

# Castlecroft Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104311
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	377061
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gerald Griffin

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	277
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Margaret Simpkins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Patricia Keech
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 May 2009
<b>School address</b>	Windmill Crescent Castlecroft Wolverhampton WV3 8HS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 556606
<b>Fax number</b>	01902 556608
<b>Email address</b>	office@castlecroft-pri.lppplus.net

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<b>Registered childcare provision</b>	Castlecroft Out of Hours Club
<b>Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision</b>	32
<b>Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision</b>	7 May 2009

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	20–21 September 2011
<b>Inspection number</b>	377061

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited ten lessons taught by nine teachers. They observed assemblies and break times, and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at progress records, teachers' lesson plans, pupils' work, school improvement plans, policies and reports. They analysed completed questionnaires returned by 94 pupils, 138 parents and carers, and 33 staff.

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

- Do higher attaining pupils make enough progress?
- Does teaching sufficiently challenge the boys at Key Stage 1?
- Do improvement plans have sufficient rigour to accelerate progress for all pupils?
- Are there any differences in progress in areas of learning for boys and girls in the Nursery and Reception classes?

## Information about the school

Castlecroft is a larger than the average-sized primary school. Two-thirds of the pupils are of White British heritage. The remainder come from a wide range of other backgrounds. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is also above average. Most of these are visually impaired and the school is specially funded to support them. A below-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. An above-average number of pupils join the school part way through their primary school career. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a separate morning and afternoon Nursery class and a full time Reception class. The school has gained a number of awards including Gold Artsmark. The Castlecroft Out of Hours Club is managed by the governors and was also inspected.

**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**

**3**

## Main findings

This satisfactory school is improving strongly. It provides a very safe, stimulating and happy atmosphere in which pupils grow into mature and articulate young people. Pupils feel extremely safe in school. They behave well in lessons and around the school and they are polite to adults and to each other. They enjoy school and this is reflected in their above-average attendance. In the Nursery and Reception classes, children settle quickly into the routines of school and make good progress in its caring and lively atmosphere. Most parents and carers are happy with the quality of education the school provides.

Attainment is average by the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6. Pupils' progress is satisfactory and improving. Progress in English has accelerated and, for some pupils, it is now good. However, older pupils have too few opportunities to solve mathematical problems, which means, for some pupils, progress is not improving quickly.

In lessons, relationships are positive. Teachers make good use of resources, such as computers, to engage pupils and make work relevant. As a result, pupils are keen to learn. Teaching is satisfactory. It is not consistently good because a rapid pace to learning is not always sustained throughout lessons, for example, when introductions last too long. Additionally, assessment data are not always used well enough to plan work that ensures all members of the class are sufficiently challenged. The good curriculum provides a broad range of exciting learning experiences and strongly underpins pupils' good personal development. Pupils are provided with a good level of pastoral care. For example, visually impaired pupils receive sensitive support that enables them to take a full part in lessons and all other aspects of school life. Pupils enjoy attending the Castlecroft Out of Hours Care facility, where they are kept very safe by well-qualified adults.

The headteacher's challenging and clearly articulated targets for the school are enthusiastically shared by the staff. Since the last inspection, the school has sustained many of the school's good qualities such as outcomes and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils' personal development, the curriculum and care. Leaders' plans have successfully tackled the recent slower progress of some groups of pupils; boys at Key Stage 1, higher attaining pupils and the small group of Black and White Caribbean pupils. This record shows that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve in the future. Leaders monitor rigorously most aspects of the school's performance and this provides them with largely secure and accurate

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information for self-evaluation. Leaders' regular checks on pupils' progress clearly identify any inadequate achievement. They ensure that appropriate extra help is provided so that any pupil who is underachieving rapidly catches up missed work. However, these checks are not always robust enough to ensure that those making satisfactory rather than good progress receive appropriate support so that they meet their challenging targets.

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?**

- Make the regular checks on pupils' progress towards their challenging targets consistently robust to ensure that action is taken if progress is not good enough.
- Secure consistently good progress by ensuring that:
  - the difficulty of the work given to individual pupils matches their needs closely, so that each is fully challenged
  - lesson introductions do not last too long.
- Provide older pupils with more opportunities to practise solving mathematical problems, so that their progress is good in this subject.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

