

# Castlemorton CofE Primary School

Church Road, Castlemorton, Malvern, WR13 6BG

## Inspection dates

9–10 December 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' attainment and progress have weakened since the last inspection. Recent improvements are beginning to address key areas of under-performance but there is still much to do.
- Pupils' achievement has not been high enough over time. In 2014, the proportions of pupils making expected progress in reading and mathematics were below those found nationally.
- Teaching requires improvement. Teaching has not always been of a good quality over time. As a result, rates of progress have been too variable.
- Teachers do not always provide pupils, especially the most able, with activities that challenge them consistently.
- Teachers do not always provide pupils with meaningful targets that help to accelerate learning and guide pupils in how to improve their work.
- Teachers' marking, though improving recently, has not always provided pupils with clear feedback on their learning or what they can do to advance to the next level.
- Pupils are not clear about how well they are doing and are not always given enough opportunity to respond to teachers' marking and feedback.
- Taking into account their starting points, over time, not enough children in the Reception class have made sufficient progress to achieve a good level of development.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher's resolute and sensitive leadership has steered the school successfully through some troubled waters since the last inspection.
- Current levels of progress in reading, writing and mathematics are improving steadily as a result of stronger subject leadership and effective training.
- Levels of progress in writing are now higher than those seen nationally. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection.
- As a result of effective leadership and good teaching, achievement in science is good.
- Pupils enjoy school, behave well and feel safe and well looked after.
- Governors have effectively supported the headteacher in dealing with significant staffing turbulence in recent times. They know the school well and are skilful in checking on its work.
- The very large majority of parents and carers hold the school in high regard.
- This is an improving school that is successfully building the capacity to move to good.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons or part-lessons, two of which were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a group of older pupils, a group of governors, the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority, as well as with staff, including senior leaders, all class teachers and those in charge of subjects.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books, including some from the previous school year, and listened to pupils read. They also spoke to pupils in lessons about their learning, as well as informally, in and around the school. Inspectors also observed pupils around the school at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors took account of parental communications with them and 49 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The results of the school's own survey of parents' views, undertaken in the spring term of 2014, were also studied. This involved 28 responses. Inspectors spoke to a small number of parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents including information about pupils' achievement, records of their attendance and behaviour, documents related to safeguarding and school plans for improvement.
- As part of a pilot study, science was inspected by a specialist inspector.

## Inspection team

Gordon Ewing, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Brian Cartwright

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Castlemorton is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium varies considerably from year to year. Currently, about one in eight pupils are eligible for this funding. This is lower than average. The pupil premium is the additional funding provided by the government to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, at nearly one in four, is above average.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- There have been significant staff changes since April 2014, involving the appointment of all new class teachers from the Reception class to Year 6. The headteacher is the only member of the teaching staff to have been in post since the last inspection.
- Children attend the Reception class on a full-time basis.
- Independently run childcare operates on the school site. It is inspected separately, so was not included in this inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and so accelerate further the good progress seen recently across the school by:
  - making greater use in the Reception class of children's learning journeys to show the progress they are making and involve parents in the process whenever possible
  - increasing levels of challenge for all pupils, especially for the most able
  - setting pupils clear and focused learning targets, thereby raising expectations and boosting pupils' understanding of how to improve
  - implementing the school's marking policy consistently and sharing existing good practice so that all pupils benefit from meaningful advice and guidance on how to advance their learning
  - ensuring that pupils act on the guidance given to them by teachers in their marking and other feedback in order to improve their work and raise their attainment.
- Improve pupils' progress and raise levels of attainment in reading and mathematics, to at least those levels seen in writing, by:
  - supporting and developing subject leaders so that they play an effective role in driving up standards and accelerating progress for all pupils
  - making sure that subject leaders are equipped with the skills and opportunities to monitor achievement in their subjects and to share the best practice
  - taking swift action to improve teaching which is less than good.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- There is no doubt that the significant turbulence in staffing, resulting in the appointment of all new class teachers since April 2014, presented enormous challenges to the headteacher and governors. The fact that the very large majority of parents and carers hold the school in high regard and there has been no exodus of pupils is a reflection of the strong leadership of the headteacher. One parent commented, 'I am in awe of the headteacher's leadership and determination.'
- Strong leadership has been exercised by school leaders in addressing a legacy of mediocre achievement since the last inspection. The resulting turbulence in staffing has provided the opportunity for a clean sweep in resolving the variability in the quality of teaching. This is beginning to pay dividends in the form of better outcomes for pupils though there is more to do in establishing a consistent track record of improvement over time.
- The headteacher's monitoring of teaching and learning is thorough and astute. New subject leaders are beginning to take on responsibility for checking on teaching and learning in their subject. They have been well supported through training and guidance from the headteacher and the local authority. The school is aware that subject leaders need to develop their skills further with opportunities to be involved in school self-evaluation and improvement.
- The school's performance management systems are robust and focused. There is a close link between teachers' past performance and salary progression. Targets set to improve teachers' performance are closely linked to outcomes for pupils and to whole-school priorities set out in the detailed school development plan. Teachers report that they are provided with regular and focused training that is starting to have an impact on their daily work.
- Planning of the curriculum follows a precise two-year cycle and is thorough and detailed. It places a priority on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills without reducing the quality of provision in other subjects. A determined and effective focus on improving pupils' writing across the curriculum has had clear impact and is a strength of the school's work. The school effectively ensures that provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of all its work. Consequently, the curriculum is well balanced and effectively prepare pupils for life in modern Britain and sensitively reinforces British values.
- Past and present leadership in science has been effective in sustaining a high subject profile across the school. Frequent monitoring has ensured that attainment is broadly average overall with a significant proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels.
- Additional funding to boost the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. As a result, their academic and personal development is strengthening and, currently, they achieve at similar levels to their peers. Extra funding to develop sports and physical education is used well. The employment of specialist teachers is increasing pupils' access to physical education and providing additional training for class teachers.
- The school continues to receive good support from the local authority in driving up standards and in building capacity to improve further.
- Good links with parents and carers, for example through the Parents' Forum, have helped to reassure parents during difficult times and to provide opportunities for them to contribute to the development of the school. One parent commented, 'The headteacher and staff are approachable and are always ready to listen.'
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is playing an increasingly focused role in the leadership of the school. They bring to the school a range of relevant skills and expertise that help them in holding the leadership to account

