

# Castlecombe Primary School

Castlecombe Road, Mottingham, London SE9 4AT

## Inspection dates

22–23 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils leaving the school at the end of Year 6 make less progress than pupils nationally. Standards are too low in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils attain less well, and make less progress than pupils nationally by the end of their time at Castlecombe.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable across the school. As a result, the progress pupils make is weak in some year groups.
- Until this academic year, middle leaders have had little impact on the quality of teaching and on pupils' outcomes. Governors have supported the work of the school, but have provided little challenge to leaders to improve the school.
- Attendance is below average and declining. Disadvantaged pupils attend less regularly than others.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and to school are not consistently positive. Low-level disruption sometimes spoils pupils' learning. Not all staff apply the behaviour policy consistently.
- Pupils feel safe at school but show limited understanding of how to keep themselves safe online or outside school.
- Pupils are polite and respectful but often lack self-assurance and confidence. They show a limited understanding of British values and the school does not provide well for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### The school has the following strengths

- Since September 2016, leaders have taken action to secure some improvements to teaching and learning, particularly in Years 5 and 6. They have been well supported in this by the academy trust.
- Children in the early years enjoy their learning. They make good progress and achieve outcomes which are above the national average. Leadership of the early years is strong.

## Full report

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

- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that leaders at all levels take effective action to improve pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics
  - further developing assessment systems which accurately reflect the achievement of pupils
  - ensuring that governors provide effective challenge to leaders to help them to improve outcomes for pupils
  - taking effective action to improve attendance
  - ensuring that the behaviour policy is applied consistently by all staff and leads to improved behaviour, particularly during lessons
  - reviewing the impact of the school's policy on teaching handwriting, spelling and grammar so that it helps teachers to support pupils in making good progress in writing.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged
  - ensuring that teachers promote and develop positive attitudes to learning in all classrooms
  - ensuring that teachers get the opportunity to share practices which lead to strong progress in the early years and in Years 5 and 6
  - developing teachers' confidence in assessing pupils' work and planning next steps in learning in reading, writing and mathematics
  - making sure that all teachers respond to recent training and take action to improve the teaching of problem solving and reasoning in mathematics.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Until very recently, middle leaders have had little impact on school improvement. They have not been given the opportunity to use their subject or phase expertise to improve teaching and learning. Since the school became part of the trust this year, the situation has started to improve. Because of the strong leadership of the executive headteacher and the acting headteacher, leaders are now able to take actions to address priorities for improvement. As a result, teaching is improving. It is too soon to see the impact of this on pupils' progress across the school.
- The school's assessment system does not give an accurate picture of pupils' progress or attainment. The system takes account of a variety of sources of evidence including tests. The school's information about how well pupils are doing does not match up with the quality of work or progress seen in pupils' books. As a result, it gives an inflated view of achievement and does not help teachers to pinpoint next steps in learning for pupils effectively.
- Attendance has declined slightly since the school opened and is below average. Disadvantaged pupils attend less regularly than others. The incidences of persistent absence are above average. Leaders have recently put actions in place to address this issue, but it is too early to see the impact of these actions.
- The school provides a broad curriculum with a sharp focus on reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils have a very basic knowledge of British values such as respect and democracy. Displays around the school lack any evidence of pupils' work in this area. Inspectors struggled to find convincing evidence to show the impact of the school's work to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils found it difficult to comment on their understanding of tolerance and respect for people who have different cultures or beliefs from their own. There are pockets of good practice which demonstrate some development in this area. For example, the choir sing for local pensioners during the harvest festival and pupils donate food parcels. Pupils enjoy performances and benefit from the after-school clubs which focus on a variety of sports.
- Actions taken by leaders have not led consistently to strong attitudes to learning or to good behaviour. Pupils say that they recently learned about 'good learning behaviour' but could not confidently talk about what this is. In some classes, pupils lack confidence in themselves as learners. They are easily distracted and lose focus on learning. Incidents of low-level disruption sometimes spoil learning for pupils. Pupils are not all clear on the rewards and sanctions for behaviour. Some said that they 'don't work'. Leaders have not made sure that all staff use the behaviour policy consistently.
- At the time of the inspection, the school's website did not meet the requirements regarding what should be published online. The website is hard to navigate and key documents which parents need to see are hard to find. Leaders made sure that the website was updated with key documents during the inspection so that the website now meets requirements.

