

Castle Wood Special School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	135569
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	381909
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2012
Lead inspector	David Muir HMI

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Randell
Headteacher	Yvonne McCall
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2009
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	4–5 July 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Muir

Her Majesty's Inspector

Peter Lawley

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 17 lessons and all 13 teachers were seen teaching at least once; meetings were held with the Chair and Vice Chair of the governing body, one parent governor, a group of pupils and a range of staff, including leaders, teachers and teaching assistants. 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 a wide range of documentation including self-evaluation documents, strategic plans and evaluations of various aspects of the school's work, including students' progress over time. Inspectors scrutinised 57 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

Information about the school

Castle Wood is a large broad spectrum special primary school formed in April 2008 as the result of the amalgamation of two special schools. It relocated to new purpose-built premises in September 2010. The school admits pupils with a wide range of disabilities and special educational needs, including profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. Around half of the pupils come from a White British background with other pupils coming from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, Around one quarter of pupils' families have English as an additional language. Just under half of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school. There are currently 26 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school has an after-school club which is managed by the governing body. The school has achieved Healthy School status and gained the Eco Schools Bronze Award.

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	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good and improving school. It provides a good level of education for the pupils. There are particular strengths in behaviour and safety and the way all pupils have their personal needs met to a high level. The whole school community is overwhelmingly appreciative of the school’s work to improve the lives of the pupils and their families. The school is not outstanding as not enough teachers are delivering outstanding lessons consistently.
- Achievement is good overall, but in some areas, such as the Early Years Foundation Stage and the classes which cater for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), the progress made is outstanding due to the high quality of provision, including the consistently outstanding teaching which takes place in these areas.
- Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. The leadership of teaching is good and senior leaders have a clear view of where the strengths in teaching are and where further development is needed. The accuracy of their judgements was evident during the inspection where all lessons were observed jointly with members of the leadership team. The best practice in teaching is not systematically shared so that all teachers consistently teach to a higher standard.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well and through their positive attitudes, make strong contributions to their learning. Pupils’ personal development allows them to manage their own behaviour increasingly effectively. They know how to keep themselves safe due to the guidance they receive. Parents and carers greatly value the impressive relationship the school has with them and the wider community.
- Leadership and management are good and the leadership skills of the headteacher are very strong. Every respondent to questionnaires valued how she has moved the school forward following the amalgamation of the two

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previous schools. Leaders' acute awareness of where improvements are needed has resulted in the developments of extremely strong provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and for those who have PMLD.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Use the outstanding practice in the school to continue to support other colleagues to improve their teaching further by:
 - ensuring that lesson objectives are clear so that all pupils understand what is expected of them
 - ensuring that pace and challenge are consistently high in all lessons.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Due to the nature of their special educational needs, pupils' attainment on entry is well below the standards expected for their age. However, they all make at least good progress from their starting points in all subjects and key stages. Some pupils, such as those in the Early Years Foundation Stage and those with PMLD make outstanding progress in lessons and over time, due to the outstanding provision in these areas, while others make good progress in their lessons, due to the good teaching. The school measures pupils' levels, through baseline assessments, when they enter the school. The progress they make is compared to national datasets of pupils with similar needs. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school uses appropriate assessment schemes, such as the Early Years Foundation Stage profile, to monitor progress. During the inspection, scrutiny of the school's evaluation of progress verified that it is robust and accurate. The school's analysis of data shows that no groups of pupils, including those who have severe learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder, make less than good progress. Clear progress is seen, according to their abilities, in the levels and confidence that pupils develop with pre-reading skills and reading. Nearly all parents and carers agree that 'This school helps my child to develop skills in communication, reading, writing, and mathematics'. Inspection evidence supports this positive view of the school's development of basic skills, including different methods of communication, such as Makaton signing and picture exchange communication system (PECS), for all pupils.

The school uses data well to ensure that where progress has been less good, strategies are implemented to improve learning. An example of this was in the provision for pupils with PMLD. This was identified as an area where improvements were needed and, as a result of the actions taken, pupils now make outstanding progress. In all areas of the school, challenging targets are set and often exceeded by pupils. There are no significant differences in the progress made in different subjects. Leaders monitor the progress made by different groups of pupils and the

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evidence shows that some groups of pupils, such as those who have English as an additional language at home, make outstanding progress from their starting points. This is, in part, due to the support put in place for families to help them be involved with their children's education. Questionnaires, returned by a majority of parents and carers showed overwhelming agreement that their children make good progress during their time in the school.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good because it meets the needs of all pupils well. It promotes at least good and sometimes outstanding progress. Some teachers consistently deliver outstanding lessons. At least good teaching was seen across all key stages and subjects, although some satisfactory teaching was also seen. In the best lessons, pupils' engagement with learning was outstanding. An example of this was in an English lesson being taught to a group of pupils with PMLD. The teacher's clear focus on the repetition of the target language and the strong awareness of pupils' needs, skilfully kept them engaged to a high level for a sustained period of time. Clear anticipation was evident and the pupils thoroughly enjoyed their learning for the whole session. In all lessons seen, pupils were engaged in their learning and were on task. In the satisfactory lessons, though, the pace was sometimes pedestrian and pupils were not challenged to a high level. In some lessons seen, the learning objectives were not clear enough to enable all pupils to understand what they were expected to learn, so there was some loss of focus. This prevented learning in these lessons from being better than good.

