

Castlewood Primary School

Castlewood Road, Horsham, RH13 9US

Inspection dates

20–21 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, effectively supported by senior leaders, has successfully maintained pupils' good achievement and outstanding behaviour since the last inspection.
- Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding, so that most pupils make good progress across the school.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is consistently above average in English and mathematics.
- The teaching of writing is particularly successful, so that the proportions of pupils reaching both expected levels and the higher levels are well above average.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are outstanding. They treat each other with respect and are polite and courteous with adults. They feel extremely safe and secure.
- The curriculum makes a strong contribution to the development of pupils' personal and social skills and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Governors are knowledgeable and provide a good balance of challenge and support for the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement is not yet outstanding because occasionally teachers do not have high enough expectations, so the progress made by some pupils slows, especially that of the most able.
- Plans for further development are appropriate but lack a sufficiently sharp focus on pupils' achievement to accelerate the drive for improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 12 lessons or parts of lessons, including five joint lesson observations with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, a group of governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, a local authority representative, senior leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of 61 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in addition to the results of a recent school questionnaire and responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and analysed a range of documents and policies, including the school improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, attendance records, safeguarding documents and a sample of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Bill James

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium in this school is well below the national average. This is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils entitled to free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Lift the quality of teaching and secure outstanding achievement by ensuring that:
 - expectations of all pupils are consistently high and that work set is sufficiently challenging, especially for the most able
 - the pace of learning in lessons is brisk
 - there is a clear explanation in lessons of what pupils need to do to be successful
 - there is a consistent approach to the marking of pupils' work, including comments and questions to guide pupils' next steps and regular opportunities for pupils to respond
 - there are consistently high expectations of the standards of presentation in pupils' books.
- Accelerate the drive for improvements in the school by sharpening the focus on pupils' achievement in development plans.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start school with skills and levels of understanding which are in line with those expected for their age. Children make good progress during the Reception Year and continue to make good progress as they move through the school to reach above average standards by the time they leave Year 6. Achievement is not yet outstanding because, while all groups make good progress overall from their starting points, occasionally, the progress of some pupils slows, particularly the most able, when expectations are not high enough.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is particularly strong, so that the proportions of pupils reaching both expected levels and the higher levels in 2012 were well above average. Teachers' confident subject knowledge is used to good effect to provide pupils with opportunities to write in different subjects and pupils' well-developed speaking skills help them to use and select vocabulary very effectively.
- Reading skills are successfully taught, including the link between letters and sounds (phonics) so that pupils enjoy reading and attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average. For example, regular phonics sessions in the Reception Year help children to use their phonics knowledge to complete written tasks. In Key Stage 2, short courses are designed to provide extra help where needed so that any gaps in pupils' learning are addressed.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics has not been as consistently strong as in other subjects in recent years. However, the school's prompt and robust response to a dip in mathematics attainment to average levels in 2011, including a successful focus on improving the quality of teaching in mathematics, has been successful, so that pupils' progress has accelerated and the dip in standards was quickly reversed in 2012.
- While attainment is typically above average by the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in reading and mathematics in 2012 was average. The school has responded with a number of initiatives, including small-group teaching, the use of learning mentors and focused support for those pupils currently in Year 6 who have the potential to attain the higher levels. Pupils' work, lesson observations and information about pupils' progress show that these initiatives are proving successful so that, at the time of the inspection, more pupils were on track to attain the higher levels in reading and mathematics in 2013.
- Pupil premium funding is used to fund resources, including additional teachers to deliver short-term programmes to boost pupils' writing and mathematics skills. As a result, average point scores show that the few pupils who are eligible to benefit from the pupil premium reach similar levels of attainment to other pupils in the school and to pupils in the same group nationally, in both English and mathematics. Successful support for this group of pupils means that the gap between this group and pupils nationally is closing in English and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are very well behaved and keen to do well. Support provided by the school is carefully and very successfully tailored to individual needs so that these pupils regularly make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons which are stimulating and relevant, so that pupils are interested and make good progress. Typically, high expectations mean that most pupils are given work which is matched appropriately to their needs. Occasionally, however, the pace of learning slows and work set is not sufficiently challenging to ensure that all pupils, including the most able, make as much progress as possible.
- Usually, pupils are given clear explanations about how to complete activities successfully. At times, however, teachers' explanations in lessons about what pupils need to do lack clarity and so pupils' progress slows.
- Teaching assistants very successfully support pupils, including disabled pupils and those with

special educational needs, because they work closely with teachers and have a good understanding of pupils' needs.

