

Castleway Primary School

Castleway North, Moreton, Wirral, Merseyside, CH46 1RN

Inspection dates 11–12 December 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

- In recent years, pupils' achievement has been too variable.
- The proportions of pupils making more than the progress expected of them by the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics has fluctuated significantly over the last three years and has been too low.
- The most able pupils do not always achieve as well as they should.
- Some teaching requires improvement and not enough is good or outstanding. Teaching is not always challenging enough. Some teaching lacks the necessary pace to keep pupils fully engaged. In some lessons, pupils spend too long listening to unnecessary instructions when they are ready and eager to get on with their learning.
- Leaders and managers are not yet rigorous enough in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching so pupils' achievement can rise. They do not hold teachers rigorously enough to account for pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Reception class make good progress because teaching and provision are good. Pupils' achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2 is on a rising trend because the quality of teaching is improving.
- Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding achieve as well, and frequently better, than their classmates.
- Attendance has improved and is now average.
- The headteacher has an accurate understanding of what the school does well and where it could do better. Governance is improving strongly.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in seven classes taught by seven teachers. Two of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also observed the teaching of grammar and phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) in four different year groups. The inspector listened to a group of Year 2 pupils read.
- The inspector held meetings with senior and middle leaders, a group of pupils, four governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of a wide range of documentation including: the school's self-evaluation and development plan; records of the monitoring of teaching and learning; policies relating to behaviour and safety; minutes of meetings of the governing body and local authority reports on the school's effectiveness.
- There were no responses from parents on the Ofsted on-line questionnaire, (Parent View). However, the inspector took account of 75 replies to a questionnaire sent out recently by the governing body to parents. The inspector also took account of questionnaires returned by members of staff.

Inspection team

Stephen Wall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Castleway is smaller than most primary schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils 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 well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards that set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Over the last three years there have been several staffing changes, including the appointment of a new headteacher in September 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make all teaching at least good with more that is outstanding, so that pupils make consistently good progress over time by:
 - making sure that teachers always set tasks that are at the right level of challenge for pupils of differing abilities, especially for the most able pupils
 - ensuring that the teaching always keeps pupils fully engaged and on task
 - making sure that pupils, especially the most able, start work as soon as they are ready and do not spend too long listening to unnecessary instructions.
- Improve further the impact of leaders and managers on raising achievement and improving teaching by:
 - making sure that the quality of teaching is monitored more rigorously and that the outcomes have a sharper focus and are better used to bring about improvements
 - making targets for pupils' progress more challenging and holding teachers more closely to account for achieving them.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because, despite a rising trend in attainment over the last three years, the pattern of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been too inconsistent and too few of the most able pupils achieve as well as they could. The proportion of pupils that make good progress in English and mathematics has been too low.
- In the Reception Year, children make good progress from their generally well below expected starting points because teaching is good and the range of activities provided for them stimulates their interest and eagerness to learn.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is below average but has risen steadily over the last three years, especially in reading and writing.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment has risen in recent years and is now below average. However, the pattern of attainment over the last three years has fluctuated significantly from being well below to below average. This has been caused in large part by disruption to staffing.
- The proportion of pupils making the progress expected of them in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 in recent years has generally been in line with or above the national average. However, the proportion of pupils making better progress than this from their starting points has been too variable and not consistently close to or above the national average.
- The achievement of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, is above that of similar pupils across the country in English and mathematics. They make similar and sometimes better progress than others in the school. In 2013, the attainment of these pupils was slightly above that of their classmates in reading and mathematics and equal in writing. The trend over the last three years has seen the gap closing rapidly and demonstrates the school's strong and successful promotion of equal opportunities.
- The vast majority of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs make at least the progress expected of them from their starting points and an increasing number is doing better than this. This also demonstrates the school's strength in providing equality of opportunity.
- Since her appointment, the headteacher has introduced several new strategies to raise levels of literacy and numeracy, including a much more streamlined approach to the teaching of phonics and writing. The rising trend in pupils' attainment in literacy and numeracy shows that the initiatives are starting to have a positive impact.
- The school is using the new Primary School Sport funding to provide specialist training by high quality for staff in teaching physical education and sport to make teaching more effective and of better quality to promote enjoyment and healthy lifestyles for pupils.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, it still requires improvement because not enough is good or outstanding. In recent years, the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and achievement has been too variable.
- In too many lessons, teaching does not establish the right level of challenge for pupils of differing abilities, especially for the most able pupils. This results in some pupils finding the work too difficult and others finding it too easy. Progress slows as a result.
- Teaching in some lessons does not keep pupils interested, engaged and 'on their toes' the whole time. As a result, interest wanes for some pupils. This has a detrimental effect on their achievement.
- Sometimes teachers spend too long on explaining to the whole class what pupils are to do in lessons when pupils are often ready and eager to get on with their learning, especially the most able pupils. Again, this slows the progress that some pupils make.

