

Castlefort Junior Mixed and Infant School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Unique reference number | 104204 |
| Local authority | Walsall |
| Inspection number | 377032 |
| Inspection dates | 24–25 January 2012 |
| Lead inspector | James Henry |

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 | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 187 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Peter Farmer |
| Headteacher | Joanne Wilson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 25 March 2009 |
| School address | Castlefort Road Walsall wood Walsall WS9 9JP |
| Telephone number | 01543 452158 |
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Introduction

Inspection team

James Henry

Additional inspector

Linda Rowley

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Teaching and learning were observed in 15 whole-class lessons, 10 part lessons, several teaching sessions supporting small groups of pupils and an assembly. Nine teachers were observed and meetings were held with school leaders, a group of pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at school assessments showing pupils' progress, school self-evaluation documents, records relating to pupils' behaviour, governing body minutes and school improvement plans. Also, 107 parental questionnaires were received and analysed.

Information about the school

Castlefort is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school. The overwhelming majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, with English as their first language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is slightly above the national average. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery class and a separate Reception class. The school meets the current government floor standard. The school has recently received a Dyslexia Friendly award from the local authority and achieved national Healthy Schools status. There is before- and after-school childcare provision consisting of a breakfast and after-school club which are not managed by the governing body and were not part of this inspection.

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 | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 2 |
| Leadership and management | 2 |

Key findings

- This is a good school, which has improved since its last inspection.
- A strength of the school is pupils' achievement over time. This is good because different groups of pupils, including those who are disabled or with special educational needs, make good progress across the school in reading, writing and mathematics, given their starting points. However, more-able pupils do not always achieve their potential, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress because of good teaching and this has improved since the last inspection. While pupils' work shows that usually teachers provide good levels of challenge in lessons, in a few lessons that were seen, opportunities were missed to extend more-able pupils' learning.
- Progress made by children across the Early Years Foundation Stage is good in all areas of learning, but there are occasions when the outdoor area is not fully utilised, especially in developing children's ability to become independent learners.
- Senior leaders, led effectively by the headteacher, have been particularly successful in improving the quality of teaching through rigorous monitoring and evaluation and by providing training and support for staff. This has had a significant impact on raising teachers' expectations and staff are now clearly focused on increasing the rate at which pupils learn.
- Through tracking pupils' progress, leaders have put in place strategies, for example small teaching groups, to help pupils who may be falling behind. While assessments show they are having some success in improving pupils' learning, these initiatives are not monitored and evaluated as effectively as other aspects of teaching.
- The curriculum is well planned and promotes pupils' personal qualities effectively. While pupils' writing skills are used well in different subjects, opportunities are missed sometimes to develop their mathematical skills throughout the curriculum, especially for the more able.
- There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities that support pupils learning and promote their social skills.
- Pupils recognise they are achieving well due to the good teaching they are

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receiving and, consequently, relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils respond well with good behaviour, feel safe in school, and, consequently, there is minimal disruption to their learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the attainment of more-able pupils in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 by:
 - providing consistently high levels of challenge in lessons to increase the rate at which they learn
 - planning more opportunities for all pupils to practise their mathematical skills in a range of subjects.
- Ensure the intervention groups that support pupils' learning meet their needs fully by:
 - undertaking more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of their success, especially in developing pupils' numeracy skills
 - ensuring changes are implemented quickly when necessary so pupils gain the full effect of the extra support given.
- Improve children's independent learning skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring children have constant access to the outdoor area throughout the day
 - ensuring planning provides more opportunities for child-initiated activities in the outdoor area.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Almost all the parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt that their children were making good progress at school. This is accurate because, over time, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities below levels usually expected and make good progress, especially in their basic mathematical skills. For example, in the Reception class, children were developing their understanding of money through a variety of counting activities, including role play which involved buying items at a shop. The outdoor learning area is underused in providing opportunities for children to develop independent learning skills.

Pupils' attainment in reading is consistently above average by the ends of Key Stage 1 and Key stage 2. When pupils were heard reading, they demonstrated good understanding and skill in blending sounds to read unfamiliar words, some quite

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complex, for example 'competitive'. Also, they had good understanding of the text they were reading and could recall stories from their favourite books. In lessons, there was a consistent approach to teaching the blending of sounds, which enabled pupils to make good progress in their reading skills.

The school has an accurate and robust system to track pupils' progress. These assessments and observations in lessons show that pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress across Key Stages 1 and 2, although there were isolated pockets of satisfactory progress in mathematics in lower Key Stage 2. Learning in lessons was good. Pupils were often sharing their learning and producing good pieces of writing, for example, in describing and setting up their own 'secret society'. There were a few opportunities missed to challenge the more able in mathematics and their progress in this subject is sometimes not as strong as for other groups. Interventions have been put in place to help those needing support and this is generally effective. For example, by the end of Key Stage 2, there is no difference in the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals compared with other pupils nationally in both English and mathematics.

Quality of teaching

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire feel that teaching in the school is good. This is accurate because teaching is good overall and increasing the rate at which pupils learn. Teachers know their pupils well. Learning is tracked and assessed effectively in classes and lessons are well planned, with activities that usually meet pupils' different needs. The curriculum is balanced and well delivered, especially in English, where pupils are given guidance in advance of the work to be covered during the week. Pupils practise their writing skills in different subjects, but opportunities to develop their mathematical skills are missed sometimes, especially for the more able. Through having high expectations and good subject knowledge, generally, teachers use effective explanations and questioning to help pupils build on their previous learning. Teachers are very enthusiastic and involve pupils in lessons.

