

Charmouth Primary School

Lower Sea Lane, Charmouth, Bridport, Dorset DT6 6LR

Inspection dates

3–4 July 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, too few pupils, including the most able, have achieved at a higher standard. The progress of all groups of pupils in writing and mathematics has not been good enough.
- Children in early years have not achieved as well as they should.
- The quality of teaching has been too variable. Teachers have not had high enough expectations of what pupils, including the few disadvantaged pupils, can and should achieve.
- Until recently, governors did not hold leaders and staff sufficiently accountable for weaknesses in performance.
- Considerable turnover in staffing has affected pupils' progress. Several parents have expressed concern about this.
- The school curriculum has not enabled pupils to extend and consolidate their learning. Some pupils are bored by the lack of challenge. This is reflected in work which lacks depth and is poorly presented.
- The school has not prepared pupils sufficiently for the next stage of their education.
- Middle leaders have not checked the quality of teaching and learning sufficiently or helped staff to become more proficient.
- Staff have not used assessment constructively enough to meet the needs of all pupils. Some assessment has been inaccurate.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well. They feel safe and well cared for.
- The new headteacher has already brought about some improvements and is planning many more. Progress is improving, and more pupils are now on track to achieve at an appropriate level.
- The teaching staff have become more stable and are now benefiting from good professional development.
- Governors are now more active, challenging and effective in helping the school to move forward. Leaders show the capacity to improve the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching throughout the school by:
 - having higher expectations of what all pupils, including the most able, can achieve and providing more challenge in all curriculum subjects
 - giving teachers more confidence to encourage children in Reception and pupils in the rest of the school to do work which takes full advantage of their willingness to learn
 - helping teachers to make more accurate assessments and use them as a tool to make sure that all pupils do work which is appropriate to their needs.
- Raise standards across the curriculum by:
 - making pupils write in more depth and at length in curriculum subjects other than English
 - ensure greater challenge in mathematics, including more focus on problem-solving and practical applications.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills and confidence of middle leaders and helping them to contribute more to school development
 - planning the curriculum more effectively to raise standards, increase pupils' enthusiasm for learning and prepare them for the next stage of their education.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- In the two years prior to 2018, outcomes in mathematics and writing declined. The quality of teaching was affected by high turnover in staffing. School leaders did not fully appreciate these weaknesses of the school.
- With the appointment of the current headteacher and a restructuring of governance, there has been a more realistic evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Planning for improvement now focuses on the priorities to take the school forwards. Leaders make good use of support from the local authority and other schools to improve teaching and learning. However, several of their strategies to improve the quality of education are too recent to show impact yet.
- Children in early years have not achieved as well as they should. The progress of pupils higher up the school, including the average-attaining and the most able pupils, has not been good enough. There has not been enough challenge in the teaching to enable pupils to give of their best. Several parents commented on this during the inspection. Parents have also been concerned about the turnover in staffing.
- There are only a few disadvantaged pupils and pupils who also have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities in the school. They, too, have not yet made enough progress.
- The school's curriculum has not prepared pupils sufficiently for the next stage of their education. Although pupils have enjoyed some of the topics, activities are not focused sufficiently on enabling them to develop good knowledge and understanding.
- Middle leaders, mainly subject leaders, have not had sufficient opportunity, confidence or knowledge to contribute effectively to monitoring teaching and learning. They have not been able to assist colleagues enough in developing their own expertise. This has begun to change, as staff now have more opportunities to develop their professional expertise.
- School leaders and other staff have not assessed pupils accurately enough in the past. Moreover, they have not used assessment information to plan effectively for the needs of individual pupils. The headteacher has begun to address this weakness, so assessment is now more accurate and staff use it more constructively to support learning.
- The school now uses funding set aside to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities more effectively. These pupils now make stronger progress. The leadership is beginning to evaluate the impact of the funding.
- School leaders have maintained some of the strengths which were highlighted at the previous inspection. Pupils behave well, and they also feel safe and well supported. Parents and the pupils themselves acknowledge this.
- The leadership has put greater emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils understand more about life in modern Britain and their role in it than at the previous inspection. For example, pupils' work shows how they understand the importance of different faiths and values in today's Britain. The school is very

inclusive and celebrates the fact.

- The headteacher's recent improvements, strongly supported by expertise from outside the school, mean that many more pupils are now on track to achieve well. This shows that the school has the capacity to improve further.

