

# Caston Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

The Street, Caston, Attleborough, NR17 1DD

**Inspection dates** 8–9 May 2014

|                                |                      |                      |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Requires improvement | 3        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Inadequate</b>    | <b>4</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Inadequate           | 4        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Inadequate           | 4        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Inadequate           | 4        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Inadequate           | 4        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures

- Over the last few years, pupils in the school have not reached the levels they should by the age of 11.
- Pupils' progress varies too much from year-to-year because teaching is inconsistent and over time it has not been good enough to raise standards.
- Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding are falling further behind their peers.
- Many pupils show little interest in learning because teachers find it difficult to enthuse them.
- The presentation of work in pupils' books is poor and shows little pride.
- The use of information about pupils' progress is hampered because of concerns about its accuracy.
- A small number of pupils do not behave well in lessons and disrupt learning.
- A number of teachers are temporary or new, so there is little of the continuity needed for improvements to become embedded.
- Governors have not challenged the school about the standards and progress of pupils.
- The leadership structure leaves the part-time acting headteacher with too much to do.
- The rate of improvement since the previous inspection is too slow.
- The recommendations of the review of governance carried out since the previous inspection have not been fully implemented.

### The school has the following strengths

- Staff have rallied around the part-time acting headteacher's unwavering determination to improve the school.
- Parents spoken to feel the school is improving.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is good.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector sampled parts of six lessons. All but one were jointly observed with the acting headteacher.
- The inspector made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' workbooks and listened to pupils reading.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the acting headteacher, other staff, governors, parents and with representatives of the local authority and diocese.
- The inspector took account of the 11 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and other direct communications from parents. The responses to nine staff questionnaires were also considered.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents including: the school's own information on pupils' progress; planning and monitoring documentation; the school's view of its own performance; records of how the school uses its funding, especially how the money from the pupil premium is spent; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.*

### Information about this school

- This is a much smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (the extra government funding for pupils looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is high.
- Pupils are taught in two classes. Reception children are taught with Years 1 and 2. In the morning, Years 3 and 4 are taught as one group, Years 5 and 6 as another; generally this is when English and mathematics are taught. Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 are taught together in the afternoon.
- The acting headteacher joined the school in September 2013. She is part-time, working three days a week. On the other two days, the school is led by the special educational needs coordinator who also teaches the Reception/Years 1 and 2 class.
- All teachers in school during the inspection are new this academic year.
- An independently run 'mothers and toddlers' group meets at the school two mornings a week.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to raise achievement by:
  - consistently implementing the school's policy for behaviour, and insisting on high standards of conduct at all times from all pupils
  - making sure each new development is fully understood by staff and pupils so that it is implemented effectively
  - teaching challenging lessons that enable pupils to move forward more rapidly in their learning
  - ensuring additional pupil premium funding is used effectively so that these pupils make quicker progress and close the achievement gap between themselves and other pupils
  - adopting methods that ensure pupils concentrate, work hard and learn well
  - closing gaps in pupils' numeracy skills
  - implementing a handwriting policy that is consistently followed to raise standards
  - ensuring teaching assistants have the knowledge and skills to effectively undertake the tasks they are given and so make a stronger contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils' need to improve their behaviour and attitudes to learning by:
  - showing resilience and perseverance when faced with unfamiliar or difficult work
  - taking pride in the presentation of their work.
- Strengthen leadership and management by making sure that:

- areas for improvement from the previous inspection are quickly and fully implemented, particularly that governors closely monitor and sufficiently challenge the work of the school
- the recommendations of the review of governance are fully implemented and governors adhere to time frames for actions
- a leadership and management structure is created, for both school and subject leadership, that is fit for purpose and enables and supports rapid school improvement
- information about the progress of pupils and work of the school is accurate so that analysis can properly support pupil progress and improvement.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Over the last few years, the vast majority of pupils, particularly the more-able and those eligible for the pupil premium, have not reached the levels they should because the progress they have made year-on-year has varied too much. This is largely due to the lack of continuity and consistency in teaching.
- Many year groups are small so each year's results need to be treated with caution. However, over several years in the national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' levels have been below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding are making less progress in English and mathematics than their classmates. As a result, they are falling further behind and the gap between them and pupils nationally is widening.
- More-able pupils learn with those of similar ability rather than age, so these pupils are currently making good progress. However, this is a very recent improvement and those with particular gifts and talents are not systematically identified and given appropriate provision.
- The acting headteacher has introduced many improvements. For example, mathematics now benefits from a clear calculations policy, but teachers are finding many pupils have gaps in their learning.
- Reading standards are improving because of a more coherent approach to teaching literacy skills, including how letters link to the sounds they make (phonics). In the 2013 Year 1 phonics screening check, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was broadly average.
- Improvements in writing are slower. Older pupils particularly show a lack of resilience and give up too easily, particularly when challenged to make the small improvements that will raise the level of their work.
- Children enter Reception with very variable skills and experiences that are broadly as expected for their age. The school has worked closely with the diocese and local authority to improve provision recently; it is now good. As a result, these children have a good balance of interesting activities and learn well. In 2013, about half reached a good level of development.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs currently make better progress because information about their progress is closely tracked to see they do not fall behind and to ensure they have support targeted in the right areas.

### The quality of teaching

### is inadequate

- Over time, the quality of teaching has been not been good enough to enable pupils to make the progress they should. Pupils have not received the help and guidance they need to make good progress because their learning has frequently been interrupted by changes of teacher who have received little information about what the pupils know and can already do. Consequently, the work the pupils have been set has often not been at a suitable level for them.
- All of the staff are new this academic year and most are temporary. Until very recently, teachers

have not been given the leadership needed to establish high expectations and have tended to do whatever they have found effective elsewhere. Each change of teacher has brought different expectations which, in many cases, have not been high enough. As a result, many books are untidy and work poorly presented. Handwriting is not developed systematically so it is of a low standard. Some of the eldest pupils do not join letters nor is their writing a consistent size.