for pupils' achievement; for example, they understand what the school's data say about pupils' performance. Their close involvement in the appointment of the new teaching staff has helped to shape the future direction of improvement and to establish strong links with subject leaders. They know the school, its staff and pupils really well and are not shy in asking astute questions about the achievement of every pupil. In tracking the impact of the school development plan, they have undertaken focused visits, for example, in checking on pupils' behaviour for learning and undertaking a study of pupils' books to gauge the impact of teachers' marking. They have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching. All safeguarding requirements are met; governors are committed to ensuring that pupils and staff are kept safe at school. Governors ensure that equal opportunities and eliminating any form of discrimination are high priorities. They rigorously ensure that pay and promotion are precisely tied to teachers' performance. Governors are closely involved in the decisions regarding the deployment of funds to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. That said, in their annual report to parents on the impact of this funding, in ensuring that no individual pupil is identified, their evaluation of this impact is too generalised and rather descriptive.

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

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' polite, courteous and considerate behaviour ensures that everyone enjoys working and living in a harmonious community.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and any form of disruption to lessons is rare. Where it happens it is normally nipped in the bud swiftly. Where learning activities are not sufficiently challenging, pupils' focus is sometimes lost and progress diminishes. This is particular so for the most able pupils, who sometimes finish tasks quickly and wait too long for additional challenges. Their good attitudes to learning, however, ensure that any distraction does not lead to disruptive behaviour.
- Pupils eagerly undertake team responsibilities around the school. For example, taking the lead as school councillors, gardeners and eco warriors ensures that all pupils contribute positively to school life.
- Pupils have a good understanding of other cultures and faiths and, through visits to different places of worship and engaging with visitors from as far afield as China and Gambia, they have a good understanding of their place in multicultural Britain and the wider world.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are robust and effective. Statutory requirements are fully met.
- Pupils' above average attendance reflects their enjoyment of school. They feel safe and valued as members of the school community.
- Any form of bullying or exclusion from school is extremely rare. Pupils confidently report that any concerns they may have are promptly and sensitively dealt with by all adults in the school. They have a good understanding of various types of bullying and can explain what they would do if approached by a stranger or were suspicious of cyber bullying.
- Out of the 49 Parent View responses, a few parents expressed concern over how the school deals with bullying. Every pupil asked about bullying was adamant that it was almost non-existent and the school's records support this.