Governance of the school

- Until recently, governors did not ensure that the strengths in teaching and pupils' achievement identified at the previous inspection were maintained. Governors had not held staff sufficiently to account. They had not provided enough support to ensure effective strategic leadership.
- Since 2017, governance has been more effective. There have been significant changes in the membership of the governing body. Governors have benefited from professional training, which has increased their knowledge and enabled them to carry out their roles more effectively.
- Governors are now more aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what they need to do to move the school forwards. They are now more active, for example in talking with staff about their responsibilities and checking the quality of teaching and learning. They also now consider the implications of the school's self-evaluation and the leadership's plans for improvement.
- Governors have successfully resolved some financial issues while carrying through staff changes. They have succeeded in arriving at a balanced budget.
- Governors take their responsibilities for safeguarding seriously. They have had relevant training to update their safeguarding awareness.
- The governing body is now more aware of how disadvantaged pupils can be effectively supported. Governors are more confident in holding the leadership to account and asking challenging questions about school improvement. Governors are well placed to help the school to improve further, building on existing strengths and supporting the newer initiatives.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff have had appropriate training, regularly updated, in all relevant aspects of safeguarding. They understand the potential issues which can make children very vulnerable, such as internet abuse, child sexual exploitation and radicalisation. They know what signs to look for and how, and to whom, any concerns should be reported. This ensures that there is a good culture of safeguarding.
- The school gives good advice to parents and pupils about safety issues, such as those involving e-safety. Pupils are confident that they are safe at school, and their parents agree. Parents discuss safeguarding awareness at parent forum meetings.
- Leaders make appropriate checks on staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. The school keeps appropriate records, for example on vulnerable children, and works well with other agencies.
- Staff help to boost pupil awareness and the safeguarding culture by emphasising key

safety measures in the curriculum and in assemblies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- During the past two years, there have been several staff changes. Parents have been concerned about this, and it has contributed to the variability in the quality of teaching. Teaching was judged as good at the last inspection, but at that time teachers were asked to ensure that pupils had more opportunities to apply their skills across the curriculum. The school has only partly achieved this, and teaching requires improvement because it has not been effective enough over time.
- Too often, there has been insufficient challenge. This is particularly the case in mathematics and writing. The most able pupils do not get enough opportunities to develop and extend their understanding. Sometimes they do repetitive tasks, pitched at too low a level. Some pupils and their parents report that they become 'bored', although pupils overall are keen to learn.
- The lack of challenge has also held back middle-attaining pupils and the few disadvantaged pupils in the school.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities now make stronger progress than before. This is because of more accurate assessment of their needs and the greater range of support that they get inside and outside of lessons. Teaching assistants have benefited from additional training.
- Teachers help pupils to develop their reading skills well, but they have been less effective in improving progress in mathematics and writing. In mathematics, there has not been enough focus on more sophisticated reasoning and problem-solving skills. There have been too few writing activities which extend the depth and range of writing in the topics, which are incorporated in most curriculum subjects.
- Teachers have not made enough use of assessment to plan learning activities geared to the needs of individual pupils or groups of pupils.
- Too often, pupils are required to do tasks that do not encourage them to consider concepts or develop skills which increase understanding. There has not been enough emphasis on applying information and knowledge constructively to deepen learning.
- Teaching is improving, because teachers have benefited from a range of professional training opportunities. Teachers are becoming more confident, for example about having higher expectations of what pupils can achieve in mathematics.
- Staff have begun to make more accurate assessments and to use this information more meaningfully in their planning. As a result, pupils are making stronger progress in many classes. Most teachers give pupils helpful feedback on their work, in line with the school's policy.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school provides a good range of spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities. While the inspection was taking place, the school was putting on its annual summer production, which involved all pupils. Parents greatly appreciated it.
- Pupils use the local environment in 'beach school', learning skills such as identifying plants and creatures. Pupils learn about moral issues in religious studies and the personal, social, health and education curriculum.
- Although not all pupils enjoy all lessons, they are very happy at school most of the time. They feel safe and well cared for in school. They enjoy their time with friends, and are confident and polite when talking to adults, including visitors.
- Pupils enjoy the extra-curricular opportunities such as sport. The school has had some sporting successes in interschool sport. The leadership has spent the sport funding partly on bringing in professional sports coaching, to which all pupils get weekly access. Pupils also have good opportunities to learn and enjoy music.
- Vulnerable pupils get a good level of support.
- Relationships are good in school. Staff promote equality of opportunity, so that Charmouth Primary is a very inclusive school.
- Pupils are keen to learn and take pride in their work most of the time. However, when pupils are less enthusiastic they do not take sufficient care with the presentation of their work.
- Pupils do not regard bullying of any sort of a problem at the school. They are confident that staff will deal firmly with any incidents.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well around the school and for most of the time in lessons. There has been occasional low-level disruption due to lack of interest in particular lessons. The school has worked to reduce the incidence of this.
- Attendance is close to the national average. The attendance of the few disadvantaged pupils has improved. Staff put considerable effort into helping pupils to improve their attendance. They support parents where necessary and take a firm stand with those few parents who do not recognise the importance of regular attendance.
- There have been very few exclusions from the school in recent years, and no recent incidents of racist or homophobic behaviour.
- Staff follow school behaviour policies consistently.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Although pupils' work is now improving in quality, achievement over time has not been good enough. Progress in mathematics and writing for pupils leaving school at the end of Year 6 was in the bottom 20% of all schools nationally in 2016. In 2017 this was still the case for writing. No pupils achieved at a greater depth in mathematics and writing in 2017.
- Pupils have not made enough progress in developing grammar, spelling and punctuation skills.
- Statistical data on the progress of disadvantaged pupils is not meaningful, because there are so few of them in the school. However, these few pupils did not make good progress compared to other pupils nationally. There is still some underachievement, despite recent improvements. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are now better supported and are making stronger progress.
- Pupils have traditionally done well in the Year 1 phonics screening check, achieving above the expected standard nationally. However, the school has not successfully transferred these results into effective writing skills. This is partly because there has not been enough range and depth in the writing, especially in subjects other than English. The school recognises this as an issue and is undergoing a major restructuring of the curriculum.
- The quality of reading is much higher than that of writing. Staff encourage pupils to read at home and there are daily reading sessions in classes. The inspector listened to some pupils reading with fluency and accuracy appropriate for their age.
- Progress in mathematics has not been strong enough. This is partly because there has been too much low-level, repetitive work, particularly inappropriate for the most able pupils.
- Pupils have not made good progress in some other subjects, such as history and geography. Work is not pitched at a challenging level for pupils of all abilities. Consequently, pupils have not developed a sufficient amount of knowledge, understanding and skills by the end of Year 6.
- Since the current headteacher took up her post, there has been stronger progress in the core subjects of English and mathematics. Teachers are using assessment more meaningfully and are benefiting from staff development. However, some of these gains have yet to be consolidated and embedded consistently across the school.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children in Reception are taught for much of the time alongside pupils in Year 1. Many of the children in Reception join the school with knowledge, skill and personal development close to age-related expectations. By the time they leave Reception, the proportion achieving a good level of development is either at or just above the national average. For some, this represents good progress, but others should achieve more.
- There has been an issue with the accuracy of some of the early years assessments. This has now been resolved. The new early years leader regularly assesses the

