themselves and each other to improve their writing by using their personal targets for guidance.
- Sometimes pupils do not learn well in lessons because teachers do not give them sufficient opportunities to explore ideas or actively find things out. This means that pupils do not have the opportunity to talk about their learning and share their understanding.
- Teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage provide a wide range of interesting experiences that make learning fun. When children choose activities for themselves, there is always an adult on hand to talk about what they are doing or to ask questions. This helps them to learn well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are confident and very thoughtful. They have a strong sense of community and respect for others. They show understanding of social and moral responsibility, and how this might influence their view of different cultures, beliefs and circumstances. These attitudes are testament to the significant effort the school has made to improve behaviour over recent years.
- Pupils know how to stay safe and what to do if they need help. They say that most pupils in the school are nice to each other and that there is no bullying. Pupils understand how the school's behaviour policy works and say this is a guide for how to behave properly.
- Pupils' views reflect the school's records, which show a marked improvement in behaviour over time. This is a result of well-developed, effective systems and the school's efforts to build strong relationships.
- The school acts tirelessly to reduce absence, trying every possible means to ensure that all pupils attend regularly. In spite of these tremendous efforts, attendance has fluctuated this year and is currently just below average. Some pupils eligible for free school meals continue to be regularly absent. This is the main reason why behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding.

The leadership and management are good

- The strong, dynamic team formed by the head of school, deputy headteacher and executive headteacher leads the school with a steely determination to improve. Robust systems and processes ensure that all staff follow a common approach to achieving this ambition. Consequently, teaching is improving and pupils' behaviour is now good.

- Senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching. They set targets for improvement that link to pupils' achievement. The head of school plans to make teachers' future targets focus even more closely on particular groups of pupils in order to close the gaps in achievement that remain.
- Staff responsible for leading subjects support senior leaders in building a picture of the quality of teaching by checking teachers' plans, looking at pupils' work, visiting lessons and talking to pupils about their learning. Leaders check whether teachers are meeting targets and provide extra support, if needed, to help them succeed. Senior leaders take courageous decisions to ensure the quality of teaching continues to improve. For example, following a recent recruitment process, leaders did not make an appointment because they believed the candidates would not contribute sufficiently to the quality of teaching overall.
- Senior leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They know where teaching needs to improve. They set about tackling issues through carefully planned actions and check if these have had the necessary impact on pupils' achievement. This process has been the key to the improvement in pupils' reading and writing since the last inspection. Leaders plan to apply this approach to improving achievement in mathematics.
- Leaders seek to ensure everyone has an equal chance to succeed. They use assessment information to identify pupils who are not doing as well as they should. Additional support has helped pupils catch up faster in English than in mathematics. Leaders know this and have plans to provide more effective support in mathematics.
- Different subjects give pupils enjoyable experiences. Pupils say they like the visits to places of interest planned into topics. There are many opportunities for pupils to write in different subjects. This has helped them improve their writing skills. There are fewer opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge of numbers in other work so their mathematical skills are not well developed.
- School surveys indicate that parents and carers are happy with the school and think it is well led. Those spoken to during the inspection echoed this view.
- The local authority has provided a range of support for the school since the previous inspection. It acted quickly to secure strong leadership during the absence of the previous headteacher. The level of support has reduced over the last year as the school's capacity to take responsibility for its own improvement has increased.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body supports and challenges the school rigorously. Governors expect every pupil to be given an equal chance to succeed. Governors are routinely involved in reviewing the progress pupils make and are quick to question leaders if they feel this is not as it should be. Governors are aware of where teaching is strong and where it requires improvement. They understand how the performance of staff links to increases in salary, including that of the Head of School. They hold the school to account for efficient financial management, including the spending of the pupil premium funding. Governors ensure they carry out statutory responsibilities effectively. The governing body has a clear strategic view of the school's future and how federation arrangements will benefit pupils at Charter Primary.

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	134019
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	408879

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	George Jones
Headteacher	Georgette Franklin, Head of School (Derek Gardiner, Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2012
Telephone number	024 7646 6391
Fax number	024 7669 5585
Email address	headteacher@charter.coventry.sch.uk

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