

Castle Primary School

Castle Street, Porchester, Fareham, PO16 9QQ

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2014

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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils of all abilities make at least good progress throughout the school. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, their attainment is above average, representing good achievement.
- Children make an excellent start to their learning in the Reception classes. They respond extremely well to the stimulating activities provided for them.
- The quality of teaching is typically good, and some is outstanding, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding, because staff are diligent in sustaining high quality care for the pupils.
- Pupils share very warm relationships with adults and behave well. Pupils participate fully in the wide range of learning activities provided for them, many of which are practically based. This rich variety of opportunity strongly promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents share very positive links with staff, encourage their children to value and enjoy school and help to sustain high levels of pupils' attendance.
- The headteacher provides the school with clear direction. He is well supported by senior colleagues and governors. They share a full involvement in all aspects of school life and are strongly committed to further improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is improving, but not enough is yet outstanding.
- Pupils achieve well overall, but not all pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils' ability to write creatively and with reflection, including across the range of subjects, is not always promoted well enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 20 lessons. They were accompanied by the headteacher and deputy headteacher for some of these observations.
- Inspectors observed morning and lunch breaks and also observed a school assembly.
- Two meetings were held with representative groups of pupils, and many other pupils were spoken to during lessons and breaktimes.
- Inspectors also met with governors, and the lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of 59 parents' responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and undertaking the inspection. The inspectors also spoke informally with a number of parents as they brought and collected their children from school.
- Meetings were held with school staff, including senior leaders, and 21 staff questionnaires were received and considered.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's own information on pupils' progress and planning, and leaders' checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspectors also examined records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding policy, procedures and practice. They also considered the school's sports premium action plan.

Inspection team

Alex Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kusum Trikha

Additional Inspector

Ken Bryan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is a well above average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average, but significantly higher in some year groups.
- A below average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after.
- In some year groups, the small number of pupils supported by the pupil premium also includes a high proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by ensuring that teachers:
 - focus more on providing learning opportunities for the pupils that stimulate their interest and widen their experience
 - improve the rate of pupils' progress, particularly in writing, through enabling them to write more imaginatively and reflectively across the full range of subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average in English and mathematics and represents good achievement over time. Across the school, observations of pupils' learning in class and inspection of their work in books show that these above-average standards are being maintained.
- All groups of pupils make good progress throughout the school. This includes disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, as well as the more able pupils.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because some pupils are capable of making even better progress. Pupils' writing skills, especially their ability to write imaginatively, are not yet high enough. Even so, checks show an increasing number of Year 6 pupils on course to attain the higher National Curriculum levels this year in writing as well as reading and mathematics.
- Children who join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage generally have skills that are close to those normally expected for their age. Often, however, their skills are below expectations in aspects of language and literacy. They consequently thrive in an extremely well-organised early years learning environment, and make outstanding progress across all areas of learning.
- Pupils supported by additional funding, including several arriving from other schools, progress as well as other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because early checks on these pupils' skills enable staff to build on previous learning and quicken their progress.
- Gaps in attainment between pupils receiving additional funding and other pupils are quickly closing. Currently the gaps represent about half a term's progress in English and about one term's progress in mathematics. In some year groups, currently in Year 6, for example, a large proportion of pupils supported by additional funding also have profound special educational needs. Although comparisons with the attainment of other pupils are not meaningful, it is clear that they make equally good progress in their learning.
- Pupils' good progress in reading is evident in their improving performance in the national checks made in phonics (letters and the sounds they make). The pupils' interest and their developing reading skills are also seen in lessons, where their confident use of books and computers aids their learning. The school's close links with parents, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage, also support pupils' good progress by encouraging parents to listen to their children reading at home.
- By the time they leave the school, pupils are well equipped with the skills needed to read for enjoyment and to support their learning across the range of subjects.

The quality of teaching is good

- Over time, the pupils' good achievement reflects good and improving teaching. Teachers' effective checking of pupils' developing skills has strengthened pupils' learning by building on their previous knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils supported by additional funding often use computers effectively to extend their phonic understanding to blend letter sounds and write new words accurately.
- All pupils develop self-confidence in learning as they move through the school. This often stems from the way staff develop excellent relationships with the pupils and promote their joy in learning. These features typify the children's excellent learning. This could be seen in Reception, where they develop their early literacy skills successfully, for example by writing about how to become a police officer or a princess during role play in 'The Den'.
- All staff are highly committed to including all pupils fully in all aspects of school life, and teaching assistants support pupils well. Adults provide outstanding assistance to those with profound disabilities, enabling them to achieve as well as other pupils.
- Pupils feel secure and recognise that their teachers know them well and value their opinions. As

a result, they engage confidently in discussions and work hard in class.

