

New Charter Academy

Broad oak Road, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire OL6 8RF

Inspection dates

28 February – 1 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
16 to 19 study programmes	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Since the previous inspection, standards of behaviour, attendance, outcomes, teaching and leadership have declined.
- There has been a sharp rise in disruption, internal truancy and exclusions because pupils are not engaged in learning. Derogatory language is commonplace.
- High exclusions have contributed significantly to below average attendance. Disadvantaged pupils account for the overwhelming majority of exclusions. Their attendance is low.
- The quality of teaching is inadequate. Leaders rightly recognise that far too much teaching does not engage pupils or meet their needs.
- Staff and parents rightly expressed serious concerns about the school's leadership and management.
- The standards pupils achieve are well below the national average in many subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Achievement in the sixth form is inadequate. Too few learners are retained on 16 to 19 study programmes and those who do stay on achieve standards below the national average.
- Safeguarding is ineffective. Not all staff have had child protection training. Attendance registers are inaccurate. There is insufficient staff supervision at social times and at the end of school.
- Processes for school self-evaluation are weak. There is no evaluation of the sixth form.

The school has the following strengths

- The newly appointed chief executive of the trust has brought a renewed urgency and rigour to the school improvement process. She has dissolved the governing body and put an interim governing board in place.
- There are examples of effective teaching in school. There are classrooms where behaviour is good due to good teacher subject knowledge, careful planning and a supportive and welcoming atmosphere.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve pupils' progress in core subjects, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, by:
 - using information about pupils' abilities to plan suitable learning
 - making learning engaging
 - using questioning to better challenge the most able pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching and in turn reduce incidents of poor behaviour and reduce truancy by:
 - using information about pupils' abilities to plan suitable learning
 - ensuring that behaviour is managed fairly, consistently and proportionately
 - establishing a positive, supportive and rewarding climate for learning.
- Improve behaviour, safety and the personal development and welfare of pupils by:
 - ensuring that all staff receive child protection training
 - increasing the numbers of staff on duty at social times and the end of the school day
 - reducing racist, homophobic and other derogatory language around the school
 - ensuring that internal and external exclusions lead to improvements in behaviour.
- Improve the 16 to 19 study programmes by:
 - ensuring that almost all pupils who start Year 12 complete Year 13
 - improving the quality of teaching to improve progress
 - evaluating rigorously the current quality of provision
 - creating a coherent plan for improvement.
- Immediately improve the quality of leadership by:
 - strengthening the process of self-evaluation
 - rigorously evaluating the impact of new initiatives, including by taking into account the views of pupils, parents and teachers
 - holding leaders at all levels accountable for the standards that pupils achieve.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The leadership and management of behaviour is ineffective. This is having a detrimental impact across the school. A minority of pupils feel unsafe at social times because there is not enough effective staff supervision.
- British values and social, moral, spiritual and cultural education are not promoted well. There is a disregard for mutual respect and tolerance indicated by the casual use of derogatory language.
- The principal has lost the support of the staff, parents and much of his senior team. The majority of staff feel that the school is worse than it was at the previous inspection. The vice-principals rightly recognise that too many initiatives have been introduced too quickly without any useful evaluation. Their expertise has not been used well; they have not been involved sufficiently in evaluating the school's work.
- School improvement planning does not focus sharply enough upon the key priority areas of mathematics and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. There is no planned evaluation or illustration of what success would look like. Consequently, new initiatives are allowed to continue regardless of their impact.
- Staff training and development has not focused enough on improving teaching. Some useful support for some subjects has been provided through the multi-academy trust (MAT), and this has led to marginal improvements. However, support brokered to improve standards in English and mathematics has been largely ineffective.
- The decline in standards across the school since the previous inspection, the inaccurate self-evaluation and weak improvement plan show that leaders and managers are not demonstrating the capacity for further improvement.
- Pupils study a breadth of subjects across the curriculum. A few pupils are educated off-site. The curriculum has been adjusted so that next year pupils will spend more time in core subjects in order to catch up. However, pupils will only make up lost ground if the quality of teaching significantly improves.
- There are a number of extra-curricular activities and enhancements to the curriculum including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.
- Pupil premium funding is not used well. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils remain low and they are not improving. Year 7 catch-up funding is not having enough impact. Pupils who enter the school with low attainment continue to be unable to read or write at an appropriate level for their age.
- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not having a significant impact. Although there is some effective intervention work and good-quality support for individual pupils, the day-to-day quality of teaching does not meet their needs.

Governance of the school

- The new chief executive officer recently dissolved the governing body and is in the process of putting an interim governing board in place.
- Governors have not challenged senior leaders rigorously enough over the fall in pupils' attendance and the spike in internal and external exclusions.
- They have failed to hold the most senior leaders accountable for falling standards, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors have not fulfilled their statutory duties to ensure that all staff have received appropriate child protection training.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- The single central record meets requirements but some staff have not received necessary child protection training. Pupils' attendance records are inaccurate as some pupils were marked as present in school when they were in fact excluded.
- A number of parents raised serious concerns about bullying not being dealt with effectively, yet there were only 12 logged cases of bullying this academic year. This is at odds with the significant number of behaviour incidents, internal and external exclusions.
- Pupils, staff and parents also raised a number of safeguarding concerns, including site security, pupils not feeling safe in school, dangerous behaviour and smoking.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Expectations are too low. The majority of pupils arrive with abilities in line with or above those expected for their age but they are not taught well enough, so they leave with standards that are well below the national average.
- The most able pupils are not stretched and challenged in their learning. This is because much of the teachers' questioning does not encourage pupils to think about topics in greater depth.
- Too much teaching fails to interest pupils, so they become disengaged and misbehave. The quality of teaching in the school's isolation room is inadequate. Pupils are given work that is repetitive and unchallenging, so many sit and do nothing; they make no progress.
- School leaders rightly recognise that the quality of teaching in mathematics is weak, but action to address shortcomings has been too slow. Pupils continue to fall well short of national expectations in this subject.
- Assessment information is not used to inform teaching. Pupils spend too much of their time being assessed to no good effect.
- There is a small body of effective teaching in school. Where teaching is effective, there is a calm and productive climate for learning where pupils thrive. For example, pupils in a Year 10 art lesson responded well to the careful planning and excellent modelling of

