

Captains Close Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	119988
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	379929
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2012
Lead inspector	Tim McLoughlin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	144
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Fox
Headteacher	Paul Bannister
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Tim McLoughlin

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons taught by six teachers. The inspector also held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. He took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and scrutinised a number of policies, including those relating to safeguarding, minutes of governing body meetings, planning documents, pupils' work and questionnaires returned from 47 parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school in a predominantly rural area. Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is close to the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is similar to that found nationally. Their needs relate mainly to social or language and communication difficulties. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark for its use of assessment in English and mathematics, and Healthy Schools status in recognition of its work in promoting healthy lifestyles.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school, which has continued to improve since its last inspection. It has a caring and inclusive small school ethos. Attainment is improving across the school. The promotion of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school’s work. The school is not yet good because pupils’ progress is not even across year groups. This is due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, and systems for monitoring and evaluating performance that are not always sufficiently focused on pupils’ achievement.
- Children start school with skills that are generally below those expected for their age, and make good progress in the Reception class. Thereafter, pupils make satisfactory progress overall and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. They make accelerated progress in Years 2 and 6 due to stronger teaching in those year groups.
- Teaching is satisfactory, with some good classroom practice when teachers’ expectations are high and pupils’ individual needs are met effectively. Pupils’ progress slows when they are given work that is not fully matched to their ability levels.
- The school offers a safe and nurturing environment where pupils feel cared for and secure. As a result, pupils have positive relationships with adults and other pupils and respect each other’s achievements. They behave well, and respect the clear boundaries set for them by the school in lessons and during playtimes and other less formal occasions.
- The school’s leaders have taken successful actions to tackle the identified weaknesses since the previous inspection. The leadership of teaching through performance management has resulted in improvements. However, the remaining inconsistencies are holding back pupils’ performance.

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- Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good, so that pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 achieve consistently well, by:
 - making better use of assessment data to plan work that is precisely matched to pupils' needs
 - encouraging pupils to become more independent in their learning
 - making the introductions to lessons crisp and sharp with a clear focus on what it is pupils are expected to achieve
 - making sure that the systems for target setting and evaluation are consistently applied in all classes in a clear and consistent way.
- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation assist leaders, managers and governors in bringing about rapid improvements to pupils' achievement by:
 - using performance management systems to hold staff to account for the performance of individual year groups and groups of pupils who are at risk of underachieving
 - developing governance so that governors feel able and confident to both support and challenge school leaders, and so ensure that all pupils at the school reach their full potential.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers are pleased with the progress their children make at the school, particularly in the core skills of literacy and numeracy. However, while the lessons observed and work in pupils' books built up a clear picture of good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, it is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. Pupils' learning is often satisfactory in lessons, but brisk pace and the effective use of assessment to plan challenging work result in good progress for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Where teaching is good, pupils focus on their learning and often work well in groups and independently; however, in some lessons there are too few opportunities for pupils to work independently and take responsibility for their own learning. The best lessons in Years 2 and 6 have a much sharper focus on teaching the pupils the key skills they need. General progress is improving in Key Stage 2, thanks to a wide variety of school-based interventions to help pupils who may have fallen behind to catch up.

Reception children make a very good start in learning to read because of the effective teaching of linking sounds and letters (phonics). The teaching of reading in

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Key Stage 1 does not consistently build on these exciting lessons. Attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 is average; by the time pupils leave the school it is still broadly average, but rising rapidly.

All groups of pupils progress at a similar rate across the school, except disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. These pupils make good progress as a result of well-targeted support and good-quality interventions. Attainment has risen over time, so that by the end of Year 6 it is now in line with the national average. Pupils develop and apply their reading, writing, communication and mathematics skills across a wide range of subjects, ensuring that they are adequately prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of teaching

In the best lessons, particularly in Years 2 and 6, teachers make good use of pupils' interests and encourage lively discussion to inspire and motivate them. For example, Year 2 pupils were investigating how advertisers use persuasive language to entice the general public to tourist attractions. They did this by using local tourist information leaflets and noticed what types of words were being used at different points in the literature before going on to create their own. In this lesson, pupils talked excitedly with each other and explored complex vocabulary needed to really interest the reader, such as the use of exemplification and appealing to a sense of wonder and excitement. This good practice is not yet sufficiently widespread. Data on pupils' achievements are not always used effectively to plan work that precisely meets the needs of individuals. Occasionally, lessons are too teacher-dominated.

The strong focus on the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills permeates many of the Reception activities and gives children the confidence and ability in their early reading and writing skills. Presentation of work varies tremendously, though many pupils are beginning to take real pride in their work, and there are several examples of well-presented pieces of work on display in classes and in public areas.

