

Castle Primary School

Newlands Road, Keynsham, Bristol, BS31 2TS

Inspection dates 10–11 June 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- The quality of teaching has been too variable over time. As a result, pupils have made inconsistent progress.
- Too few pupils have made good progress. Therefore, the standards that they reach by the time they leave the school have not risen quickly enough.
- Teachers do not always make sure that the work they give to pupils is challenging enough, particularly for the most able.
- The comments that teachers make when they mark pupils' work do not always provide clear enough guidance on how to improve.
- Sometimes pupils do not have chance to practise and apply the guidance that teachers give them.
- Some pupils do not behave well enough in lessons and teachers do not always have high enough expectations. Pupils sometimes lose concentration and disturb the learning of others.
- Pupils do not take enough pride in their work.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers, including governors, have an accurate understanding of what is going well and what needs to get better. Their actions have resulted in steady improvements to the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make.
- Pupils enjoy school. Teachers usually make learning fun and some teachers make learning unforgettable.
- The early years provision is good. Children get off to a good start and make increasingly rapid progress, as a result of good teaching.
- Pupils are safe in school and they know how to keep themselves safe. They are well looked after and they feel secure because they know that teachers care about them.
- The subjects pupils learn are interesting and prepare them well for life in modern Britain.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons and parts of lessons, some of them jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, other leaders in school, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and with parents and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 69 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also discussed the views of parents through informal conversations in school.
- Inspectors considered leaders' views on the quality of the school's work and their plans for school improvement, as well as gathering information about pupils' progress. They looked at teachers' planning, pupils' work, documentation about safeguarding procedures and samples of the targets teachers receive to improve their performance.
- The inspection team analysed the 41 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Jeanne Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Martin Bragg

Additional Inspector

Julie Fox

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Castle Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have both been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The early years provision comprises two Reception classes and a Nursery class.
- The children in the Reception class attend full time and the nursery age children attend on a part-time basis. The school has recently opened a provision for two-year-olds, which was not considered as part of this inspection.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after) is higher than average.
- Most of the pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is higher than the national average.
- The breakfast club and the after-school club are both managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum standards set for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, and therefore pupils' achievement, by:
 - ensuring teachers set challenging activities that enable pupils to show what they can achieve, particularly for the most able
 - making sure that the comments teachers write in marking provide clear advice to pupils on what needs to improve
 - checking that pupils practise and apply the advice they get from marking.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning by:
 - raising expectations of some teachers about pupils' behaviour to match those of the best
 - finding ways of helping pupils to develop their powers of concentration and their attitudes to learning
 - making sure that pupils take pride in the quality and presentation of their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, other leaders in school and governors have a clear and accurate view of the strengths in the school and what needs to happen to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards further. Since their appointments, the headteacher and her deputy have resolutely addressed staff underperformance and have created a culture where better teaching is bringing about improvements to pupils' achievement. However, they have not yet ensured that pupils make rapid progress. Therefore, leadership and management are not outstanding.
- Teachers who lead subjects make a strong contribution to improving teaching and pupils' outcomes. They know about standards in their subjects and they use their expertise to introduce new ways of working and to support their colleagues through the changes. They model their own good practice to help everyone to improve.
- Teachers say that they have benefited from the targets they are set to improve their performance because the training they have meets their needs well and helps them to get better. They say that the way they learn from each other is particularly helpful.
- The subjects pupils learn have been organised in a way which helps pupils to make links in their learning. Pupils enjoy finding out the answers to 'big questions', such as 'What have the Romans done for us?' The visits they make and the visitors who come into school bring the learning alive.
- Pupils learn about British values and they are well prepared for life in modern Britain because great emphasis is placed on learning to be tolerant and to respect the views of others. Pupils have first hand experience of democracy through the work of the school council. The team of pupils which promotes awareness of looking after the environment makes pupils aware of their community responsibilities.
- There is a wide range of appropriate activities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and emotional development. Pupils learn about other cultures through reading stories, as well as through art, music, history, geography and religious education. They learn right from wrong and they have regular opportunities to reflect on spirituality in assemblies and through art and nature. The responsibilities they take on help them to grow into responsible and confident young people.
- The additional funding for primary sport has been spent effectively on a variety of new opportunities and developments based on the needs of the school. Staff have benefited from training from sports coaches and through a partnership with the local secondary school. These experiences have increased their confidence and knowledge of how to develop pupils' skills. There is a much wider range of sports for pupils to enjoy, such as rugby and badminton. An increasing number of pupils are showing interest in sport. The funding has also been used to provide transport to competitive events, which enables pupils to share their enjoyment and improve their skills further.
- Pupil premium funding is having an increasingly positive impact on pupils' achievement. Leaders are looking carefully at how the different kinds of support are helping pupils to catch up so that they can make as much difference as possible. They are quick to respond if progress slows. Pupils have help individually and in small groups so that their needs can be met accurately. As a result, the gaps are narrowing.
- Parents who discussed their views informally with inspectors were very positive about the school. They recognise the improvements that leaders have made. They say that staff are approachable and that their children are happy and safe. The questionnaire the school has carried out supports these views. However, those who responded on Parent View were less positive.
- The school is aware of its responsibility to tackle discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity. Leaders regularly check on the pupils' progress and they check that particular groups of pupils are making as much progress as they should.
- The school's arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils meet current requirements. The headteacher and governors are highly aware of their responsibilities. They make sure that staff have the knowledge and skills they need to recognise and deal with situations where a child's welfare might be at risk.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness and has provided well-targeted support for the school to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are aware that, in the past, they have not always provided the levels of challenge that were necessary to enable the school to continue to improve. Over the last few years, they have changed the way they work. They have carried out an audit of their skills and they have recruited governors to fill the gaps identified. They are using their skills with increasing effectiveness to provide high levels of support and challenge. As a result, the school is improving steadily. Governors have an accurate view of