While attainment on entry to the school is dropping, it remains broadly in line with national expectations. Attainment when pupils leave is average. Pupils enjoy learning and their achievement is satisfactory. While learning is generally satisfactory, some good learning was seen in lessons during the inspection. For example, in a good mathematics lesson, pupils enjoyed experimenting with shapes they had been given to make different polygons. They discussed their ideas in small groups which helped give them a good understanding of the names and the properties of the shapes they had made. Pupils worked with a good level of independence; they were not over-reliant on adult help. Each pupil worked hard because their targets matched closely their individual needs.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to these pupils' progress. For example, they keep records of pupils' progress which are passed to the teacher; these make a useful contribution to planning challenging next steps. In an English lesson seen, the visually impaired pupils enjoyed planning a letter to tell a friend about themselves because the well-qualified assistant provided them with expert guidance and support. This meant they were able to work alongside other pupils in the class. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or

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disabilities is not consistently good because their work is not always matched closely enough to their specific needs. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress. Adults ensure that they have full understanding of technical words as they meet them in lessons such as science.

The progress of boys in Key Stage 1 has accelerated because they now find the work they are given more interesting and relevant. For example, topics such as dinosaurs and work involving games in mathematics are strongly improving boys’ engagement. The progress of higher attaining pupils has improved strongly as a result of more demanding work which stretches them. Pupils’ understanding of the sounds letters make has strongly improved their reading, especially for those who found this subject difficult. When writing, pupils’ spelling and punctuation is reasonably accurate. For some pupils, however, there are not enough opportunities for them to write longer pieces of work, a matter that the school is successfully addressing. Mental and paper calculation skills are now satisfactory. The ability to use calculation skills to solve mathematical problems is a relative weakness for older pupils. The progress of the small number of White and Black Caribbean pupils has accelerated because they have received effective individual coaching, which has helped them catch up work missed in the past.

Pupils are confident that the rare cases of bullying will be quickly dealt with by the school. They have an outstanding understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example on the internet. Pupils understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and do their best to eat a healthy diet and take plenty of exercise. They have a clear understanding of the dangers of drug abuse and smoking. Pupils readily take responsibility in school as buddies and as members of the school council. They take part in local youth projects with the police and generously collect money for charity. Average standards in their basic skills and positive attitudes mean that pupils’ preparation for secondary school is satisfactory. Pupils reflect maturely on their actions and those of others. Their good behaviour is underpinned by a strong moral code. They work productively in groups and are quick to help others. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of the diversity of British culture.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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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<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan work that pupils find relevant and interesting. They use a wide range of teaching styles to sustain pupils' concentration and motivation. For example, pupils regularly discuss their ideas in small groups which helps them clarify and reinforce their understanding. Progress is not consistently good because sometimes the pace of learning slows or all groups of pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Marking and other feedback are improving, especially for older pupils who say that they find this process very useful in helping them to understand clearly how they can improve their work.

Lively assemblies provide pupils with good opportunities to reflect on their feelings and actions. The many bright displays of artwork around the school and the good number of pupils that enthusiastically sing in the choir and play musical instruments exemplify the good provision in the creative arts, which is reflected in the school's national award. The outstanding opportunities for pupils to take part in educational day and residential visits, some abroad, make a significant contribution to pupils' enjoyment. They gain in confidence, raising their ambitions and widening horizons. The wealth of sports and other clubs is very well supported and greatly adds to pupils gaining a healthy lifestyle. The school has strong links with the local secondary school that further broaden pupils' academic experiences. For example, some science lessons take place in the high school laboratories, during which pupils use advanced science apparatus.

Staff use their detailed knowledge of each pupil well to provide them with a good standard of personal care. Pupils confidently approach staff with any problem, knowing their concerns will be quickly resolved. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with sensitive support. The school uses experts well to help assess their needs and to plan appropriate learning programmes. Pupils who join the school part way through the school year are given a warm welcome. They settle quickly and happily into the routines of school and make similar progress to their peers. The school's targeted support for pupils whose circumstances have the potential to make them vulnerable is very effective.

In the Castlecroft Out of Hours Club, staff plan a wide range of exciting activities that match closely the needs of each child in their care. The club is well resourced and children are encouraged to choose activities. This contributes to their growing

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independence. The club provides a healthy breakfast in the mornings and healthy drinks and snacks after school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school's leaders articulate clearly its challenging targets. Subject leaders are taking appropriate responsibility for improving standards in their areas. However, leaders' checks on the quality of progress are not sufficiently robust to secure consistently good progress. Leaders have provided successful training which has sharpened staff's skills, for example in helping pupils to link letters to the sound they make. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body works hard on behalf of the school. Its growing understanding of data means that it is starting to challenge the school robustly over its effectiveness.