- The new acting headteacher and executive headteacher have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are well supported in this by the chairman of the trust. The acting headteacher has an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning. Staff are positive about the recent changes leaders have made and are working hard to improve their skills.
- Leaders recognise that there is much work to be done to improve the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. They have secured good support from the trust this term, which has had a positive impact on pupils' progress in the current Year 5 and Year 6 classes.
- Leaders understand the need to review the impact of policies on the teaching of handwriting, spelling and grammar to improve progress in writing. Training for teachers to improve the teaching of problem solving and reasoning in mathematics is yet to have consistent impact across the school.
- Leaders have thorough plans in place for this academic year to make sure that pupil premium funding is targeted effectively to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. In the past, leaders and governors have not evaluated the impact of their spending on pupils' achievement effectively.
- The sport premium funding has been used effectively to provide a range of opportunities for pupils to take part in sports and competitions. Pupils have benefited from working with specialist sports coaches.
- Leaders have ensured that additional funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is spent well. Pupils are supported well and make good progress from their starting points.
- The majority of parents who spoke to inspectors or completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, have a positive view of the school. A very few parents had concerns about behaviour.

## **Governance**

- The local governing committee is committed to supporting the work of the school. Governors' decision to join the academy trust coincided with a sharp awareness that they needed support in increasing the challenge they give leaders. Governors acknowledge that they have not challenged senior leaders effectively in the past. As a result, weaknesses in aspects of the school's work have not been tackled effectively.
- In the past, governors have not held the school to account effectively for pupil premium spending. This has improved this academic year as a result of the support from the trust. However, governors have not held leaders to account for the spending of the sport funding.
- Governors are up to date on all aspects of safeguarding and undertake this part of their responsibilities effectively.
- Governors value the support of the chairman of the trust and welcome the opportunities to work with governors across the trust to enhance their skills.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Systems and logs for recording actions taken as a result of safeguarding issues are thorough, orderly and up to date.
- Designated safeguarding leads show an incisive knowledge of the pupils in their care and are relentless in their drive to ensure that pupils are kept safe. They work tirelessly to ensure appropriate response and actions from external agencies.
- Staff receive relevant training about all aspects of safeguarding. Governors carry out their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. Leaders engage well with parents and carers to make sure that pupils are safe and supported.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable.
- Teachers are reliant on an assessment system which does not support them in identifying appropriate next steps in learning for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Tasks set are often too difficult or too easy for pupils. For example, pupils working on decimals did not understand what decimals were. Some of the most able mathematicians say that they like mathematics 'because it's easy and there's not much to do'. In some lessons, the most able pupils are held back by starter activities which teachers use to assess the tasks pupils will attempt next. The most able pupils often complete these initial tasks easily and wait for the challenge to come. Recent training for staff on developing problem solving and reasoning has had some impact in some year groups. Pupils' books show that some teachers are yet to respond to the training received because there is a lack of any work to develop these skills.
- The teaching of reading varies across the school. While the teaching of phonics leads to strong outcomes in the Year 1 screening check, the least able pupils are not always given books which help them to apply their phonics knowledge in reading continuous text. The most able readers in key stage 1 often work through multiple-choice comprehension worksheets but are not given books which interest or inspire them to read. As a result, progress in reading is variable.
- The teaching of reading in the current Year 6 class is leading to strong progress. Pupils keep reading journals and are given opportunities to deepen their understanding of texts through skilful questioning and interesting activities to develop comprehension. As a result, pupils of all abilities, including the least and most able pupils, are making strong progress.

- Teachers have worked hard to ensure that pupils write for a range of purposes and audiences, relating to interesting themes from books or from a range of subject areas. Progress is often hampered by poor spelling, handwriting, grammar and punctuation. The school's handwriting policy ensures that children start to join their handwriting from the very earliest stages of learning letters and sounds. This sometimes has a negative impact on some early writers. Pupils who are not yet confident at holding a pencil or recognising individual letters are attempting cursive writing when they are not yet able to do it on their own successfully. As a result, writing is often messy. Pupils sometimes become frustrated by this and are unable to talk about or recognise what they have written. Teachers do not always provide the necessary support to move these pupils on with their writing skills.
- Pupils attempt tasks which they are set, but their attitudes to learning are sometimes less than positive. This is usually when work is not set at the right level for them. Teachers work hard to engage pupils but at times activities fail to inspire or excite them.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils lack confidence in talking about their learning. Pupils are polite and talk to visitors when they are approached, but generally lack confidence when they are questioned about their learning or their life at school.
- During the inspection, pupils were unable to talk confidently about keeping themselves safe online and were unsure how to keep themselves safe from other forms of bullying. They showed little awareness of how to keep themselves safe outside the school environment, although all pupils said that they feel safe at school.
- Leaders and teachers care about pupils' physical and emotional well-being. Their rigorous approach to safeguarding pupils underpins the work of the school.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Low-level disruption and off-task chatter have a negative impact on the progress pupils make in some classrooms. Teachers and teaching assistants sometimes struggle to keep pupils focused on learning.
- Behaviour logs show that leaders take swift action in response to poor behaviour. However, not all staff use the behaviour policy consistently. Some pupils are unclear about rewards and sanctions and do not know the consequences of, for example, receiving a 'red card'. Some pupils cannot see the impact of the behaviour policy and said that fighting occurs in the playground. One pupil said, 'Yes, we have naughty children. Like every school does.'
- Behaviour in the playground, in assemblies, in the breakfast club and in the lunch hall is good. Pupils do not have a range of equipment to use at playtime except balls. This means that some of them wander around looking for something to do.