- Teachers plan interesting lessons and pose thought-provoking questions to motivate pupils. Their learning in mathematics, in particular, has improved because pupils share ideas and challenge each other when solving problems. For example, pupils in Year 6 learned well by discussing profit and loss and investigating whether 'special offers' were best for the customer or the retailer.
- Pupils' mathematical skills are also often developed well in support of learning in other subjects. This was seen, for example, in Year 3 when pupils explored the shapes and angles to be found in a variety of national World Cup flags. At times, though, pupils' writing skills across the breadth of subjects are not developed consistently or well enough.
- Teachers have high expectations, for example placing a strong emphasis on developing pupils' grammar and punctuation skills. This was evident in the pupils' above average performance in the national grammar test introduced at the end of Year 6 last year. However, writing creatively is not always given enough emphasis, hindering some pupils, including some with most ability, from achieving at the highest levels.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically of the wide range of physical education and sporting opportunities provided for them. They appreciate the way staff support them and encourage everyone to participate and 'get fit and healthy'. Pupils also highlight other activities such as trips and residential visits that extend their cultural understanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Most pupils behave extremely well, especially when out of class, during assemblies, and during break times in the school's spacious grounds. Pupils enjoy coming to school, as reflected in their high levels of attendance.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning, especially when sharing their ideas, support their improving progress. At times, a few pupils are too reliant on adult support and need reminders to sustain full involvement in learning when adults are with other pupils.
- Pupils share very supportive relationships with each other and with adults. They show a good understanding of how behaviour contributes to school life. For example, they talk knowledgeably about the school's 'Rights, Respect and Responsibility' project and how it helps them to respect and value each other and other cultures. School records show that there have been no exclusions in recent years.
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about memorable performances such as *Cinderella Rockerfella* and *Bugsy Malone*. They specifically highlight how everyone is involved and that pupils with disabilities also play a full and respected part.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say that they feel very safe, 'because teachers talk to us about how to stay safe and deal with problems'.
- Pupils are informed about cyber bullying, for example, through posters and an 'e-safety' assembly. Pupils say that bullying is rare at school and that should any misbehaviour occur, then staff would swiftly deal with it. The large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire and all those interviewed by inspectors fully support these views.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and sets a clear ambition to drive improvement and raise standards. He is effectively supported by senior colleagues and by a well-organised and industrious governing body, indicating clear capacity to improve further.
- The headteacher has worked purposefully since the previous inspection to move the school forward. He has strengthened the systems for checking pupils' progress, and this development continues to be a key part in the school's increasingly successful drive to raise standards. As a

result, actions taken have improved pupils' reading and their progress in mathematics.

- Leaders and managers give safeguarding procedures the highest priority; for example, staff are vetted very thoroughly to ensure that pupils are kept safe. All staff are fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity and do not tolerate discrimination.
- Leaders and managers also undertake regular observations of teaching and learning and frequently scrutinise pupils' work. They discuss their findings with colleagues and with governors and together they form an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Leadership and management are not outstanding because middle leadership is developing during a period of staff change and pupils' progress in writing is not yet strong enough.
- The wide range of learning activities provided by the school makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Activities such as the 'India Project' raise pupils' awareness of other cultures and help to prepare them well for their future education.
- The school's provision of sport is a particularly strong feature with, for example, bicycle riding and sailing enhancing their ability to stay safe in different situations. The school uses the new sports funding very effectively to improve teachers' skills and extend sports opportunities for the pupils. By using specialist coaches through a sports partnership, the school has improved teaching and pupils' skills, for example in gymnastics, golf and dancing.
- The school continues to check the impact of this provision and has already noted that there has been a 30% increase in the number of pupils participating in clubs.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors play an active role in the day-to-day life of the school. They support events and contribute to the school's strong links with parents. Governors are well organised, meet regularly and, through their sub-committees, diligently fulfil their statutory obligations, especially in respect of safeguarding procedures. They make regular visits to the school to ensure that their understanding of the work of the school is up to date and accurate. Governors know how the performance of pupils compares with that seen in other schools nationally, and scrutinise the headteacher's detailed reports of pupils' achievement carefully against published data. They also check that pupils supported by additional funding achieve as well as other pupils. Governors question the headteacher closely and check that priorities of the school development plan and considerations of teachers' pay are linked to pupils' progress. They know about the steps being taken to improve teaching. By these means, governors have a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development and hold senior leaders and staff to account.

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	116083
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	443884

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	409
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marie Leonard
Headteacher	Justin Bartlett
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 January 2011
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