The school is committed to equal opportunities. For example, all visually impaired pupils take a full part in lessons and all other aspects of school life. This, together with the accelerating progress of the younger boys, higher attaining pupils and White and Black Caribbean pupils, shows its policies are effective. Safety and safeguarding are given a high priority. Child protection procedures fully meet current safeguarding requirements, and are robust and regularly updated. The checks that the school makes on the suitability of adults to work with pupils in school and in the out of hours care facility are rigorous. Lessons on safety and safeguarding provide pupils with a very strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

The school is good at engaging parents' and carers' support for their children's learning at home. For example, it provides them with specific information about how they can help their children to prepare for the tests at the end of Year 6. The classes it arranged to show how parents and carers can help their children at home with mathematics homework were very well attended. The school is a happy and harmonious community in which pupils integrate well. Its promotion of wider community cohesion is well developed. For example, it provides training and work experience placements for blind and visually impaired adults on training courses and for students with these disabilities from secondary school. Strong links with communities in France, Germany and South Africa extend further pupils' understanding of diversity.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's progress has improved strongly over the past two years and now they make good progress across all areas of learning. The progress of boys, which was slow in the past, has improved strongly and they now make similar progress to the girls. Children are polite and well behaved. They are gaining good levels of independence, for example, through helping to clear up resources at the end of a lesson. Parents and carers are very pleased with the information they receive about their children's progress. They value the opportunities they have to work with their children from time to time and the advice they are given on how they can help their children learn at home.

The good teaching provides an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning both indoors and out. For example, in one lesson seen, a less able group working with an adult improved their writing skills by accurately joining dots using a pencil. Elsewhere, a group outside were quickly learning about shape, number and colour through a game led by an adult. Some children had chosen to paint and they, too, made good progress because they knew precisely what they needed to do and an adult had ensured the work challenged them well. However, this is not always the case and occasionally children are not stretched by their chosen activity. The quality of resources is variable; consistently good in Reception and satisfactory for most areas of learning in the Nursery.

Leaders ensure that staff extend their skills through training which helps to ensure that adults are well qualified in Early Years Foundation Stage teaching, for example by sharpening the planning skills of adults in the Nursery. They use assessment well to check progress. Plans have been effective in accelerating the progress of boys by

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providing games, topics and books which grab their imagination.

Staff in the Castlecroft out of Hours Club liaise with teachers to ensure the activities the club provides match the needs of children in their care. They keep detailed notes on each child’s academic and personal development, which are shared with teachers. Staff are provided with regular training to improve their skills, for example, in checking the progress of children of Nursery and Reception age.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

A higher than usual proportion of parents and carers returned a questionnaire. Their comments indicate that they believe their children are very safe, enjoy school and are well cared for. The inspection endorses these views. A few parents and carers thought that their children’s progress was not good enough. The inspection found that school has improved the progress of some groups whose progress had been too slow in the recent past. The inspection found that children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It found that progress is satisfactory rather than good in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. A few parents and carers thought that the school does not deal with poor behaviour well enough. During the visit, inspectors found that behaviour was good in lessons and around the school, and pupils confirmed that any incidents were dealt with well. The school’s measures to deal with poor behaviour are appropriate.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Castlecroft Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 138 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 277 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	80	58	56	41	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	89	64	43	31	6	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	59	43	63	46	12	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	36	61	44	14	10	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	65	47	65	47	6	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	66	48	60	43	9	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	77	56	58	42	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	68	49	53	38	5	4	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	58	42	67	49	5	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	38	59	43	13	9	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	54	39	67	49	8	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	78	57	49	36	6	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	80	58	47	34	6	4	2	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



22 September 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Castlecroft Primary School, Wolverhampton, WV3 8HS**

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and the opportunity to talk with some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on so well together. Castlecroft is a satisfactory school which means it does some things well and could do some better. Here are some of the things we found out.

You told us that you enjoy school and feel very safe and secure. You try hard in lessons and your progress is getting better. Your behaviour is good. You are keen to take responsibility in school and in the local community. You have good relationships with your teachers. The curriculum provides plenty of exciting clubs and visits, which you enjoy. Adults look after you well and are always ready to help you. The headteacher and staff are working together to make the school get better.

We have asked the school to do three things to help you do even better in your learning. They need to:

- make sure that the regular checks on your progress always pinpoint if your progress is not quick enough, so that you can be given extra help to meet your targets.
- improve your progress by making sure you work at a fast pace and that teachers always provide you with work that is not too hard or too easy
- plan more lessons, for the older pupils, to improve your solving of mathematical problems

All of you can help the school by continuing to try your best in lessons, behaving well and attending regularly. We wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gerald Griffin  
Lead inspector

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