- A legacy of the constantly changing personnel is that teachers now find it far more difficult to motivate and enthuse pupils because many of them show little interest in learning. This is compounded by the variable quality of the support provided by teaching assistants. When trained well, such as in working with the youngest children or in how to lead guided reading, they make a positive impact. Elsewhere, such as when teaching phonics, they do not help the pupils to make progress because they have received insufficient training and guidance.
- Very recent changes are beginning to help the pupils to know what to expect from staff, and what staff expect from them. For example, all lessons now start with an explanation of what pupils will learn and how they will know they have succeeded. Pupils say they like this approach, but its impact is yet to markedly increase their progress.
- Too many changes sometimes lead to one improvement being introduced before the last has been fully implemented by staff and understood by pupils. For example, a new approach to building pupils' skills and confidence for learning has had little impact because it is rarely mentioned by staff who are concentrating on newer changes. Pupils spoken to had little understanding, or were confused, by some of these changes.
- A recent development, which has brought improvement, is that outcomes from one lesson are now used to modify the plans for the next, and teachers often refer back to earlier learning to put what pupils are about to learn into context. The impact of this is evident in recent increases in the rate of progress made by more-able pupils.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate**

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. Although most pupils conduct themselves well, some do not behave well in lessons and the attitudes to learning of a significant number of pupils are poor.
- The new behaviour policy is clear, teachers use it consistently and pupils' response is increasingly positive. However, the reaction of teaching assistants sometimes exacerbates the pupil's poor behaviour and the situation escalates.
- A small proportion of pupils, largely but not exclusively boys, struggle at times to behave well and this has an impact on their learning and that of others. Teaching assistants sometimes step in to help the pupil make the right choice and enable the teacher and class to continue with their learning, but this is inconsistent and not always effective.
- Pupils say that some of their classmates become frustrated and angry when they do not understand their learning straight away. They do not understand that they need to persevere, seek help and try again.
- Most pupils are very understanding and tolerant of others; they socialise and behave well during break and lunch times. One described the school as 'my second family.' A parent described how her child is 'a different person' since she has moved to Caston because of the care and support

she receives.

- Staff recognise that changing the learning culture of the school is fundamental to better progress and standards. Staff now talk to pupils of 'learning' rather than 'doing'.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know, for example, how to stay safe when using the internet. They say they feel safe and well looked after at school.
- The acting headteacher and staff have made improving attendance a strong focus. For example, current data is displayed near the school entrance. As a result, it is now a little above average.
- Pupils say they like playing a role in the life of their school, and that their views are listened to. For example, they organised a successful event to raise money for play equipment.

### **The leadership and management are inadequate**

- Leadership and management are inadequate because several areas for improvement from the previous inspection remain unresolved. In addition, the recommendations of a recent independent review of governance have not been fully implemented. The present management structure does not support the school to provide a high quality education for its pupils. While data is now used to try to improve achievement, questions remain about its accuracy and therefore its usefulness.
- School improvement lacked a sense of urgency until the appointment of the acting headteacher. She has re-written the school's self evaluation and development plan so both provide a clear pathway for improvement. She has galvanised the school community so that these improvements have now begun.
- The staffing structure is not fit for purpose. The part-time acting headteacher is swamped with important and urgent changes that need to be implemented. Although staff are fully supportive, too much falls on the shoulders of too few. The English subject leader has made important changes and produced an excellent action plan which has recently begun to bring changes to teaching and learning, but this is the exception not the rule.
- Training has little impact because teachers change so frequently. A new approach to the curriculum, for example, has begun without staff training because it is unlikely that staffing next term will remain the same.
- Many good opportunities supplement the curriculum. All pupils over seven learn to play a musical instrument. Visitors and visits, including residential, widen pupils' experiences. Clubs are popular, many and varied, so pupils' artistic, music and sporting skills are enhanced.
- Pupil premium funding is used predominantly to enable eligible pupils to participate in activities that would require their parents to pay. However, until recently, there has been no analysis of their learning needs to provide additional help to overcome these.
- The acting headteacher has put a good action plan in place to ensure additional sports funding is used effectively. Pupils benefit from specialist coaching.
- The school works closely with parents who remain positive about their children's schooling. They describe the acting headteacher as 'approachable' and like the changes she has made, especially

how she has re-organised the school day so time is not wasted and learning gets off to a brisk, more focussed start each morning.

- The partnership with local schools is good. For example, staff moderate pupils' work together, but this is insufficient to ensure accuracy of data.
- The diocese and local authority give the school advice, for example, through the school improvement board. The diocese and local authority helped greatly with improvements in the Reception class. However, neither was successful in supporting or challenging the school to halt its decline into inadequacy.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Within the governing body, too much relies upon a small number of governors, most particularly the Chair. While this was recognised in the review, little change has taken place to redress this. Governors in the review recognised the importance of training and the need for many to better understand important aspects of education such as pupil premium funding, but little has been done. They agreed to undertake regular learning walks, but only the Chair and Vice Chair have done so. Governors are given much more detailed information since the appointment of the acting headteacher, but many are not in a position to use it constructively. Until the arrival of the acting headteacher, the school did not have a policy linking staff pay to performance, nor a clear understanding of how underperformance would be tackled. Systems to ensure safeguarding are fully in place.



## 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

|                                |         |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 121111  |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Norfolk |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 442102  |

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

|  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                      |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary aided              |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–11                         |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                        |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 57                           |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body           |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Sue Lee                      |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Victoria Norris              |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 15 January 2013              |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01953 483304                 |
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