

# Inspection of Charlton School

Apley Avenue, Telford TF1 3FA

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Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Charlton School leaders and pupils share the same high aspirations. Pupils understand and follow the school vision of 'building knowledge, developing character and inspiring futures'. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and respectful. Teachers treat pupils as individuals and pupils welcome this.

Most pupils work hard and want to do well. In a small number of lessons, a minority of pupils demonstrate some low-level off-task behaviours. Teachers act quickly and efficiently to address any behaviour issues. During social times, pupils walk and mix in a calm and orderly manner. If incidents of poor language or behaviour occur, leaders deal with them swiftly. Pupils feel safe. They say they know who to talk to about any concerns they have.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development well. The extra-curricular programme is rich and diverse. Pupils regularly take part in a range of clubs, such as baking, dance and board games. Pupils value being able to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and school productions. Opportunities, such as trips to art galleries for art, to Berlin for history and to amusement parks for performing arts, enhance the curriculum.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. All pupils follow the same curriculum, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders' actions to develop the curriculum have led to improving pupil outcomes by the end of key stage 4.

Leaders have identified the important things that pupils need to know in order to succeed. In some subjects, teachers present key knowledge precisely. This helps pupils to learn and remember it. For example, in art, pupils have successfully used their understanding of drawing and calligraphy when developing their art skills in the broader topic of patterns. However, some teachers do not check if pupils have remembered important knowledge precisely enough. This can lead to gaps in some pupils' knowledge that are not addressed.

In some subjects, teachers do not take opportunities to develop and challenge pupils' knowledge and understanding as fully as they might. For example, some teachers do not always ask pupils questions that have sufficient depth or set challenging tasks for pupils to complete. This means that pupils are not able to fully extend their understanding of different topics.

Leaders quickly identify pupils with SEND. 'Pupil profiles' provide precise information for staff about pupils' individual needs. Teachers use this information effectively to adapt their teaching. Leaders ensure that all pupils access the same ambitious curriculum. They adapt the curriculum to meet all pupils' needs. This means that pupils with SEND successfully access learning and achieve in line with other pupils.

Leaders are developing a range of strategies to support pupils who are not confident readers. Teachers encourage pupils to read often, including during tutor sessions. Teachers model reading by highlighting keywords. Teachers also discuss pupils' understanding of these words.

Most pupils' behaviour and attitudes are respectful and positive. Inappropriate language and behaviour are rarely heard or seen. Pupils say that derogatory language is uncommon, but they occasionally hear it around the school. Leaders deal with it quickly if heard. Some pupils say the school is now 'more calm and orderly' than it has been in the past. Leaders celebrate positive behaviour across the school, such as in assemblies, and pupils welcome this.

Pupils' well-being is at the forefront of leaders' vision, including pupils' mental health. Leaders actively support pupils who need extra help. Leaders have a well-planned programme of personal, social, health and economic education. Pupils learn about topics such as healthy relationships, democracy and online safety. All students receive unbiased information on potential next steps and high-quality careers guidance. This prepares them well for the next stages of their lives.

Senior leaders and governors know their school very well. Leaders have a well-thought-out professional development programme for staff. They ensure that there are opportunities for staff to collaborate effectively. Governors are well-informed about the curriculum. They both support and hold leaders to account for the decisions taken.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is exceptionally well embedded in the culture of the school. Leaders are visible in person and their photographs are on display around the school. Leaders know the pupils and their local context exceptionally well. They use this knowledge to plan support and help for pupils and their families. External agencies are contacted quickly where early help is required. All staff are proactive in reporting any concerns. Staff and governors receive extensive training, which is updated throughout the year.

Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe, including online.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In some lessons, teachers do not always use assessment systems consistently or effectively to check what pupils know. As a result, pupils develop gaps or misunderstandings in their knowledge, which are not addressed. Leaders should

ensure that all teachers check pupils' understanding consistently to identify and address any gaps in knowledge or misconceptions quickly.

- Some teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to deepen their learning. This means that pupils miss opportunities to gain a greater understanding of the subject. Leaders should ensure that all teachers continue to provide pupils with a range of learning activities and questions that will challenge pupils, expand their learning and deepen their understanding.

## 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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142821
<b>Local authority</b>	Telford & Wrekin
<b>Inspection number</b>	10267832
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,231
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Mike Briscoe
<b>Principal</b>	Andrew McNaughton
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.charlton.uk.com">www.charlton.uk.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected under section 5 Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is one of 10 schools in the Learning Community Trust.
- The school makes use of six registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- Charlton School converted to become a sponsor-led academy in December 2018 and is sponsored by the Learning Community Trust. When its predecessor school, with the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors focused on the following deep dives: English, art, history, mathematics and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at other subjects to check the curriculum and how these subjects are taught.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school's curriculum and improvement planning. The school's website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised further safeguarding records. Inspectors also looked at how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with trustees, governors, the principal, senior leaders, subject leaders, pastoral leaders, teachers, including early careers teachers, students and pupils. They also talked informally to students, pupils and staff to gather information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff and the pupil questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Stuart Clarkson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Steve Byatt	Ofsted Inspector
Amjid Zaman	Ofsted Inspector
Ant Edkins	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Feldman	Ofsted Inspector

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