- Attendance has been below the national average since the school opened. Disadvantaged pupils do not attend as regularly as other pupils. The rate of persistent absence is higher than the national average for both boys and girls. Actions put in place by leaders this term have yet to show an impact on attendance.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because the progress that they make in reading, writing and mathematics is not consistently good.
- Standards at the end of key stage 2 were broadly average in 2015 but well below average in 2016. The progress that pupils made when they left the school in 2015 and in 2016 was well below the national average. Pupils were not prepared well for the next stage of their education. Disadvantaged pupils made less progress than that seen nationally by other pupils and their attainment in 2016 was well below the national average for other pupils.
- Expectations in some classes are too low and tasks set do not challenge pupils to achieve what they are capable of. In the current Year 5 and 6 classes, pupils make stronger progress because of teaching which challenges and interests them. Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve better outcomes than pupils did last year.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics because teaching does not build swiftly on what they already know.
- The progress of lower-attaining pupils who need to catch up is variable. The least able pupils are often withdrawn to work with teaching assistants. Sometimes behaviour in these sessions is disrupted by a small minority of pupils and reduces the progress pupils make.
- Pupils' books show that there is currently no significant difference between the progress that disadvantaged pupils and other pupils are making. Where teaching is weak, progress is weak for all pupils. Where teaching is stronger, all pupils make better progress.
- Since September, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported inside and outside classrooms. They are making good progress from their various starting points.
- As a result of good teaching, pupils' attainment in the Year 1 screening check for phonics is above the national average and has risen significantly since the school opened.

### Early years provision

### Good

- Leadership of the early years is good. The early years leader has managed improvements to the provision well. She has a thorough knowledge of early years practice and is clear on the need to improve provision further, particularly in the outdoor learning space.
- The academy trust has provided support to enhance teaching in the Reception class this term. Teaching, learning and assessment across the early years are good.

- From starting points which are below those typically seen for their age, children make good progress across the early years and are well prepared for Year 1. The proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development has improved steadily since the school opened and is now above the national average.
- The early years leader is also the Nursery teacher. She has had a great impact on the perception parents now have of the Nursery. The Nursery suffered from a poor reputation in the past which still has an impact on the number of admissions. Parents of children who are currently in the early years are very happy and positive about their children's experiences at school. They said that their children are well cared for by staff and are achieving well. They enjoy the 'stay and play' sessions which have further developed positive relationships.
- Inspectors found happy, confident children in the early years. They show positive attitudes to learning and the range of interesting activities on offer help to make them enthusiastic learners. Children's behaviour is good.
- Warm relationships between adults and children are evident across the early years. Children behave well and listen to their teachers. Many children start in the Nursery and in the Reception classes with poor language skills or with speech and language difficulties. They are supported well and make good progress in their communication skills.
- The early years provision rightly places a strong emphasis on early reading, writing and number skills. However, all areas of learning are well planned for. Children's work and tracking records show that current pupils are making good progress in all areas of development.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has been used effectively to secure good teaching in the Nursery class. The progress that disadvantaged pupils and other pupils make is similar.
- The whole-school issue of reviewing the policy on teaching handwriting is also relevant to the early years. In the Reception class, some pupils struggle joining their letters. Leaders recognise that reviewing this aspect of their work, along with improving the outdoor learning environment, will enhance children's progress further.

## School details

Unique reference number	140533
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10019225

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	247
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Beryl McGrath
Acting Headteacher	Nivanka Vitarana
Telephone number	020 8857 1504
Website	<a href="http://www.castlecombe.bromley.sch.uk">www.castlecombe.bromley.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin.office@castlecombe.bromley.sch.uk">admin.office@castlecombe.bromley.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Castlecombe is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The school joined the Spring Partnership Trust in September 2016.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is higher than average.
- The majority of pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- Children in the early years are taught in two part-time Nursery classes and one full-time Reception class.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups. Observations were undertaken with the acting headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors met with members of the local governing committee and with the chairman of the trust.
- Meetings were held with pupils to discuss their learning and their views on the school. Pupils took inspectors on a 'curriculum tour' of the school.
- All leaders met with inspectors to discuss their roles and the impact of their work.
- Subject leaders for English and mathematics carried out a book scrutiny with inspectors to see what progress pupils were making. Eighteen books from each classroom were analysed.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to pupils in the lunch hall, in lessons, in the breakfast club, in the playground and as they moved around the building.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including information on pupils' progress across the school, improvement plans, curriculum plans and checks on the quality of teaching. They also examined school records relating to safety and behaviour.
- Inspectors took account of 35 responses to Parent View, and of information gathered from discussions with parents during the inspection.

## Inspection team

Ruth Dollner, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Shelley Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Rick Barnes	Ofsted Inspector

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