

# Castle Wood Special School

50 Deedmore Road, Coventry, CV2 1FN

**Inspection dates** 14–15 January 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Castle Wood School has made good improvements since the last inspection, so that it is now outstanding in all areas.
- Outstanding teaching is characterised by lively, creative and imaginative learning. This captures the attention of pupils and results in extremely high levels of engagement by pupils.
- The early years provision is outstanding. Children make excellent rapid progress, in line with their different abilities. Their individual needs are met very effectively by diligent staff and exciting activities.
- Pupils continue to make outstanding progress throughout the school, irrespective of their different learning needs, backgrounds, gender or ethnicity. The wide range of learning needs of pupils is met very effectively.
- An innovative approach has been implemented to offer rich and varied programmes to pupils. This extends the principles of the early years provision across all classes. Planning for this new approach is evolving but is not yet consistent across the school.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. They enjoy visiting places of interest in the local community, residential trips and learning about different cultures.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. They are keen to speak to visitors and take pride in their achievements. They become increasingly more confident, as their needs allow, particularly in developing their communication and independence skills.
- The recording of pupils' progress through the use of learning journeys is excellent. These chart the progress of pupils powerfully, through photographs, in many different areas of learning.
- The leadership and management of the school, including that of the headteacher, are outstanding. Parents hold the school in high regard. One parent stated her child had made progress in 'leaps and bounds' since starting school. Parents are well supported by the school, and partnership working between home and school is very strong.
- Senior leaders check the quality of teaching regularly and provide advice, support and training which has led to outstanding teaching.
- Senior leaders and governors have created a positive learning climate, enabling pupils to thrive. They make excellent use of external advice to bring in new ideas and provide further challenge, so that the school is always looking to improve its work further.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed ten lessons or part lessons, all of which were joint observations with different members of the senior leadership team.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, teaching staff, pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire, Parent View. However, the inspection team considered the school's recent survey of parents' and carers' views. They also met with two parents.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation including the school's information on pupils' progress, its self-evaluation, development plans and information relating to the safeguarding of pupils and the scrutiny of their work.

## Inspection team

Frank Price, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carol Deakin

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Castle Wood is a generic special primary school.
- The school admits pupils with a wide range of learning from those with profound and multiple learning difficulties to those with moderate learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders.
- Approximately half of the pupils are White British, with other pupils coming from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Around one quarter of pupils' families have English as an additional language.
- There is a higher than average proportion of disadvantaged pupils who receive additional government funding known as the pupil premium.
- There are twenty children in the early years provision. Children start on a part-time basis, building up to full-time attendance when they are able to cope with a full day.
- The school has an after-school club which is managed by the governing body.

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

- Further develop planning, so that it is consistent across the school, in order to accelerate pupils' progress even more.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors set high expectations and have ensured that an extremely warm, positive and uplifting learning environment has been established. This encourages pupils to do as well as they can, enjoy school life and behave exceptionally well, given their needs. The headteacher has overseen and led excellent improvements across the school. She has pursued excellence and innovation with rigour and embedded it into the school's practice.
- The school is outward looking and constantly reviews its work to see how new ideas can be adapted and incorporated into existing school practice. It makes very effective use of external expertise to bring in new ideas and challenge. This has led to highly effective, innovative approaches and has ensured that teaching and learning are lively, imaginative and meet the wide range of pupils' needs exceptionally well.
- The range of subjects and experiences offered to pupils is well thought out. The school has arranged the way it covers the wide range of pupils' learning needs under the headings of 'informal', 'semi-formal' and 'formal' to match their different abilities. The extension of the principles of the early years provision across the school is innovative, although consistent planning for this approach is in the early stages of development.
- Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain in a way that is appropriate to their level of understanding. They enjoy celebrating other cultures and faiths through music, food and dance. The school is a respectful, tolerant and harmonious community where the achievements of pupils are celebrated by all.
- Subject and aspect leaders drive forward their areas of responsibility with passion and enthusiasm. They have action plans to provide a blueprint for further improvements and benefit greatly from external advice to bring in new ideas.
- The grouping of pupils in classes is considered carefully. Some classes are organised to meet the needs of those with profound and multiple learning difficulties; other classes are structured to meet the needs of those with autistic spectrum disorder. The excellent accommodation enables classes to be divided into smaller groups to help meet the needs of pupils more effectively.
- Sources of additional funding have been spent very effectively. Disadvantaged pupils receive high quality additional help to promote their reading and communication skills. As a result, they close the gap on their peers and move slightly ahead. Where programmes have been particularly effective, these are extended to all pupils. Primary physical education and sport funding has increased pupils' physical activity, notably in swimming. A new physical development programme is due to be launched imminently. This has brought exceptionally positive benefits for pupils' health and physical needs.
- The work of teachers and support staff is checked closely. This has resulted in excellent improvements to teaching. The access to expert knowledge and ongoing training has given rise to exemplary teaching, leading to the outstanding progress of pupils. Staff share good practice with each other and with other schools.
- The school is careful to ensure that all pupils are treated equally, regardless of background or need. Pupils are treated with respect and dignity. Exceptionally positive relationships pervade the school.
- Safeguarding procedures meets statutory requirements. Staff are diligent in promoting a safe environment which does not deny pupils their independence. Unexplained absences of pupils are followed up promptly to ensure that they are safe.
- The school is exploring different ways of assessing more-able pupils' progress, following the removal of national curriculum levels. However, most pupils are operating well below these levels and the school is continuing to use existing nationally recognised methods of measuring progress.

