

Castleway Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105002
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	382339
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Angela Milner HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	143
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pete Henry
Headteacher	Val Kermode
Date of previous school inspection	27 April 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out at no notice by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. When Castleway was inspected in April 2010 it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an adequate standard of education and the person's responsible for leading, managing or governing the school were not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors visited the school termly to check on its progress. This inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection visit. During the course of the visit, the inspector judged that the school was at least satisfactory in all areas and also judged leaders were demonstrating capacity to secure further improvement. As a result, the visit was deemed to be a section 5 inspection.

The inspector observed 12 lessons, scrutinised documents and pupils' work and the arrangements for safeguarding. Two joint observations were conducted with the headteacher. The inspector met with members of the school council, the headteacher, other members of staff, representatives of the governing body and the local authority. Pupils' behaviour and their work in lessons and around the school were also observed. There were no questionnaires for parents and carers as this was a scheduled monitoring visit. The school's information, including minutes from meetings of the parents' forum and discussions with parent governors were used to assess parental views of the school.

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

- The impact of initiatives to improve pupils' attainment and their rates of progress.
- The quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning, particularly in reading.
- The curriculum and how well it meets statutory requirements and the needs and interests of learners.
- The capacity of leadership and management at all levels to sustain improvements made since the previous inspection.

Information about the school

Castleway is a smaller than the average sized primary school. The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. Substantial staffing changes took place in September 2011 with the appointment of a new headteacher, three new class teachers and a teacher responsible for reading interventions. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy School status and the Activemark Award. The school is also a Fair Trade school.

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

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Castleway provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. Leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, are now demonstrating satisfactory capacity to make further improvements. This is because of the focused drive for improvement and the school's careful management of teaching and learning. Increased capacity can also be seen in the substantial improvements made to the school's curriculum, the accurate use of assessment information and the adoption of tracking systems to monitor pupils' progress. These have been used to plan motivating and structured learning experiences which are better matched to pupils' learning needs, to identify underperformance and then provide appropriate interventions to accelerate learning and raise attainment.

The headteacher has rigorously monitored the work of the school this term and has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. She has worked with her senior leadership team and the local authority to prioritise actions, provide appropriate training and development and continue to move the school forward. The learning environment has been enhanced and the school's positive and calm atmosphere creates a purposeful climate for learning. Expectations and aspirations have been raised. Good care, guidance and support and effective classroom support from teachers, teaching assistants and specialist intervention teachers support the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities well.

Pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2 with broadly average attainment, though a smaller than average proportion exceeds the level expected for their age. Progress is satisfactory and increasingly good where teaching is consistently good. Pupils' attainment and progress in English is improving because of the continuing focus on a whole-school systematic language development programme, a new guided reading initiative and well targeted reading interventions. Good teamwork has ensured that new initiatives and appropriate interventions have been embedded quickly and evidence of their impact has already been evaluated. The school is fully aware of the need to continue to raise attainment and to accelerate the progress all pupils make, particularly in English. Leaders are striving to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good. They recognise the need to develop teachers' questioning skills so that they are able to assess accurately how

well pupils are learning during lessons They are aware too, of the need to share best practice and that teachers need to consistently plan and provide learning activities which meet the precise needs of all pupils. Marking is regular and encouraging but does not always give clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.

The calm and purposeful leadership of the recently appointed headteacher sets a clear direction for school improvement. This is based upon creating successful and confident learners who are also responsible citizens and through creating a sense of 'mutual respect within the school community'. Improvements since the last inspection and the school's accurate self-evaluation of its effectiveness show the school's capacity is satisfactory and the school is suitably placed to continue to improve.

About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils exceeding age-related expectations by:
 - sharing best practice in teaching and learning to ensure the quality of teaching is consistently good or better
 - making more effective use of assessment information to plan activities which meet the precise learning needs of all pupils
 - making greater use of observations and questioning during lessons to check on pupils' understanding and reshape activities to accelerate their progress
 - ensuring all pupils know how to improve their work further.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enter the school with a range of skills and abilities that are well below age-related expectations. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress in Key Stage 1 and 2 is satisfactory and good where pupils receive consistently good teaching. The introduction of a systematic whole-school language development programme has led to rapid gains in pupils' basic skills including their ability to use letters and sounds in their reading and their handwriting. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have benefited from this programme, because their needs are identified and supported appropriately.

Raising attainment strategies are proving effective. Inspection evidence, including lesson observations, work in pupils' books and an analysis of school data indicate that the school is now meeting its targets. Attainment in the national tests at Key Stage 2 improved significantly in 2011 and is now broadly average. As expected, however, Key Stage 1 results dipped in reading, writing and mathematics. The school knows more work is needed to ensure that all pupils continue to reach or exceed age-related expectations and to narrow the gap between attainment in English and mathematics, boys and girls, and pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.

Pupils report that they are enthusiastic about the changes in their school and that they feel safe. Any reported incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively by the school. Behaviour is good and has improved as a result of the recently introduced systems of rewards and consequences. Pupils demonstrate a satisfactory level of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They concentrate well in lessons and take great pride in their work. The school has put significant emphasis on attendance and this is currently satisfactory. Pupils play an appropriate role in their school. There is a strong sense of community and increasing opportunities for pupils to contribute to the wider community. Pupils understand what constitutes healthy eating and readily participate in a range of sporting activities before and after school. Satisfactory personal development, academic outcomes and attendance mean that pupils are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education.

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	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
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	3
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	3

How effective is the provision?

