

Charlton School

Address: Apley Avenue, Telford, TF1 3FA

Unique reference number (URN): 142821

Inspection report: 21 April 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	● ●
Needs attention	● ● ● ●
Urgent improvement	

✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have established clear systems to foster pupils' regular attendance. They carefully implement routines each day to address any issues with punctuality. Leaders carefully check pupils' levels of attendance and take prompt action when needed. This includes working with parents and carers, and providing specific support for groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, pupils' attendance has improved over time. Rates of persistent absence are declining. Pupils with SEND now attend more regularly and are above national averages.

Leaders maintain high expectations for behaviour. Pupils speak highly of the school. Well-established routines ensure that most pupils engage purposely in their learning. Behaviour around the school is calm and orderly, including at social times. Pupils interact well with one another, which contributes to a respectful environment. If disruptions do occur in lessons, staff address these effectively. Bullying and discriminatory behaviours are rare and addressed swiftly. Suspensions are used appropriately and have reduced over time. Targeted support helps pupils who struggle with managing their behaviour to improve. As a result, behaviour across the school is positive and pupils feel respected and ready to learn.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed a comprehensive and well-thought-out personal development programme that takes into account the local area. They make sure that all pupils benefit from the programme. The curriculum builds pupils' knowledge of important topics, including bullying, misogyny and self-esteem. As pupils progress through the school, they deepen their understanding of more complex themes, such as addiction and digital safety. Leaders enhance the school's provision through form-time activities, assemblies and external speakers. Pupils articulate their understanding of different cultures and religions, as well as fundamental British values and the differences that exist between people. They generally recall key knowledge from recent topics.

Pupils receive effective support for their wellbeing. This is reinforced through nurturing relationships with staff and pupil leadership opportunities. Pupils develop confidence and resilience through opportunities such as literacy leaders, peer mentors and year representatives. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They receive age-appropriate education about relationships and sex education. This helps pupils to understand risks that they may encounter and make informed choices. Pupils take pride in their wider achievements and contribute positively to school life.

Pupils benefit from a broad range of experiences that extend beyond the taught curriculum. Opportunities in areas such as the arts, music and sport are matched to pupils' talents and interests. Leaders check how well pupils engage in these opportunities and in trips and visits. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are active participants in these experiences. Pupils take an active role in continuing to refine the wide offer of clubs and activities based on their own ideas and opinions.

Careers education is embedded and appropriately shaped around the school's context and begins in Year 7. Leaders ensure that pupils have the knowledge and guidance they need to move towards securing their next education, employment or training pathway.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Too many pupils do not achieve as well as they should from their starting points. In national examinations, some pupils attain below their peers nationally. This means that they are not as well prepared as they should be for the next stage of their education, employment or training. For other pupils, their attainment in external examinations has improved and is now close to national averages. Gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and their peers have also reduced.

Pupils' progress through the curriculum is variable due to inconsistent teaching. In some subjects, pupils build secure subject knowledge, which allows them to successfully recall prior learning. In these lessons, pupils use subject-specific vocabulary with increasing accuracy. However, this is not typical across the school. Many pupils have gaps in important knowledge. Teachers do not address these gaps before they move pupils on to new learning. As a result, these pupils do not build their knowledge securely over time.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding effectively. As a result, misconceptions and gaps in knowledge are not identified quickly enough. Support for those pupils who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not consistently effective. At times, pupils have too few opportunities to work independently or deepen their learning. Consequently, some pupils produce incomplete work or work that does not meet leaders' expectations.

Targeted interventions and whole-class reading strategies help those pupils who need support to become confident readers. However, leaders' work to address gaps in handwriting, numeracy and oracy is at an early stage. This limits some pupils' access to the curriculum.

In some lessons and subjects, teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and a clear understanding of pupils' abilities. They adapt learning appropriately and use agreed approaches, including targeted questioning and effective circulation, to help pupils improve their work. In these lessons, pupils engage well with learning and produce work of a higher quality.

Leaders have an accurate and informed understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. The curriculum is well sequenced. Key knowledge and skills are identified and ordered to build progressively over time. Leaders have established a clear approach to

teaching that supports staff in the delivery of content. This is underpinned by the trust framework, which promotes consistency.

Inclusion

Needs attention ●

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils' achievement, but this ambition is not realised consistently across the school. Leaders and staff build positive relationships with pupils and support their wellbeing needs effectively. Furthermore, pupils who are disadvantaged, have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), or face other barriers to learning are identified accurately. However, the support provided in lessons for these pupils is too variable. Teachers do not always receive clear enough information about how to adapt learning for these pupils. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not learn the curriculum as successfully as they could, leading to gaps in their knowledge. Leaders have started to strengthen their work on inclusion by providing clearer guidance and training for staff.

