

Castlecroft Primary School

Windmill Crescent, Castlecroft, Wolverhampton, WV3 8HS

Inspection dates 7–8 November 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and by the time they leave Year 6 their attainment in English and mathematics is often above the national average.
- Teaching is good. Lessons are generally well planned and teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where provision is good. Children are happy and enjoy a good range of activities both inside and outside the classroom.
- Well planned and resourced provision for visually impaired pupils, for the disabled and those who have special educational needs ensures they make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy school and behave well. They are polite and courteous and engage well in their learning.
- The headteacher, ably supported by his senior team, has quickly established an ambitious vision to drive improvement in the school.
- Senior leaders, supported by the governing body, have made a concerted effort to improve teaching which is resulting in faster progress and better attainment for pupils.
- Governors know the school well and ask challenging questions to ensure that it is continually improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although boys achieve well compared to national averages, they are not achieving as well as girls at the school.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Some teachers do not always use all the information available about pupils' learning to plan lessons that give each of them challenging work from the start of lessons.
- Some marking does not give pupils comments about how to improve their work that are precise enough to allow them to make rapid progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, four of which were seen together with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made other short visits to lessons and to learning areas in the course of their observations of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors observed senior leaders reporting back to teachers on the quality of their teaching.
- Inspectors took account of the 25 responses to the online Parent View survey and spoke informally to parents as they brought their children to school.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, representatives from the local authority, members of the governing body, senior and subject leaders and teaching staff.
- The information from 33 staff questionnaires was considered.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school, and looked at pupils' books and at a number of documents, including the school's own data and monitoring of how well pupils are achieving. They also checked planning documents, records of checks on the quality of teaching, and records of behaviour, attendance and punctuality, as well as documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Simon Blackburn, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Hilary Green	Additional Inspector
Roisin Chambers	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is below the national average. (The pupil premium gives the school additional funding for particular categories of pupils.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is well-above average because the school has specially resourced provision for visually impaired pupils. This provision is for two pupils in each year group.
- About one in three of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils.
- The current headteacher took up post in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Close the gaps in the attainment and progress of boys and girls in all year groups by ensuring that teachers are able to use resources, including reading books that stimulate boys to want to learn more rapidly and to read more widely.
- Increase the proportion of lessons where teaching is outstanding by ensuring that all teachers:
 - plan learning in lessons that always challenges pupils of all abilities with activities, resources and tasks that move them on quickly from their different starting points
 - use the excellent practice already present in the school to improve the quality of feedback given to pupils about their work so that they know precisely how to improve it.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards in all subjects at the end of Year 6 have improved for each of the last two years and are above average in reading and writing and similar to the national average in mathematics. This is as a result of good teaching and rich learning experiences that ensure pupils are interested in their work and develop positive attitudes to learning.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are below those expected for their age and make good progress as a result of well-planned activities that stimulate curiosity so that they are well prepared to enjoy learning in Year 1. They leave Reception with average skills and knowledge across all key areas of their development.
- Progress is good in Years 1 and 2 as a result of improving teaching and pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is, currently, above average. Pupils make good progress in most year groups through Key Stage 2 and, by the end of Year 6, achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. The most-able pupils in both key stages achieve well.
- Pupils with visual impairments provided for in the specially resourced provision make good progress because staff provide support that is tailored well to each pupil's individual needs. Appropriate resources and staffing are deployed sensitively to ensure that almost all learning is fully integrated with that of the rest of the pupils in the school.
- Other disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive the same good levels of support. Their needs are identified early and precise plans are drawn up by teachers which ensure that they make good progress in their learning.
- The achievement of boys is relatively weaker than that of girls in many year groups across the school. Teachers are working hard to provide activities that interest and inspire boys in their learning and to encourage them to read more often for pleasure. This good practice is beginning to have an impact on their progress, as seen from the school's own progress-tracking information. Girls and boys from minority ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to that of other pupils.
- Pupils read widely and often in school. They can use the skills they have learned to sound out and construct unfamiliar words with great success to make sense of stories and non-fiction. Inspectors found that some of the pupils who read to them in Year 2 had books that were not challenging enough for them and were not changed frequently enough. Boys are less enthusiastic about reading than girls and they told inspectors that they would like a wider range of books to choose from.
- In 2013, pupils in Years 1 and 2 did very well in the screening check that assesses their ability to use what they have learned about letters and sounds. This was a big improvement on the results in 2012.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium are effectively supported by well-trained staff and are making better progress than other pupils in reading and writing and similar progress in mathematics. As a result, gaps in attainment are closing and eligible pupils who finished Year 6 in 2013 were about a term behind other pupils. Those pupils who enter Key Stage 2 with the lowest attainment make the most progress through to Year 6.

