

Castle Academy

Station Road, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN12 3DB

Inspection dates

1–2 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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

- Teaching requires improvement because, in some year groups, pupils are not making enough progress in learning to read and write and in mathematics.
- The work which pupils are given does not always take into account what the pupils already know and can do. Sometimes, pupils do not complete enough work.
- Teaching assistants are not always guided enough to give pupils the help they need.
- Pupils are not always given time to correct and improve the work in their books in response to teachers' written comments.
- Leaders have not acted swiftly enough to ensure that teaching improves and leads to good progress and achievement for all pupils.
- Leaders and teachers do not use the information collected from checks on pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics to provide pupils who are making too little progress with the right help quickly enough.
- The examples of good teaching where pupils make rapid progress are not shared widely enough to ensure pupils' good progress in all subjects in all year groups.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching is consistently good in the Reception class. As a result, children make good progress in starting to learn to read, write and count.
- The teaching of mathematics in Years 5 and 6 is particularly effective and is securing pupils' rapid progress in the subject.
- Almost all pupils take great care and pride in their work. The quality of their art work and their knowledge of history are very good.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are keen to learn in lessons and are sensible and polite at breaks and lunchtimes. They say that they feel safe.
- Governors and leaders use resources well to make sure that those known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress and that mathematics teaching has improved in Years 5 and 6. Necessary improvements are underway to the accommodation for the Reception class.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons and other activities for shorter periods of time. Five lessons and activities were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at work in their books.
- The inspectors met with groups of staff and pupils and with the Chair of the Governing Body.
- The inspectors took account of 38 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). They also spoke to a number of parents and grandparents.
- The inspectors observed the academy's work. They looked at the academy's information about pupils' progress, documents relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding and the academy's analysis of how well it is doing and its plans for further improvement.

Inspection team

Liz Godman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Matthews	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is of a similar size to other primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and the children of military personnel) is broadly average.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. These special educational needs include learning and behavioural difficulties and autistic spectrum conditions.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Castle Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2012. When its predecessor school, Conisbrough Station Road Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school works in an informal partnership with Darfield Upperwood Primary School in Barnsley.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to increase the rate of pupils' progress over time, by:
 - making sure that pupils of all abilities are given work which takes into account what they already know and can do and which allows them to make rapid progress
 - making sure that pupils always complete a good amount of work
 - ensuring that pupils know how to improve their work and that they are given time to respond to the teacher's written comments by correcting and improving their work
 - guiding teaching assistants to give pupils the help they need to make progress.
- Improve the use of information about how well pupils are doing in order to increase the rate of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups by:
 - using the information gathered from the checks on pupils' progress, including that contained in the individual plans for pupils with special educational needs, to provide additional help swiftly to those not making the progress they should
 - changing the additional help provided when it is not helping to improve pupils' progress
 - increasing the use of activities which are proving effective.
- Ensure that leaders bring about the necessary improvements to pupils' progress by:
 - holding teachers and teaching assistants to account for the progress of pupils in their classes and groups
 - sharing the examples of good teaching and effective use of information about pupils' progress to increase the progress of all pupils in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because their progress in reading, writing and mathematics has varied too much since the start of this school year.
- Children join the Reception class with skills that are below those typical for their age. They make a good start in reading, writing and mathematics so that by the end of Reception they have skills similar to or above those typical for their age.
- In 2013, pupils in Year 1 made good progress in learning about letters and the sounds they make. The proportion who could read the expected number of sounds in the Year 1 national screening check in 2013 was similar to the national level. Pupils currently in Year 1 are starting to use their knowledge of letters and sounds to write words correctly.
- However, pupils' progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 to 4 is uneven. For example, progress in reading is good in Years 2 and 3, while progress in writing is weaker in these years and in Year 4.
- In the 2013 national tests for pupils in Year 6, attainment in writing was broadly similar to the national average. Attainment was below average in reading and mathematics. This was most marked in mathematics.
- The progress in mathematics of pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 is better than expected. By the end of this school year pupils in the current Year 6 are expected to reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are broadly similar to the 2013 national average. However, progress in mathematics in other year groups remains uneven.
- Many, but not all, pupils make good progress in learning to read as a result of actions taken to develop their reading skills. The progress of many pupils in reading is helped by the large numbers of parents and grandparents who regularly listen to pupils read at home and at the academy. Year 6 pupils are fluent and confident readers and enjoy a variety of books.
- In Year 6 in 2013, pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, reached levels in reading, writing and mathematics that were slightly higher than those attained by other pupils. Pupils currently known to be eligible for the pupil premium make expected or better progress. This is the result of steps taken following careful checks as to how well these pupils are doing.
- Regular checks made on the progress of all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics show that some pupils in all classes at Key Stage 2 are not making the progress they should. This includes some of those with special educational needs and some of the most able pupils.
- The progress of these pupils requires improvement because they have had no extra help or ineffective help. Sometimes in lessons, pupils with special educational needs do not make enough progress because the work they are given is too difficult.
- The progress of the most able pupils is similar to other pupils. It slows down at times because they spend too long going over things they already know and can do and do not move on to harder work. Similarly, in some lessons, they do not complete enough written work. As a result, the overall promotion of equality of opportunity is not fully effective.
- However, there are examples, where pupils use their writing skills well in the different subjects, for example, when writing about different events in history.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is not ensuring pupils' consistently good or better progress over time.
- Although activities are planned well and organised so that pupils know what is expected of them they are not always sufficiently challenging and time is not used consistently effectively. Tasks do not always ensure that the most able pupils do work that is hard enough and they go over

work they already know and can do. Similarly, the less able pupils are given work which they find too hard.