- The teaching of mathematics has been a recent focus for development in the school, with an increased emphasis on helping pupils to use a range of strategies to tackle mathematical problems and on providing more challenging work. In Year 6, for example, pupils are given plenty of opportunities to talk about their mathematics work with a partner as well as talking to the whole class. As a result, pupils are able to test and refine strategies and are becoming skilled in explaining how they have tackled mathematical problems.
- In the Reception Year, warm and secure relationships combined with high expectations and a consistently clear focus on learning mean that children rapidly develop in confidence. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in the many smiling faces, a notable feature of the lessons here.
- Pupils' work is often well marked with comments and questions provided by the teacher to help pupils to improve their work and pupils told inspectors that they found the marking helpful. However, there are slight differences in the quality of marking between subjects and year groups so that opportunities are sometimes missed to maximise pupils' progress. For example, where comments and questions are provided, pupils are not always given opportunities to respond, and in some cases marking is brief, with few comments to guide pupils' next steps.
- The quality of work displayed around the school is exceptional, particularly the artwork, and reflects the strong contribution the curriculum makes to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are, however, some variations in the quality of the work in pupils' books. At times, for example, untidy work detracts from the good quality content of pupils' written work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are extremely positive throughout the school, from the youngest children to those pupils in Year 6. Children are keen to learn when they start school and eagerly participate. The school builds very well on this positive start so that, by Year 6, pupils have developed into mature and responsible young people who are very well prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils' appetite for learning and their enjoyment of school is reflected in attendance rates, which are consistently above average.
- Pupils are thoughtful, welcoming and impeccably polite. Their behaviour is exemplary because adults expect all pupils to behave well and to do their best, regardless of background or ability, and systems for managing behaviour are well established and clearly understood across the school. Most parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire consider pupils to be well behaved.
- The school very successfully fosters good relationships and there are high levels of mutual respect in the school, both between adults and pupils and between pupils, so that the school's ethos is harmonious and inclusive. Pupils cooperate with each other extremely well and opportunities for pupils to talk about their learning are regular features of lessons, making a very positive contribution to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills and to their personal development.
- Pupils happily perform a range of responsibilities within the school, such as the role of school councillor, with maturity. Recently some pupils have been trained to become mathematics tutors for any pupils who need a bit of extra help. Opportunities such as these are preparing pupils well for their future education while developing their confidence and self-esteem.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and school records confirm pupils' views that bullying is rare. Discrimination and derogatory language of any kind are not tolerated. For example, pupils know what racism is but told inspectors, 'It never happens here.' Pupils feel extremely safe and well cared for. They told inspectors that they know that adults will take note of any concerns they might have and will make sure that they are safe. All the parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire said that children feel safe in school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's calm commitment, professionalism and determination have ensured that the good teaching and achievement identified at the last inspection have been maintained. The school is keen to improve further and there is no sense of complacency in the school. Staff work well as a team and morale is high.
- The school's evaluation of its strengths is accurate and plans for improvement are appropriate. However, development planning lacks a sufficiently sharp focus on pupils' achievement to increase the drive for improvement and to secure outstanding achievement.
- Subject leaders' roles in the school are well developed and they play an active role in checking the quality of teaching, in identifying development needs and in ensuring pupils have equality of opportunity. There are good opportunities for professional development, including regular opportunities for teachers to observe and share good practice in their own and in other schools.
- Systems for checking pupils' progress are well established and used effectively to evaluate teaching. Recently, more regular meetings have been introduced so that individuals and groups who are not making enough progress can be identified more quickly and supported by short, sharply focused teaching programmes to accelerate progress.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and enriched well. Strengths within the curriculum include opportunities for pupils to pursue artistic and musical interests and a wide range of well-attended extra-curricular clubs.
- The local authority has provided light touch support for this successful school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a good balance of professional skills which are used to good effect to provide support and challenge for the school. Governors regularly complete relevant training, such as training on the use of pupil performance information, so that they understand how well pupils in the school achieve in comparison with other schools nationally. Governors know how pupil premium funding is used to provide support for eligible pupils and how this is helping these pupils to learn and achieve well. They are well informed about the quality of teaching, including what is being done to secure good teaching and to provide support where needed. Rigorous safeguarding procedures are in place and meet statutory requirements.

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	131130
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	403623

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Wallace
Headteacher	Julia Slocombe
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2008
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