Relationships are good and this has a positive effect on promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, especially in encouraging good attitudes to learning. Teaching is less effective when staff try to convey too much information and instil too fast a pace into lessons and pupils can become unclear what they are expected to learn. The consistency of approach to teaching provides good continuity to pupils' learning. In all the lessons observed, teachers shared with the pupils what they were expected to learn and how pupils could judge if they had made progress. Teachers are effective in providing feedback to pupils about their learning during lessons, but sometimes less so at reviewing pupils' understanding at the end of lessons. Feedback to pupils through marking is generally good, especially in helping pupils to improve their writing. This feature is not as consistently good in mathematics.

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Teaching assistants are often used effectively to lead small-group teaching sessions, particularly in developing pupils' early reading and communication skills. The consistent approach adopted builds on previous learning systematically. In whole-class lessons, support staff are often used successfully to help disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in their learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The vast majority of parents and carers and pupils who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt that behaviour was good and that the school dealt effectively with any kind of bullying that may occur. This is an accurate reflection of what behaviour is typically like. When asked, pupils said that any kind of bullying was very rare and, if it occurred, it would usually be name calling. The school takes steps to help pupils understand the meaning and effect of different types of bullying, for example, through thematic weeks such as 'anti-bullying' week and by inviting the local Community Police Support Officer to talk to pupils about cyber-bullying. Pupils feel safe in school and there are systems to help them keep themselves safe. For example, older pupils are trained to be peer mediators and playground buddies and there are 'worry boxes' in classrooms. Pupils know they can approach any member of staff if they have any concerns and feel they will be listened to and that their worries will be addressed. Over time, there have been no exclusions and very few cases of racist incidents.

Pupils are polite and respectful towards staff and each other and have positive attitudes to learning and, when asked, pupils confirmed that this was usually the case. They understand the school rules about behaviour and feel there is a good balance between rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for inappropriate behaviour. During the inspection, pupils behaved well in lessons and generally around the school, although there was a little boisterous behaviour when pupils took their coats off after playtime.

Attendance over time has been average. However, due to persistent actions by the school to promote good attendance and deal with persistent absentees, attendance is improving. The school has reduced the number of parents and carers who take their children out of school during term-time for holidays and there is regular feedback through newsletters about the rewards given to pupils for good attendance.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has set high expectations and instilled an ambitious drive to improve the quality of education provided for the pupils. She has effectively developed the leadership capacity in the school and is supported well by the deputy headteacher and other senior and middle leaders, who now take a greater role in monitoring the work of the school. This delegation of duties means that there is a collective responsibility for pupils' achievement, with regular meetings about pupils' progress. This is ensuring that the improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement made since the last inspection are embedded and clearly show that the school has a

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good capacity to improve.

The aim to improve the school by raising the quality of teaching has been achieved through a balance of rigorous monitoring of lessons, with feedback to teachers in how to improve, and by providing training and coaching where necessary.

Consequently, over time, the quality of teaching has improved from being satisfactory at the last inspection to being good now overall. Robust procedures to assess, track and monitor pupils' progress are now fully embedded and are used to good effect to hold the school accountable for the achievement of all groups of pupils. They are also being used consistently to identify any pupil who is falling behind, or who needs extra support so that intervention strategies can be put in place. However, these actions are not monitored and evaluated fully to ensure they meet the needs of different groups of pupils consistently.

The good curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. For example: assemblies give pupils the chance to pray and reflect; religious education topics, such as the abolition of slavery, give pupils opportunities to discuss social and moral issues; and the celebration of festivals, such as the Chinese New Year and Diwali, promotes pupils' understanding of different cultures. Activities such as music or sporting events provide opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of their own culture.

The governing body is not only supportive, but also provides challenge to senior leaders on the performance of the school. A strength is the governing body's use of their own particular areas of expertise to support the different aspects of management. They are very aware of their responsibility for safeguarding pupils and all appropriate procedures and checks to ensure pupils are safe are fully in place. The school employs a family support worker to ensure that any potentially vulnerable pupils are well supported in accessing their education, which demonstrates the school's commitment to promoting equality and tackling discrimination.

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.



26 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Castlefort Junior Mixed and Infant School, Walsall, WS9 9JP

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our time and it was a pleasure to meet you and watch you working in classes. Your school gives you a good standard of education and you agreed with this in your replies to the questionnaires. Almost all of you enjoy school and think that your teachers help you to learn well. Here are some of the good things about your school.

- You make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The teaching in lessons is good.
- You are keen to learn and work hard in lessons.
- You behave well and older pupils, willingly, help younger ones around the school.
- You enjoy taking part in the different activities that the school offers, for example singing in the choir and sporting events.

To help improve your school we have asked the adults in charge to:

- ensure the more-able pupils make consistently good progress in mathematics
- check more carefully on the work that pupils are given in the small teaching groups so that everyone makes as much progress as possible, especially in mathematics
- make sure children in the Nursery and Reception classes have more opportunities to learn for themselves by using the outdoor area as often as possible.

You can help by continuing to work hard, listening to your teachers and helping one another in lessons and around the school.

Yours sincerely

James Henry
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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