

Charter Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134019
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	328800
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Marian Harker HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	185
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Mason
Headteacher	Paul Hardisty
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Mitchell Avenue Coventry CV4 8DW
Telephone number	02476 466391
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Charter is an average sized primary school situated on the outskirts of Coventry. Most pupils come from the local area and are of White British origin. The proportions of pupils who are eligible for free school meals or have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are much higher than average. The school has part-time Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children in the Nursery and full-time for those in Reception. Located on the school site is the privately run Mosaic Nursery Canley Children's Centre which was subject to a separate inspection. The school is part of a non-statutory soft federation agreement with a local primary school.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Charter is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. One parent typically reflected: 'The school has improved so much in the last year; they have really started to turn the corner.' Since the last inspection, the school has undergone a significant period of instability in staffing, which has impacted on school improvement. The headteacher and senior team have worked closely with the local authority and are part of a very successful soft federation agreement. As a result, staffing has stabilised and achievement has improved and is now satisfactory. A good system for monitoring, assessing and tracking the progress made by pupils is used by all staff. When pupils are not making the expected progress, they are quickly identified and appropriate support is provided to put them back on track. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress; some make good progress when their individual needs are identified early and they are given appropriate support. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is satisfactory. The school has put a range of strategies in place to improve attendance and as a result they have met their statutory target, and figures are moving closer to national averages.

There are, however, still issues to tackle in the school. The progress made by pupils across the school is uneven in places. When children start at the school their skills are generally below those levels expected for their age. In key areas, such as early reading, writing and creative development, their skills are well below expectations. Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve satisfactorily. The standards these pupils currently attain are below national averages, although there is an improving picture. The most recent school data indicate that a greater proportion of pupils are now achieving the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1. Older pupils are making at least satisfactory progress and some, particularly in Year 6, make good progress. As a result, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved since the last inspection, although they remain below average, particularly in English.

All these improvements have come about due to the steadfast leadership of the headteacher, who, very ably supported by a recently appointed senior team, has ensured there is now a stronger sense of direction in the school's work. Leadership and management across the school are satisfactory overall, as some wider leadership and management roles and responsibilities are at an early stage of development. The school has a clear understanding of the main areas for development and its self-evaluation is good. School improvement planning is clearly linked to raising standards and the school is satisfactorily placed to continue to improve.

The quality of teaching and learning has recently improved and is now satisfactory overall. Some lessons observed were good. However, this is not consistent across the school. The curriculum is satisfactory and pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, are given the opportunity to participate in a good range of enrichment activities. A key strength of the school is the effective way in which it promotes the personal development and well-being of its pupils. Care, guidance and support are also good. The pupils are polite, have positive attitudes to learning and are provided with many opportunities to develop their confidence and self-esteem. The school soundly prepares pupils for their next steps in learning.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The learning environment is stimulating and welcoming and the children settle quickly into school life. One parent said: 'My son loves coming to school. The staff are very caring and keep us fully informed of how well he is doing.' Good quality care and support enable the children to develop their social skills well. Children have the skills and confidence to choose some of their own learning activities. They develop independence and undertake simple jobs in their classroom. The curriculum is carefully matched to the required areas of learning and there is an appropriate balance of child-initiated and teacher-led activities. However, on occasion, staff leave the children alone for too long and do not direct or extend their learning. Children make satisfactory progress in their learning and good progress in their personal development. School data indicate that, by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, a greater proportion of children attain the expected levels for their age than previously, although very few exceed these levels. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The Early Years Foundation Stage manager has been recently appointed and is beginning to make a positive impact in moving the provision forward.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and further accelerate the rate of progress for all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Strengthen and improve the quality of teaching, so that it is consistently good or better.
- Sharpen the expertise of leaders and managers to provide staff with the guidance they need to further increase the rate of pupil progress and raise standards.
- Improve pupils' attendance.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement across the school is satisfactory. Even though progress is good in some year groups, the legacy of previously inconsistent progress, due to staffing instability, means that some pupils, particularly in Years 1 and 4, still only make satisfactory progress. Children make satisfactory progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. Pupils in Year 2 make good progress due to good quality teaching. As a result, by the end of Year 2, standards have improved, particularly in writing. By the end of Year 6, although standards are still below average, they are rapidly improving as pupils increasingly catch up on gaps in their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy and enjoy school. When asked, one Year 6 pupil commented: 'Everyone will be sad to leave because we have such good memories of school.' Effective strategies have been put in place to promote good behaviour and this has resulted in pupils' behaving positively both in class and around the school. Whilst attendance is satisfactory, a minority of pupils miss too much school and this slows their learning. Pupils' social and moral development is good.

