

Causton Junior School

Maidstone Road, Felixstowe, IP11 9ED

Inspection dates 31 January–1 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Standards are below average. Pupils do not always have reading books that are at the right level for them and some pupils do not do enough reading.
- Pupils do not have enough time to practise their literacy skills in other subjects and their grasp of language is not as far-reaching as it could be.
- Pupils do not solve enough mathematical problems on their own and do not always have the skills to check the accuracy of their work.
- Teaching is not consistently good because the quality of questioning varies, and work is not always set at the right level for pupils.
- Teachers do not always make clear to pupils when marking their work what the next steps in learning are, or encourage them to respond to their comments and act upon their advice.
- The informal collaboration between the infant school and the junior school is not as effective as it could be because the headteacher and deputy headteacher are very stretched in their roles, especially when the headteacher is not on site.
- Not all teachers use their teaching assistants effectively, and there is not enough time for them to liaise together about pupils' learning.
- Governors, leaders and managers have not held all members of staff sufficiently to account for their performance.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' progress is speeding up, and standards are rising quickly.
- Pupils achieve well in the specialist support centre for pupils with moderate learning difficulties because the work is carefully tailored to their needs.
- More of the teaching is good because of the clear guidance leaders give teachers.
- Pupils behave well, are keen to learn, and feel safe at school.
- Pupils excel at sport and enjoy many clubs and visits.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 17 lessons or parts of lessons, many of which were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Twelve teachers and most support staff were seen working with the pupils.
- The inspectors heard pupils read, attended an assembly, observed class councils and, with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, looked closely at examples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and curriculum materials, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders and phase team leaders and pupils chosen at random. Discussions were also held with the deputy headteacher, class teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 10 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), a letter from a parent and spoke with several parents in the playground.
- The inspection team considered 28 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Terence Cook

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized junior school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent in the armed forces.
- The school has specially resourced provision for up to 15 pupils with special educational needs. The specialist support centre (known as '6S') supports pupils with moderate learning difficulties, all of whom have statements of special educational needs. At present, there are nine pupils benefiting from this provision.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is very high.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2012, which set the minimum expectations for progress and standards in English and mathematics.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for its pupils off site.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2010 after the last inspection. She also runs Maidstone Infant School, which is located on a separate site from the school. When the headteacher is based at the infant school (approximately half the week), the deputy headteacher runs the school in her absence. The collaboration between the schools is informal.
- There is a recently appointed Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is consistently good and make sure that teachers:
 - question pupils to check their understanding and extend their thinking, so involving them more actively in their learning
 - set work that is at the right level for all pupils and that is hard enough for more-able pupils
 - make clear to pupils when marking their work what the next steps in learning are and make sure that pupils respond to their comments and act upon their advice.
- Increase standards in English and mathematics by:
 - making sure that adults check that pupils are choosing reading books at the right level for them and are doing enough independent reading
 - extending the range of pupils' language and giving them more time to practise their literacy skills across different subjects
 - making sure pupils have the chance to solve mathematical problems on their own and develop the skills to check the accuracy of their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - reviewing present collaboration arrangements and the roles played by the headteacher and deputy headteacher to make sure that the momentum of improvement continues swiftly
 - making sure that all teaching assistants are deployed and used effectively and creating time for them to liaise with teachers about learning
 - holding all staff fully to account for their performance and the progress that pupils make.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In previous years, standards have been too low in English and mathematics because of some underachievement. In 2012, the school did not meet government floor standards. There remains some inconsistency in how well pupils are doing in Years 3 and 4 because of variations in the quality of teaching. They enter Year 3 with standards that are below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The rate of progress is improving because teaching is better, especially in Years 5 and 6. Last year, almost all groups of pupils made good progress and standards rose faster than was seen nationally, closing gaps in attainment. However, standards were still below average because of the ground pupils had to make up.
- The present Year 6 are on track to reach broadly average standards. So far this year, progress has been good in Years 5 and 6, and the trend of improvement is continuing.
- The introduction of specific teaching in the sounds that letters make (phonics) has improved reading for pupils in Year 3. On occasions, pupils have a reading book that is too easy for them, and keep the same book for relatively long periods of time. While writing is improving, pupils do not have enough time to practise their writing skills in other subjects or extend their grasp of language.
- Pupils in the specialist support centre achieve well. Good teaching makes sure that work is just at the right level for them and their progress is carefully checked. These pupils make consistently good progress over time from very low starting points. Their attainment is included in the school's overall results, which can make standards seem lower than they actually are for most pupils, as there is such a high proportion of pupils in the school with statements of special educational needs.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs elsewhere in the school make similar progress to their classmates and this is improving over time. Pupils' needs are identified promptly and appropriate support is given to help them keep up.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium benefit from additional teaching, homework club and other support groups to help them keep up with other pupils. This is having a positive impact on their progress and performance information shows that this year the gap between the attainment and progress of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils has closed considerably.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good across the school, especially in Year 3. While there is some good teaching in Years 3 and 4, there is not enough. Teachers do not always ask sufficiently probing questions, or target particular pupils to respond. They too readily accept the answer from the pupil with the first hand up, meaning that many pupils do not contribute to class discussions.
- In some classes, work is not always set at the right level for pupils, and is often too easy for more-able pupils. In mathematics, pupils do not have enough chance to solve problems on their own, or apply their skills to check if they have the right answer or not.