- Teaching in the Reception class is good. It is organised well to provide a good range of activities both indoors and outdoors that stimulate children's interest and engages them well in their learning.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. Most use this effectively to ask challenging questions that make pupils reflect on their answers and give reasoned responses. This promotes pupils' speaking, communication and their numeracy skills effectively.
- Teachers forge good relationships with the pupils in their classes. As a result, most pupils are eager to please their teachers and to give of their best.
- The teaching of phonics in the younger classes and of grammar in classes for older pupils has benefited from the recent training instigated by the headteacher and the subject leader for English. The teaching, including that by teaching assistants, is planned effectively and carried out with pace and enthusiasm. As a result, pupils' skills in reading and grammatical accuracy in their writing are growing securely and rapidly.
- Teachers mark pupils' written work regularly and diligently. The vast majority of teachers' comments provide pupils with good step-by-step advice on how to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes towards school and learning. They are keen to give of their best. However, sometimes when teaching does not engage pupils fully in their learning because the rate of new learning is too slow or because the level of challenge is not appropriate, pupils show some frustration and occasionally chatter.
- Around the school, pupils are polite to the adults who work with them and to visitors. They play together respectfully and with good regard for the comfort and safety of others.
- Case studies show that pupils who may be vulnerable are identified early and that they are supported and cared for by a wide range of interventions. Pupils and their families appreciate the school's hard work to make sure that these pupils get the most out of their education at Castleway.
- Pupils' high levels of respect, their good manners and their solid sense of right and wrong testify to the school's effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils say, and school records confirm, that bullying of any kind is rare. Occasionally there is some 'falling out' and name calling, but adults are quick to deal with it. Pupils also say that the adults working with them are caring, approachable and fair.
- Since her appointment the headteacher has strengthened procedures for checking on and promoting good attendance. Parents have been made more aware of the importance of regular attendance to pupils' achievement and personal development. Parents are responding positively to the rallying call. As a result, attendance has improved in recent years and is now average.
- Punctuality to school has also improved. School records show that the number of pupils arriving late for school has decreased significantly.
- The recent survey of parents' views conducted by the governing body shows that the vast majority of parents have few concerns about behaviour or bullying in the school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because, despite a rising trend in pupils' achievement in recent years, too much teaching still requires improvement and not enough is good or outstanding and pupils' achievement is still not consistently good.
- Leaders and managers monitor teaching and learning regularly. However, the monitoring sometimes lacks enough rigour to give sufficiently sharp focus in identifying specific areas for improvement.
- Despite improvements in procedures for tracking pupils' progress in recent years, targets for the proportion of pupils who make better than the progress expected of them are not yet as high as

they could be and teachers are not held rigorously enough to account for pupils' good progress in their classes.

- The headteacher has an accurate view of what the school does well and where it could do better. She has tackled and eradicated inadequate teaching and is laying solid foundations for the school to continue to improve.
- The school's planning for future improvement is of good quality. It identifies appropriate areas for action. Recent initiatives to improve pupils' literacy skills are starting to bite and achievement is rising as a result.
- Subject leaders and other middle managers feel more secure in their roles. They welcome the new responsibilities that the headteacher has given them and are playing a more effective role in bringing about improvements in their areas.
- The headteacher has tightened procedures for managing the performance of teaching staff, including teaching assistants. There is a firm link between performance and progression up the salary scale.
- The curriculum is broad and well balanced. Pupils particularly enjoy topic work that is planned to give them a range of opportunities to apply and develop their literacy and numeracy skills. The good range of extra-curricular activities in sports and the arts involves pupils increasingly in the local community and underpins their good levels of personal development.
- After providing intensive support for the school in recent years, the local authority has scaled down its support to light touch monitoring in recognition that the school is now set fair to carry on improving by itself.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are fully in place and give no cause for concern.
- Most parents are supportive of the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The relatively recently appointed Chair of the Governing Body provides the governors with exceptionally purposeful and knowledgeable leadership. New appointments to the governing body provide a wide range of skills that are being used very effectively to hold the school increasingly to account and to restore parental confidence and involvement in the work of the school. Training for governors has taken place to give the governing body a more accurate view of how well the school is doing in comparison to similar schools locally and nationally. They are using this knowledge astutely to support and challenge the headteacher in her quest for further improvement. The governing body has a firm grasp on the school's finances including how the pupil premium is allocated and the impact it has on closing gaps in attainment and progress for those pupils eligible for this support. The governing body knows about the quality of teaching keeps a close eye on the use of performance management and is fully aware of its links with staff pay progression.

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	105002
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	426073

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	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Owens
Headteacher	Valerie Kermode
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2011
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