Although teaching remains satisfactory overall, there are clear signs that it has improved since the last inspection and that this has had a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress. Targeted staff development has enhanced teachers and teaching assistants' skills and confidence. The proportion of good and better teaching has increased significantly. Previous inadequate teaching has been eradicated. This is confirmed by the school's and the local authority's own monitoring. Planning builds on previous learning and is informed by accurate assessment information. This means that work is generally matched well to pupils' levels of ability. It also means that any gaps in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, for example, in the use of letters and sounds in reading, are being addressed. In the best lessons, adults make effective use of their observations and questions to ensure pupils' learning is checked regularly and activities are continually adapted to meet their needs. When questioning and the information from the monitoring of pupils' work is not used well enough to plan lessons or amend activities as lessons proceed, the pace of learning slows and progress remains satisfactory rather than good. Marking is regular,

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

detailed and encouraging. There are examples of good practice, but marking does not consistently give clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.

The school now provides a satisfactory curriculum which meets statutory requirements, including for the teaching of religious education. A detailed review of the curriculum has taken place and well chosen up-to-date resources are being used to stimulate learning. The new curriculum provides a broad range of cross-curricular experiences. It has been enhanced by numerous extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities. This includes visits out of school and the use of visitors to school. These have had a positive effect on pupils’ attitudes to learning. They are interested in and enthused by the new curriculum. Pupils have responded positively to the opportunities to work collaboratively and increasingly independently as well as to use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across a range of subjects. Good emphasis is being placed on the development of thinking and writing skills across the thematic curriculum.

The good levels of care, support and guidance provided for all pupils and particularly for the potentially most vulnerable, are strengths of the school. Following the last inspection, academic support has improved considerably. Accurate assessment and careful tracking of individual pupils’ progress enable underachievement to be identified and appropriate interventions to be triggered. Inspection evidence confirms that the use of specialist interventions to narrow the gap in younger pupils’ reading and older pupils’ comprehension skills are proving particularly effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

The newly appointed headteacher is building on the school’s improvements. Expectations and aspirations have been raised. She has established a clear vision for the school and a shared determination for further improvement. The very calm and attractive school environment creates a purposeful climate for learning and a common sense of purpose. There are good systems in place to check on the progress of pupils, monitor the quality of teaching and learning and hold teachers to account.

Subject leaders are now fully involved in monitoring and self-evaluation. Consequently, leadership and management at all levels accurately identify strengths and weaknesses and the school knows where its priorities for action lie. Regular monitoring of teaching and the curriculum, staff development and support from another school and the local authority have been particularly effective in improving the proportion of pupils reaching age-related expectations and the quality of teaching

and assessment since the last inspection. However, there is still some variation across the school.

The school is a cohesive community. Parents and carers are better informed and readily support their children with homework and reading. Developing partnerships with a range of local agencies are being used to enhance the curriculum and provide targeted support for the potentially most vulnerable pupils. Members of the school council have been instrumental in taking decisions about how to improve their school and have been actively involved in tree-planting to improve the local environment.

The effectiveness of the governing body is satisfactory. Governors are well informed, supportive and fully involved in the life of the school. Training and support have allowed them to have a better understanding of their role in holding the school to account and tackling its areas of weakness. Statutory responsibilities, including for the curriculum, are now met and safeguarding arrangements are good. The school meets all the requirements for child protection, health and safety, and risk assessment. It has clear policies and procedures in relation to equality and discrimination, which are satisfactorily promoted. The school has satisfactory plans to promote community cohesion.

Improvements made to the areas of weakness since the last report and to pupils' outcomes demonstrate the school has the capacity to sustain further improvement and that it provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children enter school with a range of skills and abilities which are well below those expected for their age. There are particular weaknesses in language and communication and children's knowledge and understanding of the world. The progress children make in their learning and development is good. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are identified and appropriate support is provided. For example, screening for speech and language

difficulties, at the start of the year, ensures children get the help they need from a speech therapist.

At the time of the inspection, children were relatively new to the school. They are happy, well cared for and enjoy what they are doing. Children gain confidence quickly, have well established routines and learn and play well together. There are good relationships between the children and the adults who care for them.

The quality of provision has improved since the last inspection. Children are actively engaged in a motivating learning environment with continuous provision of activities in the classroom and outside. A regular programme is in place to teach children how to link letters and sounds. Planning covers all the required areas of learning and allows adults to interact with children, extend their skills and help them make good progress in their learning and development. There are good opportunities for children to initiate their own play-related learning. For example, during the inspection, they worked as Santa's elves, running the toy factory and wrapping the presents for him to deliver. Accurate assessment and detailed tracking of children's progress means children can receive focused help with their learning. 'Learning journey' folders are used to build up a good picture of children's achievements. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parent and carer questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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 is 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).

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.



12 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Castleway Primary School, Wirral CH46 1RN

Congratulations! Your school no longer requires special measures. It is much improved and now provides you with a satisfactory education. The school takes good care of you and you get the help and support you need to help you learn. This is because teaching and the curriculum are much better than when inspectors came to the school in April 2010. Getting a school out of special measures takes a great deal of hard work. Well done to your governors, headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants too! You are all now making better progress in English and reaching the standards that other pupils in other schools do in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. This is because teachers and teaching assistants have made learning more interesting and worked hard to keep track of how well you are doing.

To help your school become even better I have asked governors and staff to continue to ensure you do as well as you can in your learning. I agreed with the school that this should be done by:

- ensuring teachers share what they do well with each other
- asking teachers to use the information they collect, on how well you are doing, to plan activities that will help you learn even more
- asking teachers to check more carefully how well you are learning in lessons to ensure you all do as well as you can
- asking teachers to tell you exactly how you can improve your work.

You should be proud of the part you have played in helping to improve your school. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Angela Milner
Her Majesty's Inspector

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