- Where teaching is stronger, the work is demanding for pupils and teachers expect them to find things out for themselves. In a successful science lesson in Year 4, the teacher skilfully helped pupils to form opinions about different forces, and gave them plenty of resources to experiment with. In the best lessons, teachers pick up quickly any misconceptions pupils may have and tackle them straight away.
- Teaching is consistently good in the specialist support centre so that pupils are excited about learning and not worried about making mistakes. When these pupils spend time in mainstream classes, they are well supported and included.
- All teachers set individual targets for pupils linked to the National Curriculum, and most pupils understand what they have to do to reach them. When marking their books, teachers do not always set out for pupils the next steps in their learning, or expect them to act upon their advice, for example by responding to their comments or written questions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are keen to learn and behave well in lessons and around the school. They talk with enthusiasm about their learning and respond very well when they are actively involved in lessons. Just occasionally, they can become passive in lessons that do not engage them enough.
- Pupils get on well with one another and show respect to adults. They say there is no bullying and that 'the atmosphere is calm generally.' Pupils have a good understanding about different types of bullying such as cyber bullying. They are confident that if any issues did arise, staff would nip them in the bud. The school can point to success stories of pupils who joined finding it hard to behave well, but whose behaviour has improved dramatically as a result of the support they have been given.
- Pupils feel that adults listen to them, and they value the class councils where they can make their views known to their representatives on the student council. They mention how their suggestions for improving playground equipment were carried out.
- Parents say that pupils behave well and that their children feel safe at school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to be safe around railways, water and roads, as well as keeping safe at school and at home. They know about using computers safely.
- Pupils' punctuality is good and attendance is improving rapidly. This year, it is in line with the national average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Present leadership structures are not helping the school to increase the momentum of improvement, as the deputy headteacher has to run the school for half the week and there is nobody taking her place when she is acting headteacher. The headteacher has two schools to run and has many demands on her time. Some members of staff, while welcoming recent changes, commented that they missed having a full-time headteacher.
- New appointments to the leadership team have boosted the school's capacity to improve, especially in the management of special educational needs and the promotion of literacy in Years 3 and 4. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas to improve, and draw up a plan each term to focus on the key priorities. This has helped to speed up progress in the past year.
- There are regular checks on the quality of teaching and teachers are set clear targets for

improvement. In the past, staff were not held sufficiently accountable for their performance, but this is changing. Meetings to discuss pupils' progress make sure that no pupil falls behind, and teachers are expected to explain any variations in the performance of their class.

- The collaboration between the infant and junior schools has brought many benefits to Causton Junior, including sharing of expertise across the schools, and greatly improved transfer arrangements into Year 3. Teachers look at Year 2 results together so that they know exactly how well pupils are doing when they join the school.
- Subjects and topics are enhanced by clubs and competitions, especially in sport. The school has won many awards and the girls' cricket team reached regional and national finals. Pupils also enjoy gardening and tending the school grounds. They take part in artistic and musical events and find out about other cultures, developing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well.
- The school fosters good relations with parents, who are generally happy with the education their children are receiving. Some parents feel that arrangements for lunches could be improved. A parent wrote, 'We can only do our best to raise our children to be understanding and kind to all, and Causton helps us to do this.' The school makes sure all pupils have equal opportunities and are valued as individuals. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The local authority gives good support to the school, and keeps a close eye on how quickly it is improving. It is helping governors to consider how best to develop the collaboration with the infant school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a clear understanding of how well the school is doing under its new Chair and Vice Chair. Governors know about the quality of teaching and what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance. They also know about pupils' attainment and progress and how this compares with other schools nationally. Governors are involved in setting targets for staff, but are not completely clear about how the pay policy is being applied. They know what the pupil premium is being spent on and the difference this is making. Governors make sure safeguarding arrangements meet all requirements. They keep themselves up to date with regular training, so that they can hold the school to account for its performance.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124580
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	402275

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Topliss
Headteacher	Lizzie Girling
Date of previous school inspection	9 March 2010
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