Teachers mark pupils' work well, particularly in Key Stage 2, frequently pointing out where pupils have made good progress and what they need to do to make even more. Pupils are beginning to demonstrate a sound awareness of their own abilities and understand the targets that are set for them to achieve, although this is not yet consistently embedded across the school.

Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is promoted well during lessons, and as a result they understand how their chosen actions affect others. The planned curriculum has a satisfactory impact on teaching overall, with some teachers using imaginative approaches and resources to motivate pupils. Parents and carers' views of teaching are positive, and the vast majority are pleased with the work of the school. The pupils themselves feel that teachers work hard to address their individual learning needs.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers are mostly confident that their children are safe in school, and are positive about the standard of behaviour. Inspection evidence agrees with the views of parents and carers. In discussions, pupils show a very secure awareness of different forms of bullying, including name-calling and cyber-bullying; they say that incidents of bullying are very infrequent and they are confident that any concerns are dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils explain that lessons are never disrupted as a result of bad behaviour and say that teachers are very caring towards them and so pupils always want to behave well. Some pupils do find managing their own behaviour a challenge. However, all staff use agreed behaviour management techniques, and as a result a positive, calm and friendly atmosphere pervades the school. Pupils say they feel safe in school and can identify how particular lessons help them to keep themselves safe, such as a recent visit to a school assembly from a national charity looking at a multi-agency approach to increasing awareness of abusive relationships.

A rigorous, thorough and consistent approach to improving attendance has resulted in the school engaging in some effective partnership work with parents and carers to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality, and reduce the number of holidays taken in term time. As a result, attendance has improved and is now well above the national average.

Leadership and management

Since the previous inspection the school's leaders have sharpened the processes for tracking pupils' achievement by introducing focused pupil progress meetings for all teachers and more accurately assessing progress across the different year groups. Leaders have a broadly accurate understanding of key strengths and weaknesses, and self-evaluation links soundly with improvement planning. As a result, rates of progress are increasing across both key stages, and teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. The headteacher and a school-based advanced skills teacher have introduced an innovative coaching model to support and challenge staff throughout the school. Nevertheless, the systems for monitoring, evaluating and action planning are not always sufficiently focused on pupils' achievement to ensure whole-school consistency in practice. Overall, the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

The aspirations of senior leaders and the governing body are shared by everybody in the school. Senior leaders take on key roles in the training of staff, and the stability of the staff has helped to support progress in improving the quality of teaching. The governing body is now more diligent in exercising its statutory responsibilities, particularly with regard to pupils' health, safety and well-being. Its members, under the effective leadership of its newly appointed chairman, recognise that their monitoring and evaluation of the school's work do not yet focus enough on pupils' achievement. They ensure that the statutory requirements for safeguarding arrangements are robustly met.

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The curriculum is broad and balanced. It meets pupils' needs and effectively promotes their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. As a result, pupils show a sense of enjoyment in learning about the world around them and are developing an ever-increasing respect for the cultural diversity of different nations across the world. This understanding has been supported through links with community groups in the local area and through regular celebrations of a range of cultural and religious festivals, including Chinese New Year and international links with a school in Nepal.

There is a strong commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity, reflected most clearly in the sensitive care and management of all pupils. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The school is very successful in helping pupils whose circumstances cause them to be vulnerable to overcome barriers to their education, by providing additional support and by utilising effective partnerships with external organisations such as a local Scouts group, social services and the police. Staff at Captains Close have very good relationships with parents and carers and the school provides useful information so that they can help their children at home with their studies. The vast majority of parents and carers who returned inspection questionnaires expressed high levels of satisfaction and were pleased with their children's experiences in school.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Captains Close Primary School, Melton Mowbray, LE14 3TU

Thank you for being so friendly when I came to your school. I enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to you. Your views, including those some of you expressed through questionnaires, really helped me with my work. Your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education. You told me that you enjoy school, but do not enjoy lessons when you have to sit for too long listening to the teachers. I found that everyone in school looks after you well, especially those of you who have difficulties from time to time. I was impressed with your understanding and knowledge of how to keep safe. I could see that you mostly behave well and help the school to run smoothly.

Your headteacher and other staff know that there is still work to be done to make the school even better. I have asked them to do two things.

- They should make all lessons as good as the best by helping teachers to ensure that all of you are able to do your very best work. This means giving you lots of opportunities to find out things for yourself, as well as making sure that staff use everything they know about your progress to set work that is just right for every one of you.
- Senior leaders should check that this is done successfully across the school.

I hope that you will all continue to enjoy coming to school and try your hardest so that you are even more successful in the future.

Yours sincerely

Tim McLoughlin
Lead inspector

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