

Causeway Green Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103983
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	366778
Inspection dates	5–6 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Merchant

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	407
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jacque Blake
Headteacher	Deb Foster
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2009
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Fifteen lessons or part lessons were observed, taught by 15 different teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, a group of parents and carers, staff and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's records of pupils' attainment and progress, school policies including safeguarding documentation and the school action plans.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of strategies to improve pupils' progress and attainment, particularly of boys and all pupils in Key Stage 2.
- The accuracy of teachers' assessments and the use of assessment information to plan further steps in learning.
- How well the school has improved attendance.
- The impact of actions taken by school leaders and managers to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Information about the school

This school is larger than most other primary schools. Most pupils live locally and the large majority are of White British heritage. About one third of the pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being of Asian or Asian British - Indian heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than average. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is average. Their needs relate mainly to moderate learning difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Nursery and two Reception classes. The school has a breakfast club and an after-school club on the site.

A new headteacher was appointed in February 2011 and took up her post at the beginning of the summer term. Previously the school has been led and managed by the deputy headteacher in the capacity of acting headteacher. During this time she was supported in her role by a consultant headteacher from a neighbouring school for half of each week. When Causeway Green Primary School was inspected in October 2009, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, it was inspected on three occasions. At the last monitoring inspection the school was judged to be making good progress.

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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school no longer requires special measures.

Causeway Green Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education. Outcomes for pupils are now improving rapidly and there is a sense of confidence and optimism about the school's future. One member of staff, reflecting the views of many, wrote, 'I feel that the headteacher and deputy headteacher have brought both calmness and a feeling that they will lead the school on to greater things.'

The school has successfully created a learning atmosphere in which pupils are confident and secure. The strong care provided for pupils has a positive effect on their personal development, which is good. Pupils are happy and behave well, and staff work as a cohesive team to provide a good level of care, guidance and support for them. This helps pupils to feel safe, valued and respected. They say bullying is very rare, but they know what to do and who to go to if problems arise.

Children get a good start in the Nursery, where a wide range of stimulating activities means that children make good progress. The actions initiated by the deputy headteacher, and built upon by the new headteacher, have had a strong impact on the performance of older pupils. Teachers' assessments and work in pupils' books show that attainment has recovered to broadly average levels in most year groups. Attainment in Year 6 is still low, but the changes to the curriculum and improvements to teaching and assessment mean that pupils are on track to reach broadly average results in 2012 and even higher in 2013. Most pupils are making good progress in their learning and this is improving strongly in nearly all year groups. Pupils in Year 5, especially boys, have made particularly good progress since the start of the year because of carefully targeted and effective support programmes, and small-group teaching in reading.

Good teaching has been the key factor in accelerating pupils' progress. Teachers have become increasingly skilful in ensuring lessons are more creative. They use interactive whiteboards confidently to motivate and engage pupils. Increasingly, teachers are ensuring that work is matched to the differing needs of pupils in their lessons. However, this practice is not fully consistent; some teachers are not as adept at planning activities that really stretch the most-able pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory and has rightly focused on embedding pupils' basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. It has recently offered some exciting opportunities, through carefully planned 'themes' that really engage the pupils. However, overall it still lacks sufficient opportunities to nurture pupils' independence, imagination and develop their creativity, in order to fully motivate the least enthusiastic learners.

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The improvement in the rate of progress of almost all pupils has been brought about by the diligent efforts of staff. They have been guided by the dynamic leadership of the deputy headteacher in her capacity as acting headteacher and greatly strengthened by the new substantive headteacher. Senior leaders now hold all staff to account for the progress of the pupils in their classes. The members of the new governing body are growing into their roles and are well placed to play an increased role in reviewing developments and in challenging the school to improve further. Even though the school has many good features, staff and the governing body are not complacent and want to lift pupils' attainment even further. They know exactly what actions to take next as a result of thorough systems of school self-evaluation. In view of the improvements in the school's middle and senior management, pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning, the school's capacity to improve further is good.

Up to 40% of the 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?