The quality of teaching is good

- The vast majority of teaching is good and some is outstanding, especially in Years 5 and 6. Where teaching is outstanding, teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and the pace of learning and the rigour of questioning ensures that pupils are challenged and fully involved in lessons. Consequently, pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Most teachers are adept at planning learning in lessons that is equally demanding for pupils of different abilities. They keep the length of introductions short and make sure that pupils get on with independent or small-group tasks that move learning on from previous lessons. In the few lessons seen where teaching required improvement, teachers did not use all the information they had about pupils' learning to give them work that challenged them from the start of lessons so that the most-able pupils in particular were not challenged enough.
- In most lessons, teachers listen carefully to pupils' answers to questions and make minute-to-minute judgements of pupils' progress so they can pick up any misconceptions or problems and address them quickly. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, the teacher judged that pupils' understanding of subtraction was not developing well enough and skilfully adapted the lesson to ensure that they gained a more secure use of the techniques they needed.
- Teachers know their pupils and manage their classes very well. They insist on high standards of behaviour in lessons. For example, in a number of Bhangra dancing lessons the teachers skilfully kept pupils on task despite the excitement of learning new skills while also helping the dance teacher to find the right pace for the lesson so that pupils could learn all the steps.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well in many lessons. For example, the theme of Diwali was explored in the Reception class through music, mark-making, writing and dressing up before the class went into the hall for their Bhangra lesson.
- The teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Teachers think carefully and successfully about how to get children involved in their learning. They make good use of all the available resources and take every opportunity to assess children's developing skills.
- Teachers mark pupils work thoroughly and regularly. Much of the marking seen gives pupils clear feedback on what they have done well and where they need to improve. However, this good practice is not consistent across all classes, and teachers do not have the opportunity to learn from the best practice in the school. Where marking is most effective teachers give precise information about what needs to improve and ensure that pupils are given time to respond to this advice in their next lesson.
- Pupils' ability to assess their own work and the work of their peers is a growing strength, particularly in Years 5 and 6. In a Year 6 writing lesson, pupils firstly developed their own marking schemes using their personalised writing targets before going on to use these to mark their own finished work. This ensured that the work they did very closely matched their own development needs.
- Teachers, specialist teachers of the visually impaired and teaching assistants work in effective partnerships to ensure that pupils who need extra help, especially visually impaired pupils, have the right resources and activities to enable them to make good progress in lessons.
- The responses to Parent View showed that a large majority of parents agree that their children are well taught – a view fully endorsed by inspectors.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The vast majority of parents agree that the school makes sure that children are well behaved. Many parents told inspectors that behaviour had improved further since the appointment of the headteacher. Pupils said that behaviour is good in the school and that the high expectations of the headteacher had ensured that pupils behaved even better.
- Pupils typically behave extremely well in the playground, in classrooms and around the school. They are polite and courteous to each other, to adults and to visitors and know how to share and look after one another. They move around the school purposefully and quietly, entering and leaving school assemblies without noise.
- The youngest children in the Nursery and Reception classes follow the directions of their teachers carefully and respond quickly to instructions. This is typical of classes throughout the school, resulting in learning that moves along swiftly and without serious disruption.
- Pupils are proud of their school and say they feel safe and are taught how to stay safe through a range of lessons including sessions from speakers from the police, the fire service and road safety officers. They understand the different types of bullying and can describe how to avoid problems which might occur when using the internet.
- The school keeps excellent records of minor incidents and bullying which show that there are very few incidents and that they are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Pupils were keen to tell inspectors about their contribution to the life of the school and the impact of the school council in improving facilities in the school and of their work at 'friendship stops' to help pupils who feel lonely or left out.
- The school has a range of effective strategies to promote pupils' good attendance. As a result, attendance is currently above average. The breakfast club promotes attendance very well and also ensures a healthy start to the day. Pupils receive simple, healthy food and learn and play in a welcoming atmosphere that encourages pupils of different ages to get on well together. This is also true of the well-attended after-school provision.

The leadership and management are good

- The newly appointed headteacher has quickly established a clear and ambitious vision to drive improvement in teaching quality and in pupils' achievement. This is based upon an accurate and realistic evaluation of how well the school is doing and how it needs to improve. As a result, the school is in a good position from which to improve still further.
- The leadership and management of teaching and learning has been improving rapidly over recent years as a result of an increased focus on setting stringent targets for pupils' achievement and staff performance. Leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' books and they are accurate in their assessments, ensuring that the development points they give to teachers are having a direct impact on pupils' learning.
- Leaders check pupils' progress and attainment regularly and use this information to discuss the best ways to increase the progress of groups of pupils. The data are also used to judge how effective the additional support allocated to pupils who need extra help is being in improving their rates of progress.

- Leadership of the support provided for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including visually impaired pupils is good. Effective systems ensure that needs are identified and addressed early so that pupils can make rapid progress in their learning. Staff are deployed where they can have the greatest impact on learning and progress, which are reviewed in partnership with parents so that effective learning can continue at home.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Strong relationships are established with parents and the progress of children is checked carefully to ensure that learning activities are effective. Subject leaders are enthusiastic about the subjects they lead and are constantly looking for ways that good teaching can be shared. Their skills as leaders are evaluated and improved through the performance management system.
- The range of subjects studied by pupils is broad and offers experiences that expand their horizons and develop their curiosity. Leaders are determined to maintain the creative elements of the curriculum that very effectively help to promote pupils well-being and tackle discrimination. These elements include trips and visits that give pupils experience of a wide range of cultures and beliefs.
- Pupils enjoy the clubs and sports that are available outside school time. These have been enhanced by the new sports funding that is also allowing the school to access specialist sports coaching through the neighbouring secondary school. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of these initiatives on pupils' health and well-being.
- The local authority provides a good level of support to the school that has successfully developed more effective governance, increased the rigour of target setting and improved the accuracy of leaders' monitoring of school performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors know the school well and have a good understanding of the performance data on pupils' attainment and progress that leaders use to judge how well the school is doing. Their understanding of this information allows them to ask challenging questions about pupils' progress and attainment. They follow this up with visits to classrooms and discussions with subject leaders to ensure they have an accurate picture of how fast the school is improving. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching in the school and where further work is required to improve teaching. They review the way the school leaders monitor performance and play a full part in deciding on future priorities for improvement. Governors check that the budget is deployed well and that it is used to reward teachers based on how successfully pupils make progress. They also ensure that the pupil premium and primary sport funding is used efficiently and effectively.

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	104311
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	426960

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	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Simpkins
Headteacher	Andy Dyall
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2011
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