For example, pupils willingly take on responsibilities around the school, such as 'playground pals' and school council members. Pupils are respectful of each others' feelings and tolerant of cultural differences, the school recognises that opportunities are sometimes missed to promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to be healthy and how to stay safe.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and there are examples of good practice throughout the school. For example, older pupils assess their own work and are given opportunities to respond to marking and identify for themselves how to improve further. Whilst work is marked regularly, guidance given by teachers to help pupils improve their work is not always consistent. Teachers are skilled at managing pupils' behaviour and relationships between staff and pupils are good. The use of teaching assistants is well planned and they effectively support groups and individual pupils in their learning. Interactive whiteboards are regularly used to make lessons interesting. Teachers' expectations of what pupils are to learn are clearly set out at the beginning of lessons. In less effective lessons, the pace of learning does not always meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Some classes have worked with a number of teachers during the previous year and this has interrupted pupils' rates of learning. However, appointments made recently have strengthened the teaching team and the school is now better placed to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Recent developments in the curriculum, such as matching learning styles to pupils' needs, are supporting learning well, and are beginning to accelerate progress. The pupils enjoy a good range of activities and opportunities in addition to daily lessons, such as a Year 6 residential visit to Wales. These broaden pupils' experiences, increase enjoyment and contribute effectively to their personal development. The many after-school sporting activities are oversubscribed, however, and the school recognises the need to offer more enrichment activities to pupils in Key Stage 1. Pupils across the school thoroughly enjoy and value visits to places of interest, such as the Early Years Foundation Stage trip to the Royal Show. These visits provide opportunities for pupils to participate in enjoyable activities and to build personal and social skills. Curricular links are being developed between subjects and this makes learning interesting for the pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupil welfare is a high priority for staff and safeguarding procedures, including child protection arrangements, meet the necessary requirements. Vulnerable pupils are well looked after. The good support from the learning mentor is particularly valued by parents and the school works closely with a range of agencies to support the pupils and their families. In particular, the school works closely with outside agencies to improve attendance and deals effectively with those for whom good behaviour is a challenge. Pupils feel safe in school. They have the confidence to approach any adult in the school knowing their concern will be listened to and dealt with.

Overall, pupils are guided well in their learning and their progress is closely monitored. However, while targets are set for groups, the use of individual targets has not been fully implemented. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and given the support they need by the school and other agencies to achieve in line with their peers.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The determination of the headteacher and the whole leadership team is having a positive impact on moving the school forward. With regular support from the local authority and through the soft federation arrangement, the senior team is now developing a more robust capacity to make the necessary improvements. However, the leadership team realises there is still work to be done to ensure that staff are provided with the guidance they need to further improve standards and achievement across the school. The governing body is very supportive of the school and determined to continue the rapid improvement in achievement and standards. Governors are fulfilling their statutory responsibilities and increasingly hold the school to account. Outside professionals associated with the school hold it in high regard. They acknowledge the strong links the school has made with local organisations such as the children's centre. Parents too are supportive of the school. One commented: 'My child is making good progress because the teachers always help her. Thank you to all the team at Charter.'

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

3 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Charter Primary School, Coventry CV4 8DW

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work, eating lunch with you and watching you learn. I thought you would like to know what we thought about your school and how it could improve.

- You go to a satisfactory school that has improved a lot recently.
- Your attendance has improved and you could help even more by coming to school every day.
- Your headteacher leads the school well and your teachers work hard to prepare interesting lessons for you.
- You are polite and considerate young people who get on well together.
- You enjoy taking on responsibilities in your school.
- We think your school is a really welcoming place with lots of lovely work on display.
- Your school council members are good ambassadors for the school.

In order to make your school even better, I have suggested that your headteacher and other teachers do the following things.

- improve the standards you achieve in your work
- make sure that all your lessons are really interesting and you do as well as you can
- ensure that all your school leaders help you improve your work so you all make good progress
- make sure you all come to school every day and on time.

Thank you once again for making us feel so welcome in your school. We would like to wish you every success for the future.

Yours faithfully

Marian Harker

Her Majesty's Inspector