- Raise attainment so that most pupils reach the levels expected nationally for their age, or above, in English and mathematics by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to practise extended writing across a range of topics
 - developing pupils' higher-level problem-solving skills in mathematics
 - making sure that teachers plan for and extend the learning of the more-able pupils at a consistently challenging pace throughout lessons.
- Enrich the curriculum to widen pupils' horizons and breadth of experience by increasing opportunities for pupils to develop their creativity and imagination, through areas such as information and communication technology (ICT), art, music and cookery.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children join the Nursery class with skills and abilities that are below and sometimes well-below those expected of their age. The work seen confirms that in most year groups, pupils are working at broadly the levels expected for their age and they are rising. A greatly increased focus on gearing teaching to learners' needs has secured good progress for most pupils, including those from different ethnic heritages or at an early stage of learning English. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well in lessons by teaching assistants, and effective use of their individual targets ensures that they make good progress. Little difference was seen in the rates of learning or attainment of boys and girls in lessons. The quality of learning in lessons is good. For instance, in an excellent Year 6 literacy lesson, all groups of pupils made rapid progress in developing their writing skills and really enjoyed working in pairs to complete the challenging task of creating a profile for the characters they had been reading about. Attainment is sometimes held back because some pupils have difficulty in explaining their ideas when they have read a text, which in turn inhibits their ability to write well at the higher levels and solve higher-level number problems expressed in words.

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Pupils' great enjoyment of their education is illustrated by the enthusiastic way they talk about all aspects of school life. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils behave well and those who present challenging behaviour are helped to cope successfully by staff and pupils, who are very supportive of one another. Consequently, by Year 6, pupils are sensitive, thoughtful and responsible young people. Members of the school council take their role seriously and are increasingly consulted more in the strategic decisions that the school makes. Attendance is satisfactory and improving; particularly noteworthy is the reduction in persistent absence as a result of the coordinated effort by a team of staff. Parents and carers report that their children are much more eager to come to school. They attribute this to the improvements in the learning at the school.

Pupils are developing the wider skills and personal qualities needed to equip them for the next phase of their education. Most can apply their skills in literacy and numeracy securely and have increasing opportunities to use ICT in lessons. They show that they can work purposefully on their own or in collaboration with others, and they cooperate well in planning tasks and sharing resources. The Year 6 'Cafe' enterprise project has provided a good opportunity for pupils to learn about managing money and marketing. They are satisfactorily prepared for the next stages of their lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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How effective is the provision?

Almost all pupils are keen to learn because of the good relationships between adults and pupils. The proportion of good and outstanding lessons is increasing. Some inconsistencies remain, and this slows some pupils' progress, but there are also many exciting lessons where all pupils are enthusiastic to learn. There are plenty of staff who model good practice, with fast-paced, highly engaging lessons, such as the outstanding Year 3 lesson seen on methods of multiplication, which used excellent real-life examples from the pupils' visit to Cadbury World. Most teachers use questioning well to draw the pupils into discussion. In weaker lessons, the learning is not always as effective as it should be, partly because in a few classes all pupils in a lesson sometimes work at the same pace, as directed by the teacher, and this leads to insufficient challenge for the most-able pupils.

Assessment is well used. Rigorous moderation exercises and training for staff in assessment practices have increased the reliability of the assessment data that are gathered so that teachers now know the levels that their pupils are working at. The school recognises even sharper use of assessment information in the classroom and refinements to teachers' planning as the next step to secure further improvements in pupils' achievement.

The curriculum has a rigorous focus on literacy and numeracy skills. However, the school has rightly identified that pupils do not have enough opportunities to fully develop their creativity and imagination. Links between subjects are developing and this cross-curricular approach is encouraging more meaningful learning, but this is not yet fully rooted in curricular planning. Well-supported, creative and educational activities outside the normal school day, including the well-attended breakfast and after-school clubs, make a valuable contribution to pupils' high levels of enjoyment.