- There are also times when pupils are not expected to start work quickly, so that the most able pupils, in particular, do not complete as much written work as they could.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and they usually make written comments so that pupils know how to improve their work. However, pupils' work indicates that pupils do not always respond to the teacher's comments by correcting and improving their work. Sometimes this is because the work set has moved to a new theme.
- When given clear direction, teaching assistants provide good help to the pupils they are supporting, both in lessons and when working in small groups. However, at other times, the support provided is less effective because the teaching assistant does not have a clear role or does not follow the guidance provided in the individual plans for pupils with special educational needs.
- Regular checks are made on pupils' progress. These show that some pupils have made very little progress since the start of the school year in particular classes in Key Stage 2, but that little has been done to rectify this. For some of these pupils too much time has been lost before giving them the help they need. Others have had additional help, for example, in mathematics, but this has not increased their progress.
- However, good teaching and carefully planned additional help has ensured the good progress in mathematics of pupils in Years 5 and 6. Teaching in a small group for Year 6 pupils who find the subject difficult is increasing their progress and building their confidence. However, this good small group provision is not happening elsewhere.
- Teaching is consistently good in the Reception class and results in children's good progress. Every opportunity is taken to develop children's reading and writing skills, for example, when the teacher is reading a book with the class, the children use their knowledge of letters and sounds to work out what the words say and some are able to write simple sentences accurately.
- Teachers encourage pupils' enthusiasm for learning by choosing topics which engage their interest. This is most marked in history, where pupils were keen to find out about life in Roman and Viking times in Years 3 and 4. Art is also taught well and results in good drawings and paintings by pupils of all ages.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They listen well to the teacher and to one another in lessons. They take great pride in their work which is usually presented well with neat and careful illustrations and often with carefully typed or handwritten text.
- Pupils are polite and respectful to one another and to adults. For example, they were calm and well behaved when reading to their parents and grandparents in the hall at the start of the day.
- Pupils with special educational needs, such as behavioural difficulties or autistic spectrum conditions, make good progress in learning to manage their own behaviour, so that lessons and learning proceed without disruption.
- Pupils behave well at playtimes and at lunchtime. They get on well together and take good care of the academy's buildings and the outdoor areas.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Attendance is above average and pupils arrive punctually at the start of the day. Many, including those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, come to school early in the morning and enjoy breakfast before they start work.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in the academy and almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agree. Pupils have a secure understanding of how to stay safe, for example, when using the internet because of the academy's teaching about this.
- Pupils say that there is occasional bullying or name-calling. They know who to go to for help

should any bullying occur and are confident that it is dealt with effectively.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders have not acted swiftly enough to make sure that teaching results in the good progress of all pupils in all year groups.
- Although leaders make regular and accurate checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics, they have not made good use of the extensive information collected to improve the progress of all pupils.
- The checks show that some pupils in all classes, particularly in Years 1 to 4, have not made enough progress since the start of this school year. Some have received additional help which has not proved effective in improving their progress, while others have had no extra help. Leaders have not held the staff to account sufficiently for this lack of progress.
- There are exceptions to this. For example, information from the detailed analysis of the progress and attainment of those known to be eligible for the pupil premium has been used to ensure the good progress of these pupils.
- There are good individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs, but regular checks are not made as to how well teachers and teaching assistants use these plans.
- There are examples in Years 5 and 6 of useful information collected about what pupils know and can do. This is used well to secure good progress. However, this good practice is not shared widely enough with all staff to develop consistently good teaching.
- All teachers have a role in leading the academy's work in the different subjects and they approach this with enthusiasm. Some recently qualified teachers are paired with more experienced staff so that they can develop their subject leadership skills. For example, one teacher works alongside the deputy headteacher in leading the academy's work in English.
- Teachers have suitable targets to meet related to pupils' progress and to subject leadership. They receive the training necessary to help them to meet these targets, although pupils' current progress indicates that there is some ground to make up if these targets are to be met.
- The academy's partnership work with another academy has helped to improve teaching and progress in mathematics.
- The academy provides pupils with varied and interesting activities, for example, to develop their knowledge of life in other countries and of history, art and music. The academy also ensures that pupils work well together and think about the needs of others.
- The academy has a good relationship with parents and with pupils' wider families. Parents who spoke with the inspectors said that they were happy with all aspects of the academy's work. Support for the academy is evident in the large number of family members who give regular help with reading both at school and at home. However, a number of parents who replied to the questionnaire did say that they do not receive enough information about their child's progress.
- Leaders make good use of the primary school sport funding to provide a varied programme of activities to develop pupils' fitness. The academy also purchases time from sports coaches who provide training for teachers as well as working with the pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body, which was formed at the time of conversion to academy status, has organised itself to hold the academy's leaders to account. Governors recognise that aspects of the academy's work are not as good as they should be. They make sure that all safeguarding requirements are met. The governing body has ensured that financial resources are used well to bring about improvements for the pupils. This has resulted in good use of the primary school sport funding, the improvements in mathematics teaching in Years 5 and 6, the good provision and progress of those known to be eligible for the pupil premium and the new accommodation for the Reception class. Governors ensure that only good teaching is rewarded. The governing body is well placed to provide further challenge to the academy's leaders in relation to pupils' progress.

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	138703
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	443810

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Hoyland
Principal	Simon Martin
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01709 513010
Fax number	01709 513561
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