Leaders work effectively with families and external partners, including the local authority, to reduce pupils' barriers. They use additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and those known to social care. Leaders review this regularly to check the impact on pupils. Alternative provision is used appropriately, with placements kept under regular review. Leaders have close oversight of pupils' wellbeing at these provisions.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention ●

Recent changes to the school's leadership have brought about a renewed drive for improvement. Leaders have refined the vision for the school and are clear on the strategic direction in which the school is heading. Leaders place pupils' best interests at the centre of their decision-making, with particular attention paid to those who face barriers to learning or wellbeing. Through internal and external quality assurance, leaders are clear on what is working and what needs to be improved in the school. Leaders are focused on developing the quality of teaching and learning that all pupils experience in order to have a positive impact on pupil outcomes and the culture of the school.

Leaders engage well with parents, carers and the wider community. Parents are highly supportive of the journey that leaders are taking the school on and of the provision that pupils receive. Staff morale is positive. Staff feel valued, listened to and supported. Leaders are mindful of workload and wellbeing. Professional learning opportunities are rooted in research and support staff to develop their expertise and refine their teaching practice.

Local governors and the trust understand their roles and provide appropriate support and challenge. They hold leaders to account and work in collaboration with external partners to drive change in the school. However, the impact of their actions is not evident across all areas of the school. Leaders are rightly focused on embedding improvements so that recent changes become secure and sustainable.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

The school is an open, friendly and respectful community. Pupils feel safe and are well cared for. They know that there are trusted adults who they can talk to should they have any concerns. Pupils with barriers to their wellbeing often benefit from the support they receive. Pupils benefit from the actions of new leaders in the school.

The quality and impact of lessons that pupils experience is variable across the school. Inconsistencies in teaching affect how well pupils learn. Pupils' needs are not always addressed appropriately through adaptations to the curriculum. This is particularly true for pupils with specific barriers to learning, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should or make the progress they are capable of.

Pupils enjoy school. Most attend regularly. Pupils behave well. They are polite and respectful towards each other and to staff. Pupils generally learn in lessons free from disruption. Staff are proactive in addressing any behaviour that does not meet their high expectations. Pupils know that staff will deal with any issues of bullying or discrimination quickly and effectively.

Pupils learn about the world around them. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Personal development opportunities and careers education help pupils to consider their next steps. Pupils value the school's welcoming ethos and the range of opportunities available, including clubs, trips, The Duke of Edinburgh' Award and school productions. Pupils can take on leadership roles that help to develop their confidence and provide them with a sense of belonging. Staff recognise pupils who make positive contributions to the life of the school. They provide these pupils with school badges. Pupils wear these with pride.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff identify pupils' needs effectively and share appropriate strategies with teachers to overcome any barriers to learning.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff use checks on pupils' learning consistently to address gaps in pupils' knowledge.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers consider pupils' starting points to meet the specific needs of all pupils and lead to consistently high outcomes.
 - Leaders and governors should ensure that they continue to take robust actions that lead to rapid improvements across the school.
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About this inspection

This school is part of the Learning Community Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Paul Roberts, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Kevin Barton.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, leaders from the school and the trust, local governors, members of teaching and non-teaching staff and several groups of pupils during the inspection. An inspector spoke with the CEO of the trust.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently makes use of 4 unregistered alternative provisions.

The principal commenced their post in September 2025.

Principal: Sarah Barton

Lead inspector:

Andrew Washbourne, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Jacqueline Newsome, Ofsted Inspector


Ed Leighton, Ofsted Inspector

Andrew Madden, His Majesty's Inspector

Hayley Clarke, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 21 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,236

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,200

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

27.51%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.40%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

20.55%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	34.5%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	25.6%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	35.2%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	42.7	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	38.5	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	41.8	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.41	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.51	-0.03	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	20.8%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	14.7%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	18.6%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	34.5	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	31.7	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	32.8	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.03	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.06	-0.57	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	20.8%	53.1%	-32.3 pp
2023/24 (final)	14.7%	53.1%	-38.4 pp
2022/23 (final)	18.6%	52.4%	-33.9 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	34.5	50.4	-16.0
2023/24 (final)	31.7	50.0	-18.4
2022/23 (final)	32.8	50.3	-17.5

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-1.03	0.16	-1.19
2022/23 (final)	-1.06	0.17	-1.22

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	91%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	94%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	94%	94%	Average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	7.1%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	8.0%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	8.1%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	20.2%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	25.3%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	24.3%	26.5%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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