Good care, guidance and support are enhanced by the well-established links with a range of external agencies and with parents and carers. Staff know individual pupils well. This results in good personal development, despite the difficult circumstances of some pupils. An appropriate and varied range of intervention strategies are used to support pupils' different needs, including their social and emotional development. Good support is given to look after children and other pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders, staff and the governing body share a determination to make Causeway Green an exciting school that aims for the highest possible standards of attainment. The

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highly effective deputy headteacher, as acting headteacher, has directed improvement extremely well to improve pupils' educational opportunities. The new headteacher has strengthened this drive and together, they communicate their high expectations successfully so that all staff have a shared sense of direction and feel part of a successful team. Leaders have been successful in improving the proportion of good teaching. They have introduced a rigorous monitoring schedule to check teachers' planning, pupils' books and the learning in lessons.

At the time of the inspection, there was no evidence of any discrimination. The school promotes equality for all pupils through careful monitoring and good support. Progress is broadly similar for all groups of pupils, regardless of their different starting points, showing that the school's commitment to equal opportunities is translated effectively into practice.

The effectiveness of the new governing body is satisfactory. It fulfils its statutory duties and has a sound understanding of the next steps for the school. Its members demonstrate a clear commitment to raising standards and a willingness to take part in training which will further enhance their role. Procedures to ensure the safety of pupils meet government guidelines and reflect good practice. At the time of the inspection, there were, for example, effective procedures for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils through the checks made on all adults who work in the school.

The school prides itself on working well with the local community and forms good relationships with families, including those that may be harder to reach. The weekly 'inspire' sessions, in which parents, carers and pupils work with school staff to explore the different ways in which children learn, are highly valued. In this inclusive school, every child matters and individual needs are considered very specifically. The school's work to promote community cohesion is good. There are good links within the local community and work to improve pupils' understanding of national and global diversity is continuing. The school itself is a very harmonious community and pupils from different backgrounds and ethnicities get on very well together.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle into the Nursery class quickly, are keen to learn, readily play together and are well behaved. Provision for children's welfare is good. The space for the youngest children is used to good effect. It is effectively organised and well resourced, safe and secure. Inside spaces are fresh and clean, with clearly marked labels on drawers and containers so that children can find and put away equipment independently. Adults work hard to involve everyone, including those with particularly limited communication skills. They effectively develop children's language and ideas. For instance, the children were observed having a splendid time role-playing characters from the stories they had been reading. The outside area is used well by adults to help develop children's climbing skills and encourages their physical development well.

The teachers and teaching assistants plan and organise activities well but opportunities are sometimes missed to enrich them, for example in number or writing. Very good records are kept of children's achievements in photographs, notes and samples of their work. The children move into Year 1 working securely towards their early learning goals and this represents good progress in relation to their starting points. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader provides good leadership to her team. She has a very secure understanding of the early years' curriculum and constantly reviews her practice to ensure that all children are safeguarded and receive high quality care and support.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so. The parents and carers with whom inspectors spoke said that they feel welcomed and increasingly involved in the life of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

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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	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



7 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Causeway Green Primary School, Oldbury B68 8LX

Thank you for the help you gave us when we visited your school. We especially enjoyed seeing you learning with your parents and carers in 'inspire' and organising your 'Cafe' event. We would especially like to thank all those pupils who came to talk to us.

We think you go to a school that offers you a satisfactory education. It does not need the special measure that inspectors gave it when they inspected it in 2009, as it has improved. These are some of the best things about your school.

Throughout the school more of you make better progress than in the last few years and the progress of boys has really improved a lot.

The youngest children make good progress in the good Nursery and Reception classes.

You listen and learn well, especially at the start of lessons, and most of you try hard.

Your new headteacher and her leadership team are doing a good job of making sure that your school gets even better, and they are supported in this by the governors.

So that your school gets even better, we have asked the teachers to do two things.

Make sure that more of you reach or exceed the expected levels of attainment in English and mathematics in the national tests that you take at the end of Year 6.

Change the way the school teaches different subjects so that they become more interesting and varied, and you can see how your learning links together.

Please help by continuing to try hard in class and behaving well.

Yours sincerely

Michael Merchant

Lead inspector

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