artistic techniques. Their immaculate workbooks showed that this high standard of behaviour and engagement is typical.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils told inspectors that derogatory and inappropriate language is widely used. Inspectors found this to be the case. Swearing is commonplace and pupils say that they regularly hear racist and homophobic language. There is no effective plan in place to prevent bullying or to encourage pupils to report it.
- Pupils' self-confidence is being rapidly diminished by the arbitrary and unfair application of the behaviour system. Some pupils find themselves in the isolation room or in after school 'correction' because they do not have a pen.
- Some teachers are not skilled enough to de-escalate situations and are using the system to unnecessarily exclude pupils from the classroom. This is causing a very damaging breakdown in relationships and a loss of respect for teachers and other adults.
- Leaders monitor the attendance of pupils who are educated off-site effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. Many lessons are disrupted by poor or confrontational behaviour. Large numbers of pupils go to the 'alternative to exclusion' rooms for 'crossing red lines'. Reasons for pupils being excluded from lessons range from forgetting a pen to assaulting a member of staff.
- The new behaviour system is not working effectively enough. Exclusions are high and increasing. Some pupils refuse to go into the 'alternative to exclusion' rooms or will not do any work when they are in there. Many pupils receive a fixed-term exclusion for 'failing' the internal exclusion or refusing to go in.
- Too many pupils show a lack of respect for teachers and other adults. Pupils' behaviour is unpredictable in lessons and at social times and falls well short of the school's expectations.
- Attendance is in decline. It is below the national average overall and it is low for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The most significant factor affecting attendance is the increase in the number of fixed-term exclusions.
- The lack of parity in the application of the behaviour system is fuelling inequalities. The overwhelming majority of fixed-term exclusions are disadvantaged pupils. It is no surprise that their attendance and achievement remains below that of their peers.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Underachievement is endemic. Standards in English, mathematics and other subjects across the curriculum are well below the national average because the quality of teaching is so poor. Target-setting is inconsistent. Some targets are unachievable so they have a detrimental effect on teachers and pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils make less progress than their peers and this situation is not improving. The school receives over £600,000 in pupil premium funding but there is no useful evaluation of where the money goes nor an open acknowledgement that outcomes for disadvantaged pupils continue to be weak.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is not having the desired impact, so pupils move through the school unable to read or write at a standard expected for their age. The majority of pupils leave the school poorly prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training because they have not grasped the basic skills of English and mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same inadequate progress as their peers. This is because, although the school has valuable information about their abilities and needs, many staff do not use it to plan appropriately. Consequently, in too many lessons, pupils' needs are not met. Additional funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not used effectively.

16 to 19 study programmes

Inadequate

- Students on 16 to 19 study programmes make inadequate progress from their starting points. The average grade on entry to the sixth form is a grade 'B'. However, students typically leave the sixth form with standards below the national average. This is because the quality of teaching is not good enough. Teaching does not always take account of students' varied needs and abilities so progress is limited.
- There is a curriculum pathway through the sixth form for the most able students. This study programme has very high entry requirements but some students on the programme do not meet the entry requirements. This leaves them at risk of underachievement.
- Retention rates have dropped since the previous inspection. Not enough students see their courses through. The proportion of students who stay on their courses from year 12 to year 13 is below the national average.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form is weak. There is no evaluation of current standards and no effective plan in place to help students do better.
- Behaviour in sixth-form lessons is much better than in the main school. Students are typically polite, responsible and show respect for diversity.
- There is some helpful information, advice and guidance for students to plan their next steps after Year 13, particularly for the most able.

School details

Unique reference number	135508
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10024108

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1386
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	86
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Ian Munro
Principal	David Shaw
Telephone number	01612 419555
Website	www.newcharteracademy.org.uk
Email address	admin@newcharteracademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 February 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The principal was appointed shortly after the previous inspection.
- The school is part of Great Academies Educational Trust (GAET).
- A new chief executive officer of GAET was appointed in September 2016.
- The school does not meet the current government floor standards.

- Alternative provision is provided for a very few pupils at Work 4 U, which is registered with Ofsted as Norman Mackie and Associates Limited and is currently judged to be an inadequate provision.
- The school is receiving support from a number of schools via the multi-academy trust.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching across the school. Inspectors spoke with over 100 pupils formally and at social times.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work, school policies and records relating to safeguarding, self-evaluation information and a range of other documentation.
- Inspectors considered one response to the pupil questionnaire and 77 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- There were 83 responses to Parent View to be considered.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the academy trust and the chief executive of Great Academies Education Trust. Meetings were also held with senior and middle leaders.

Inspection team

Sally Kenyon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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