children's progress. Children's progress is recorded in detail in their learning journals, and there is a good range of evidence to support the judgements made.

- Children make varying progress in developing their early writing skills. Some make good progress, but staff do not build on some children's skills as soon as they could.
- Most children make good progress in their personal development. The inspector saw this in lessons. Most of the children are confident and articulate in talking, whether to the teacher, to each other or to the inspector. They understand the conventions of listening to the teacher and each other when appropriate. Children cooperate well with each other and with pupils in Year 1.
- The early years leader has good transition arrangements with pre-school families. She invites children and their parents into school so that the children feel secure.
- The early years leader benefits from good professional development opportunities with other colleagues.
- Children behave well and they enjoy learning, as the inspector saw when they were enjoying a range of teacher-led and independent activities. Children showed, for example, that they can share and take turns. They feel safe in school, and their parents agree.
- The classroom is quite small, although well resourced. There are plans to develop the outdoor area. Currently, it does not have enough dedicated learning areas to allow children to enjoy a full range of meaningful social and learning opportunities.

School details

Unique reference number	113662
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10048033

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	149
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ray Dyer
Headteacher	Laura Cornish
Telephone number	0129 7560591
Website	www.charmouth.dorset.sch.uk/
Email address	office@charmouth.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	April 2015

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is just above average.
- The school meets the floor standards, which are the government's minimum expectations of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school operates a breakfast club.
- There have been several changes in staffing and governance during the past two years. The current headteacher took up her post about six months ago.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited all classes briefly, accompanied by the headteacher, to observe learning and behaviour.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, several other staff and seven governors, including the chair of governors. The inspector had telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority and the headteacher of another school. He also met with several parents, both inside the school and in the playground.
- The inspector talked with several pupils and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector reviewed documentation, including the school development plan, governors' minutes, assessment information on pupils currently in the school and documentation about various aspects of safeguarding.
- The inspector reviewed the 31 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. He also reviewed staff responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, and several free-text responses from parents. The inspector received two letters from parents.

Inspection team

John Laver, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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