

# Inspection of a good school: Charlton Park Academy

Charlton Park Road, Charlton, London SE7 8HX

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Inspection dates:

7 and 8 June 2023

## Outcome

Charlton Park Academy continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

The school is safe and welcoming. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and their welfare, care and safety are at the centre of everything that leaders and staff do. This includes making sure that all pupils, and students in the sixth form, are given the skills they need to live as full a life as possible. For example, the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is especially strong and well thought out. It gives pupils and students lots of opportunities to develop their life skills and to understand the world outside school.

The programme of learning for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) is highly effective. Teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs) work closely with pupils to give them an individual programme based on their complex needs. The wide range of resources supports this work extremely well. As a result, pupils in the PMLD classes get a high-quality experience of education.

Staff make learning fun and build strong relationships with pupils. The success of this work shows in pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour and in their enjoyment of school. Parents and carers confirm this. Some said that their children enjoy school so much that they want to be there in the holidays. Learning is purposeful, with opportunities for older pupils to gain external qualifications and to go on to college.

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

Leaders continue to move the school forward successfully. They have adopted new developments in special education, provided training for staff, and are now adapting their practice to meet the changing needs of pupils. Leaders have laid the foundations for improvement carefully.

To facilitate this improvement, leaders have increased the capacity of the leadership team by appointing a new headteacher and senior staff. The role of middle leaders is being redefined to ensure greater clarity about who does what and how. This groundwork is

supported by a review of the curriculum and a new focus on reading, including the introduction of phonics.

To achieve this plan, leaders are using and adapting an approved phonics programme to teach early reading. It is early days, but the phonics programme is already helping pupils to recognise the sounds that letters represent and to blend these to read words. In some classes, pupils are reading words more fluently because they know these sounds. In mathematics too, a new scheme is being introduced. This is typically helping pupils to learn successfully. For example, students in the sixth form were developing their basic mathematical skills effectively.

Overall, pupils learn well. As leaders recognise, their work to improve the curriculum is not as well rooted in teachers' everyday practice as it needs to be. In some cases, staff lack the detailed knowledge about the new approaches to the curriculum. In a few instances, this can sometimes limit pupils' learning. Leaders have well-advanced plans to develop staff's professional skills further.

Art is an important part of the curriculum. Some pupils work towards a GCSE qualification. Teaching enables pupils to gain a thorough grounding in some of the fundamental skills and techniques of art that will stay with them when they leave school. They produce work of high quality that demonstrates what they have learned.

The PSHE curriculum is especially strong. Careful thought has gone into planning and teaching. As a result, pupils are given many opportunities to learn about the world outside school and the life skills that they need. For example, relationships and sex education is taught sensitively, recognising that pupils with SEND need the same understanding as others.

The quality of the work to support and care for pupils with PMLD is top notch. Teachers and LSAs are expert at providing activities that are stimulating and fun. They know their pupils extremely well and tailor work carefully to meet their complex needs.

Leaders and staff do much to broaden the curriculum. Every classroom has an outside space for gardening, and pupils maintain the school's courtyard garden. Older pupils experience bee-keeping, for example, and the honey made is sold as part of an enterprise programme. From yoga to work experience at a local supermarket, together with a strong careers programme, leaders and staff provide a wide range of activities that help pupils to make the transition to the next stage of their lives.

Governors are highly committed to the school's success. They bring considerable experience to their role and carry out their duties effectively. As a result, leaders are both supported and held to account. The school's outreach work illustrates the dedication of all to nurture and support pupils with SEND.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is at the top of leaders' agenda. The systems and procedures to keep pupils safe are detailed and understood by staff. Everyone knows how to identify and report any concerns they may have and how to respond to pupils who ask for help. The procedures for checking on the suitability of staff are strong. Records are up to date and include all staff and governors.

Safeguarding staff meet weekly to monitor the progress of pupils and to check whether pupils are getting the additional support they need. Leaders have strong links with local agencies, including local authority services. They work closely with families to support pupils' safety and welfare.

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

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

- The work to improve the curriculum is not as well rooted in teachers' everyday practice as it needs to be. In some cases, staff lack detailed knowledge about the curriculum. On occasions, this limits some pupils' learning. Leaders need to ensure that the actions they are taking to develop the curriculum, including staff training, are embedded securely in practice.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2013.

## **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>	138547
<b>Local authority</b>	Greenwich
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268742
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy special converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	229
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	71
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Lynda Hage
<b>Principal</b>	Mark Dale-Emberton
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.charltonparkacademy.com">www.charltonparkacademy.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Charlton Park Academy is for pupils and students with complex SEND.
- The school has boarding provision which is the subject of a separate inspection report.
- The previous headteacher is now the principal.
- The current headteacher took up her role in April 2023.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- 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 carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, art and design, and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at the curriculum for some other subjects and visited lessons in these subjects.
- Meetings were held with the principal, the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, pupils and parents.
- Inspectors also met with the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors considered 15 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including six written comments.

### **Inspection team**

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jo Jones

Ofsted Inspector

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