The school's ethos, based on innovation, inclusion and partnership contributes strongly to the learning in lessons. All pupils are treated with the utmost dignity and respect throughout their time in school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching is consistently outstanding which promotes outstanding progress for all children in this department. Literacy and numeracy are promoted well across the school and the introduction of initiatives such as 'Write Dance' have allowed pupils to develop their writing through improvements in their fine and gross motor skills. The school has high expectations in developing reading. A reading group for parents and carers has been established, so that reading becomes a feature within families and is modelled for pupils.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour and safety are outstanding. The school is an extremely calm and orderly environment. School records show that there have been no racist or other bullying incidents and discussions with pupils supported this. Pupils are encouraged to be independent. Staff are consistent in the promotion of pupils' safety and behaviour management strategies over time, in lessons and around the school. In all lessons during the inspection, pupils demonstrated very positive attitudes and were enthusiastically involved in their learning. Case studies, and comments from parents and carers, show that pupils make significant improvements in their behaviour from their entry to the school. The support provided by the school for pupils and their

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families is greatly appreciated. Typical comments received from parents were, 'The school staff have helped me through my difficult times with the boys and have always been there for me as well – I do courses at school which I am grateful for,' and 'The staff are wonderful, not only do they teach the children but they have time for the parents too.' Almost all parents and carers who returned questionnaires agreed that 'there is a good standard of behaviour at this school. One parent summarised others' views by saying, 'All of the children are valued, included and important and the school's holistic approach to education ensures that the children are better equipped to deal with situations in the world outside of school'. Another parent typified the trusting relationships that the school develops with families by saying, 'As a parent of a very disabled son, I found it very hard to leave my child with anyone... I'm very happy to leave my child and he even goes to an after-school club'.

The school provides access to a wide range of therapies to support pupils in their personal and academic development. These include speech and language therapy, musical therapy and physiotherapy among others. Leaders liaise well with external agencies to support pupils. They work with services to ensure that pupils attend as often as they can, including those with medical needs. Students who are able to attend regularly do so, because they enjoy coming to school.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has established a strong ethos in the school based on high expectations for all pupils and on developing innovative practice to support their development. This ethos is supported by parents and carers, pupils and staff. Many members of staff were also keen to share their overwhelmingly positive view of the school's work through their response to questionnaires and meetings with inspectors. Strong performance management procedures mean that staff develop the skills and accountability they need to work successfully with the range of needs that the pupils have. A large majority of staff feel that the school supports their professional development needs well.

Leaders ensure that aspirations for excellence are disseminated through devolved leadership. They have a sharp focus on where improvements are needed and as they are tackled, clear progress is made in pupils' achievements and personal development. Subject leaders are increasingly accountable for the progress made in their areas. Leaders are continuing to develop ways to share best practice more effectively, so that all staff can benefit from the expertise in the school. Due to the established systems for school improvement, and the improving outcomes already, the capacity for further improvement is good.

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well. For pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and those who have PMLD, the curriculum has been developed to an outstanding level. The latter with significant input from a PMLD specialist at a local university. This exemplifies the school's desire to innovate and create provision which meets the needs of all pupils. Pupils have access to successful mainstream

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opportunities as appropriate. The well-planned transition programme prepares and enthuses pupils for the move to the next stage of their lives in one of several secondary provisions which they will progress to. After-school clubs and holiday schemes are valued by parents, carers and pupils. They enhance the school's work in developing pupils' social and emotional skills.

The governing body has a clear view of where there are strengths in the school and where improvements are needed. Recent training has enabled them to understand and execute their roles more effectively. They ensure that all aspects of safeguarding, including recruitment records and staff training, meet current government requirements. There is no discrimination in the school and equality of opportunity is a central plank of the school's ethos, enabling all students to be supported to meet their potential. The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through a range of activities, including: visits to the local community; residential visits; awareness of a range of religions and their festivals such as Diwali and Holi, and developing an understanding of diversity and equality in society. The impact of the provision is evident in students' highly positive attitudes and ability to reflect on their behaviour.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



6 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Castle Wood Special School, Coventry, CV2 1FN

On behalf of the two inspectors who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you very much for giving us such an enjoyable and memorable experience and sharing your views about your school.

Castle Wood is a good school. We found that your school is at least good in all aspects that we inspected and there are some outstanding things about it. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and those who have profound and multiple learning difficulties make outstanding progress because the teaching is outstanding in these areas. The headteacher and leadership team are devoted to ensuring that you receive a good quality education. It was clear during our visit, from your questionnaires and your comments, that you appreciate them and their hard work and that you enjoy school. Your behaviour and attitudes to your learning are exemplary and are clear strengths of the school. The improvements that you make in your learning during your time in school are good. The teaching and support that you receive in the school are good and adults know in fine detail how to support you and make your time there successful.

I have asked the headteacher to improve some things as the result of the inspection and that is to make sure that the school uses the outstanding teaching in the school to continue to support other teachers to improve their teaching further. This should be done by making sure that you are clear about what you are meant to learn and that you are working more quickly in lessons.

You should be very proud of yourselves and the contribution that you make to the school. We particularly enjoyed meeting you all and talking to you about your experiences. Sincere thanks to you all for the time you spent with us during the visit and I would like to wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Muir
Her Majesty's Inspector

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