- Parents are extremely positive in their views of the school. One parent spoke to the inspection team and stated how much progress their child had made in their physical and communication development, contrary to medical prognosis.
- The local authority has full confidence in the school, and its leadership and management. It provides good termly support to assist the school to develop and improve.
- The ongoing improvements in all areas of its work indicate the school's strong capacity to improve further.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are committed and knowledgeable. They receive detailed information, including video presentations, on various aspects of the school's work. Governors have specific areas of responsibility and visit the school in relation to these areas, such as Forest schools. They understand the many strengths of the school and areas for further development.
  - Governors have the right amount of information to help them understand the progress of pupils in different subjects and how those who receive the pupil premium perform. They are aware of the changes to assessment for those pupils who operate in national curriculum levels and how the school is addressing this.
  - Governors have ensured there is a suitable link between salary progression and the quality of teaching. Challenge is provided to the school in a supportive manner. British values are promoted through many aspects of the school's work and its harmonious ethos.

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

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners. Their attitudes to learning are excellent and they are keen to learn. They settle well in class and work hard. Pupils typically demonstrate a fondness and affection for each other and staff. As a result, pupils learn and play in a calm and harmonious environment despite the high level of need.
- Pupils' behaviour in classes and around the school is excellent. At lunchtimes they learn to become more independent by feeding themselves and through making choices.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered exceptionally well. They have plentiful opportunities, through aspects of the curriculum to experience other cultures, faiths and traditions. For example, pupils enjoyed a performance of music and dance by African dancers.
- Pupils' behaviour improves exceptionally well over time. When some pupils start school they have difficult behaviours and have support plans in place. However, as their behaviour improves, the need for support plans disappear and they interact and socialise with each other more readily.
- There are no incidents of racism and bullying. This is because staff value pupils as individuals and relationships are trusting and supportive, leading to a happy school. There are no exclusions or fixed-term exclusions.
- The attendance rate is below average but nearly all absences are for medical reasons.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The high quality care and support the school provides ensures that pupils feel very safe.
- Governors, staff and pupils are confident about the safety of pupils. Nearly all parents are happy to

entrust their child to the care of the school. Visitors to the school are carefully checked and monitored.

- Staff are vigilant in safeguarding matters. Risk assessments for off-site visits and other activities are in place.
- The after-school club is supervised well and children are well cared for.
- Cyber-bullying is not an issue for pupils, as most require supervision in order to access the internet.