achievement, including how additional government funding is used and the difference it is making. They know about the quality of teaching and how well the school is doing compared with other schools. They use the detailed reports that they receive from the headteacher when they make their regular visits to the school, so that they can check that the information is correct. Governors know what the school is doing to improve further. They check on the impact of the targets that teachers are set to improve their performance and the actions that are taken to tackle underperformance. They make sure that progression through the pay scales is only awarded to effective teachers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In lessons, particularly but not wholly when the work is not challenging enough, a few pupils do not show positive attitudes to their learning and they lose concentration. Parents who responded on Parent View, staff and pupils felt that behaviour was not consistently good.
- Pupils recognise that the behaviour of a few of their classmates sometimes stops them from learning well. While most teachers provide effective guidance and support for pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour, this is not always the case. In lessons, pupils do not always respond quickly to staff instructions and some staff do not always have high enough expectations of the way pupils should behave.
- Around the school, pupils of all ages are polite and play together well, so that the school is a harmonious community. Pupils show their understanding of respect, which is one of the school's values, through their empathy and their kindness to each other.
- There are a significant number of pupils whose behaviour can be very challenging. Exclusions over the last two years have been higher than average. The school is now recognising pupils' needs more accurately and is putting effective support in place. However, some of the actions have not yet had time to bring about the desired improvements.
- Pupils take care of school equipment. They are proud of their school, although they do not always show the same levels of pride in the presentation of their work.
- Pupils understand about the different types of bullying and they know the difference between bullying and rough play. They say that there is bullying in school and, although teachers deal with it, it happens too often.
- The small numbers of pupils who attend breakfast club and after-school club behave well. They enjoy their activities and they have a positive start and end to the school day.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe. They know that the adults care about them and listen to them. Parents, pupils and staff agree that the school is a safe place in which to learn.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They speak confidently about how to use the internet safely, as well as about road safety and stranger danger. They know how to deal with situations they might meet as they get older through their visits to a special exhibition about personal safety.
- The school meets all the current safeguarding requirements. All staff training is up to date and appropriate checks are made when the school is recruiting new staff.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Records kept by the school and information about pupils' progress show that, in the past, teaching has not been consistently effective in raising standards. Although the quality of teaching is now improving, and pupils are making better progress, teaching has not been of high enough quality during the time that the current pupils have been in the school to merit a judgement of good.
- Teachers mark pupils' books regularly and they identify the most successful aspects of the work and what could be better. The comments they make usually give appropriate guidance about pupils' next steps, but this is not always the case. Sometimes the comments lack detail so that the pupils are not sure what they have to do.
- Pupils sometimes continue to make the same mistakes because they do not have time to respond to the comments.
- Most teachers and teaching assistants use questioning well to check on pupils' understanding. They make

sure that pupils understand before they move on, which is helping progress to speed up.