**The quality of teaching****requires improvement**

- Teaching has not been consistently effective over time to ensure that all pupils make good progress. This was particularly so in reading and mathematics. Improvements in the teaching of writing have increased pupils' attainment in 2014 to just above the national average and every pupil made at least expected progress. These improvements in writing are beginning to boost learning in other areas.
- New staff have rapidly gained good knowledge of each pupil's attainment and progress. As a result, current pupils' achievement is strengthening steadily. Within this positive picture overall, inconsistencies remain. For example, teachers' marking, while regular and positive, does not always provide pupils with meaningful feedback on their learning and how they can move forward swiftly. On the occasions when good feedback is provided, teachers do not always make sure that pupils act on the advice.
- Tasks are not always geared to ensuring that pupils are challenged consistently. Pupils of different abilities are, at times, given the same activity or worksheets. In these cases, the most able often finish quickly and teachers are sometimes too slow in providing higher-level tasks. As a result, opportunities are missed to accelerate learning and maintain engagement.
- Learning targets set by teachers, and sometimes by pupils themselves, are not always demanding enough or accurately related to pupils' current learning. As a result, pupils do not confidently know or understand how to take the next step or accelerate their own learning.
- In science, learning is more consistent because there is a good mix of experimental investigation coupled with research about a topic. Consequently, pupils develop and exercise higher-level skills of prediction, explanation and evaluation. This was evident in the topic on 'Space' where pupils learned facts about the Solar System and carried out experiments on shadows and gravity.
- The teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds) has been of variable quality over time. This has not been helped by the turbulence in staffing, especially for younger pupils. The teaching of phonics has improved recently so that pupils are growing in confidence in developing important reading skills.
- Most of the teaching assistants have been in post for some time. This has had a positive impact in maintaining continuity and in providing reassurance to parents and pupils. When deployed effectively, teaching assistants play a valuable part in boosting pupils' learning. This was the case in a numeracy lesson on fractions. Pupils' learning was effectively boosted by the teacher and her assistant, who skilfully asked questions to check on and consolidate learning. As a result, every pupil was engaged and showed a growing understanding of halves, quarters and twelfths of different quantities. This good practice is not yet a common feature across the school.

**The achievement of pupils****requires improvement**

- As pupil numbers are relatively small, it is always tricky to make direct comparisons with national averages. That said, since the previous inspection, achievement has been adequate overall, resulting in levels of attainment and progress that have been broadly in line with those seen nationally.
- Positive action, taken by the headteacher and new staff, is beginning to address the legacy of mediocre achievement over time. Pupils are now making accelerated progress but it is not consistently so in all classes. The under-achievement gap is now being addressed so that all learners, including disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and the most able, are making at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. It is still early days, but current rates of progress are testament to the success of the hard work of the headteacher and her staff.
- In 2014, there were too few disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 for their attainment and progress to be commented on without risk of identifying them. Additional funding is being used well so that current pupils eligible for support are making similar levels of progress to their peers. The gaps in their attainment are beginning to close, especially in reading and writing. There is more to do in closing the gaps consistently.

- Pupils' progress in reading is now improving. The proportions that reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check in 2013 were broadly average. This was not the case in 2014 where only half of the pupils reached the expected standard. However, inconsistent staffing was a contributory factor. Currently, the very large majority of Year 1 pupils are on track to meet the expected standard in 2015.
- Over time, the most able pupils have achieved well in science but less consistently in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2014, not all the pupils who had reached Level 3 when in Year 2 gained Level 5 in Year 6 in reading and mathematics. Recent improvements in teaching are beginning to address the legacy of under-performance of the most able but there is more to do to ensure levels of challenge are as high as they can be.

### **The early years provision**

### **requires improvement**

- Children join the Reception class with skills, knowledge and understanding that are broadly typical for their age. However, given the relatively small numbers, their skills vary considerably from year to year. In particular, their writing skills are generally at levels below those typical for their age.
- Overtime, children have not made consistently good progress in all areas of learning. However, the new Early Years leader, ably supported by the headteacher, is working tirelessly to boost levels of achievement. Early indications show that children's learning is accelerating and those who arrive with lower levels of skills are beginning to catch up with their peers. This is particularly so in their reading and writing skills. Consequently, children are developing the skills and attitudes necessary to move to Year 1.
- Teaching is improving but there is still much ground to cover in ensuring that children are challenged throughout each lesson. Some children need considerable support in developing good levels of concentration but more structured teaching, introduced recently, is beginning to pay dividends. Opportunities for children to develop good attitudes to learning through activities in the Forest School are proving effective.
- Adults develop good and long-lasting relationships with children. Children share learning resources well, take turns in group activities and show consideration towards others. Behaviour is good; children learn in a safe environment and parents say that their children feel safe and secure.
- The Early Years teacher is new to the role and profession. While provision and progress in learning are not securely good, she has quickly grasped what needs to be done and her growing understanding of the gaps in provision is already leading to better practice. This was evident in an activity where children were making gingerbread men. Children explored the textures of different ingredients, experimented with simple measuring and accurately cut out shapes. They eagerly talked about the shapes they were making and how much each item would cost. They were fully engaged and their confidence grew visibly as the adults ably questioned them about their learning.
- Children's learning is regularly recorded in special journals. These act as a catalogue of what children have done but are less precise in showing how well they are learning. Furthermore, parents and carers are not yet involved in contributing to these records. Consequently, opportunities to strengthen home-school links are currently under-developed.

## 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>	116791
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	448484

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	98
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Godfrey Pryor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janet Adsett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01684 833282
<b>Email address</b>	office@castlemorton.worcs.sch.uk

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