### **The quality of teaching** is outstanding

- The excellent resources and facilities enhance the outstanding teaching. Pupils' individual needs are very effectively met in smaller and quieter spaces, enabling them to remain focused and on task. Classrooms are bright and stimulating.
- Lessons are typified by a wide range of creative, stimulating and interesting activities for pupils. For example, in a Key Stage 2 class, pupils worked enthusiastically to recognise numbers by discovering them in the sand tray.
- Staff are deployed very effectively to support the wide range of learning needs. They are well trained and work seamlessly together. Teachers are skilled at encouraging pupils' independence skills through using musical cues to signify when an activity has finished and it is time to tidy up. Pupils respond well to these and have developed good habits to take increasing responsibility.
- Literacy and mathematics are presented in very interesting ways for pupils. For example in writing, pupils learn how to spell simple words on white boards, or make marks in different types of media, such as shaving foam. Pupils enjoy acting out stories such as the 'Hare and the tortoise' using props. Practical activities are used superbly to help pupils to tell the time or to handle money.
- Teachers make highly effective use of assessment information. This understanding ensures that all pupils of different abilities are stretched in relation to their learning needs. Assessment information identifies pupils who are not making the expected progress in literacy and numeracy, so that additional help is provided to accelerate their progress.
- Teachers' planning is not yet consistent across the school, as they are getting to grips with the new way of delivering subjects. This means that on isolated occasions some pupils are not moved quickly enough onto new areas of learning.

### **The achievement of pupils** is outstanding

- From their starting points, pupils make outstanding progress in English, mathematics and their personal development. Their progress in science is good. The school has brought in outside expertise to further develop mathematics across the school. Over the last three years, the majority of pupils make better than expected progress.
- Pupils' language and communication development is a significant strength. This is because the school places a high priority on this area and provides additional support and help for pupils. Pupils have made excellent improvements in reading through continual focus and support. Pupils enjoy reading and develop a love of books.
- The communication methods used in the school are wide ranging. These include signs, symbols, representational and real objects. As a result, pupils gain confidence in their communicative abilities.
- The progress of the different groups of pupils across the school is tracked and analysed carefully. This has shown that more-able pupils do exceptionally well in literacy and personal development.

- Those pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties do outstandingly well in developing early numeracy through the use of sensory methods. Pupils who are on the autistic spectrum disorder learn to manage aspects of their condition more effectively through clear structures and routines.
- Disadvantaged pupils who are supported by additional funding make excellent progress and they slightly out-perform their peers. Where pupils are identified as struggling, extra help is given from knowledgeable staff to help them make up lost ground.
- A number of pupils join the school part way through the primary phase and their skills are assessed on entry and then regularly tracked. This enables the school to demonstrate clearly the rapid progress they make over time.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their move to secondary school. They are given extensive help and preparation prior to leaving the school and this helps them to transition well and get off to an excellent start in their new environment.
- Pupils' eagerness to learn and their evident enjoyment of lessons contribute to their outstanding progress.

### **The early years provision**

**is outstanding**

- Children start the school with skills that are significantly below those which are typical for their age and make excellent progress across all the areas of learning.
- Progress is particularly striking in their personal, social, emotional development and in their communication skills. This is because staff have a very individualised approach to meeting the needs of children.
- Early years classes are vibrant and stimulating, and provide a rich environment for pupils to thrive. Teaching is outstanding. Children experience a wide range of imaginative activities. As a result, they are keen to explore new activities, such as identifying cold items through exploring ice in a tray.
- Classrooms are bright and orderly. There is a strong emphasis on the use of communication methods, such as signs, symbols and photographs, which does much to encourage children's language and communication skills exceptionally well.
- The leadership and management of the early years provision is outstanding. Children's progress is carefully tracked so that small steps of progress are captured and celebrated through learning journals, which parents appreciate.
- Partnership working with parents is a strength and good levels of communication between home and school benefit children's progress and development.
- Staff are very well trained, knowledgeable and always looking to improve their practice further.
- Children are prepared well to move onto the next class in the school. The provision lays strong foundations for them to thrive as they move through the school.
- Procedures to keep children safe are rigorous, and show that staff have an excellent understanding of children's needs and close supervision.

## 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>	135569
<b>Local authority</b>	Coventry
<b>Inspection number</b>	449509

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	119
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Julie Atkins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Yvonne McCall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 July 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	024 7670 9060
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