- Teachers usually set work at different degrees of difficulty and pupils can often choose the level of challenge for themselves. Pupils say that teachers would notice if they picked a level which was too easy because 'teachers expect you to challenge yourself and do as well as you can.' However, sometimes the tasks do not allow pupils, particularly the most able, to extend their learning fully.
- Teaching assistants support learning well when they are working both with pupils individually or in small groups. They have good subject knowledge and they complement the work of the teachers effectively, whether they are working with the least able, the most able or with disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils learn the skills they need to read confidently and fluently. The youngest pupils know how to use picture clues to help them make sense of the text. They understand the links between sounds and letters and they usually apply their knowledge when reading. Older pupils can find the deeper meaning in texts because they know how to look for clues about characters' emotions, feelings and why the characters choose to act in certain ways.
- Teachers help pupils to use their understanding of how authors write to plan their own writing. For example, during the inspection, pupils read traditional tales and they were able to use previous learning to structure their own tales. Pupils often write at length and across all the subjects they learn so that they practise the skills they learn about punctuation, grammar and spelling.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge in mathematics, which helps them to explain new learning clearly. They make sure that pupils apply their understanding of mathematics to solve problems. Pupils understand their next steps because they can track their progress on the charts which are displayed in the classrooms.
- Teachers make learning enjoyable. They make sure that pupils apply their learning in interesting ways. A few teachers make learning highly memorable. For example, in one lesson the teacher used such a wide variety of ways to draw the pupils in, and to make sure that they understood the new learning, that all the pupils made rapid progress. Her highly effective questioning and her engaging style meant that not a moment of learning time was lost by any child.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement fell after the previous inspection and, since that time, standards have not improved fast enough, particularly in Key Stage 2. This is because progress from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6 has slowed. Relatively few pupils have made the progress that is expected. Even fewer pupils have made good progress. Although the standards they reach are broadly in line with the national average, so that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, this does not represent good progress from their starting points.
- The progress of pupils currently on the roll of the school is improving. Records kept by the school show that, over the last two years, pupils have made increasingly rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The work currently in books indicates that this is being sustained this year. However, pupils have not yet caught up with where they should be, which is why achievement requires improvement.
- At the end of Year 1, the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the national reading check is broadly average. The school's tracking shows that, at the beginning of the year, there were fewer pupils who were demonstrating the skills they need. The additional support has resulted in significant improvements and more pupils are on track to reach the expected standard at the end of 2015 than in previous years.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has gradually improved and is now broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. There are no significant differences in standards between any subject. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level is broadly average in writing but is below average in reading and mathematics.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are also broadly average. Standards in the national tests in mathematics fell at the end of 2014, but this was not typical of the standards usually achieved by the pupils in their work in school or the standards reached in previous years.
- Pupils' progress has been inconsistent. The proportions making expected progress are broadly in line with the national average. Not enough pupils make good progress, although this is now starting to rise.
- The progress of the most able pupils has not been rapid enough. The proportion reaching the higher levels in national tests at the end of Year 6, while rising, is below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Over the last two years the progress of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium has gradually speeded up and they now usually make similar progress to their classmates. This is because the

extra help they have in the classroom, as well as through special programmes of work, is now meeting their needs more effectively, and the gaps in their attainment are now closing. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, they are about two terms behind their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. Compared with other pupils nationally, the gap is similar, except in mathematics, where they are about a year behind.

The early years provision

is good

- Children thrive in the early years provision, whether this is in the Nursery or in the Reception classes. Parents are delighted with the progress their children make.
- Children make a good start because of the careful, well-planned introduction they have to school life. The recently introduced toddlers group is an example of the way in which the school is reaching out into the community to build relationships with parents and to support a positive start to school.
- When children start in the Nursery and in the Reception classes their skills are below, and often well below, those typically found for their age. Although they make good progress in Nursery, they have not generally been able to catch up with typical levels for their age. Continued good teaching in Reception is bringing about rapid improvements. Over the last three years, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by end of Reception has risen rapidly from below average to above average.
- These improvements have been brought about by the concerted actions of the teachers, encouraged by the clear drive from the early years leader. She continually reviews the provision to make sure that children are doing as well as they can. She is now focusing appropriately on improving the quality of the equipment outside the classrooms so that it matches the high quality of resources inside.
- Teachers use their observations about children's interests alongside information they collect about their achievement to plan a wide range of engaging activities. As a result, children enjoy their learning. The whoops of delight evident during the inspection, as children made a discovery or were amused by their activities, were a joy to hear.
- Teachers make sure that they plan opportunities for children to develop across the areas where they are not doing quite as well. This helps them to catch up, although their skills in reading and writing are slightly behind other areas.
- Adults talk to the children about their learning so that they can share the language that children need in order to develop their understanding. They are good at asking just the right question to challenge children's thinking.
- Children work, behave and play together well. Adults make sure that children are safe and that they learn how to keep themselves safe. Their regular walks to the woodlands help them to learn skills in ways not normally available in the classroom environment.

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	109081
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	449554

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	286
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Edmondson
Headteacher	Rachel Tabram
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 February 2010
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