

Castle Primary School

Newlands Road, Keynsham, Bristol BS31 2TS

Inspection dates

25–26 April 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' progress over time has not been consistently strong enough. Until very recently pupil outcomes have been low. This is especially at the end of key stage 2 in reading and mathematics and at the end of key stage 1 in reading and writing.
- Many of the school's leaders are new to their roles or new to the school. They have not yet evaluated recent improvements in teaching.
- Over time, governors have not provided challenge and support to leaders or fully understood the areas for development.
- Systems intended to support pupils in their learning, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, have not yet been fully implemented.
- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently strong enough to ensure that middle- and higher-ability pupils make rapid and secure progress.
- Over time pupils have not been given support in correcting their mistakes in grammar and spelling, which has led to weak progress in writing.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders share a passion and determination for school improvement. As a result, staff and pupils speak very positively about the school.
- Attendance and behaviour have improved this year due to the decisive action taken by school leaders.
- Pupils' good personal development, their well-being and their safety are given a high priority. There is an ethos of care and nurture throughout the school, which leads to pupils feeling safe and well supported by staff.
- Learning in the early years is a strength of the school. Nursery and Reception classes provide interesting and exciting opportunities for pupils to learn and grow in confidence.
- Some teaching has recently improved and is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress. Teaching assistants contribute well to supporting pupils' personal development and recent academic learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and pupils' outcomes by:
 - swiftly ensuring that higher- and middle-ability pupils are well supported and challenged in lessons so that they make consistently good progress across the school
 - following up misconceptions in spelling and grammar in writing lessons.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - school leaders evaluate the school's new teaching approaches and that these approaches are having a long-lasting impact on improving pupils' outcomes
 - staff use new systems that support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively to monitor pupils' learning and progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders, over time, have not secured rapid improvement to pupils' achievements. Consequently too many pupils in recent years have not achieved expected outcomes, especially at the end of key stage 2 in reading and mathematics.
- Most of the middle leaders are new to their roles and some are also new to the school. They have quickly understood the actions that have been needed to improve the quality of teaching. Their actions are beginning to bring about necessary improvements to the quality of teaching. However, this work has yet to be fully embedded within the school and evaluated.
- Leaders are aware that the assessment of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has not always been accurate. New systems of assessment and monitoring have been developed very recently. Funding to support these pupils is beginning to be used well; more recently attendance and progress have been improving. Staff have only recently begun to develop a clearer understanding of how to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders have a clear vision for the pupils of this school, and a strong determination to improve. This has inspired staff and pupils alike. Since the beginning of this year, new approaches to teaching and learning are having a positive impact on outcomes. These have yet to be applied consistently and embedded in order to secure the consistently good outcomes the school is aiming for.
- Leaders have ensured improvements in the teaching of mathematics. Pupils' learning is based on a practical understanding of number and calculation. As a result, when faced with complex written problems in mathematics, pupils can solve these with more confidence. Assessment information and work in books show that more pupils are now achieving what is expected for their age. However, leaders acknowledge that further training for teachers is required because teachers' evaluations are sometimes inconsistent.
- Leaders have made reading a high priority for improvement. Current pupils, especially in Year 6, have regular opportunities to read and, as a result, they are achieving well.
- The action that leaders put in place to support disadvantaged pupils last year was partly successful. In some year groups these pupils made accelerated progress but this was not consistently so across all year groups. The local authority's view matches that of inspectors, which is that improvements in teaching are still needed.
- Teachers feel well supported in their professional development because of the strong culture of support offered by school leaders. Teachers value the additional opportunities they are given, such as taking on the leadership of an area of the curriculum. They are given good training and guidance to undertake these roles. As a result, staff are committed to their own professional development and to the school.
- Senior leaders and middle leaders share the responsibility for driving school improvement. A system for monitoring individual teachers' performance is in place and appropriate targets are carefully monitored. Recent feedback from these activities

helps teachers improve, for example, their teaching of the broader curriculum.

- There is an interesting and exciting curriculum in place that inspires pupils. Topics begin with 'Wow' days and teachers ask interesting questions such as 'what have inventors done for us?' This makes learning memorable for pupils. They are encouraged to undertake projects at home (such as building space rockets) to develop their interest and fascination in these topics.
- The curriculum contributes well to the pupils' development in social and moral understanding. Assemblies on themes such as 'why it is important to say sorry' make a positive difference to the way they interact in lessons and at playtimes. Pupils' spiritual development is at its strongest when they reflect on their learning and the wider world. For example, inspectors observed Year 2 pupils, returning from a trip to the farm, who were able to reflect on what it felt like to hide in a hollow tree. Pupils' cultural development is not as broadly developed. Children's understanding of what it is like to belong to another faith remains underdeveloped.
- Pupils are aware of British values, such as respect and democracy.
- There is a good range of clubs to extend and broaden the curriculum. These are popular with the pupils and include rugby, cricket, street dance and wheelchair basketball.

Governance of the school

- Over time the governors' work with the school has not sufficiently challenged or supported leaders. This has meant that the school has not improved rapidly enough.
- Governors meet regularly with the school leaders. They monitor the school by visiting the classrooms, analysing assessment information and looking at pupils' books. However, over time this work has not been rigorous or focused enough to ensure that pupils' outcome improve.
- Governors review the budget which is provided for improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. However, this is not yet effective enough and governors were not expecting the 2016 outcomes to be so low.
- Subsequently they have sought additional support from the local authority and they are welcoming this guidance and advice. Governors are increasingly ensuring that school leaders focus on swift and effective improvements in teaching and learning.
- Governors are developing a better understanding of the urgent need to improve outcomes for pupils. They value the support being given by a local teaching school and feel that this strengthened partnership would contribute to improvements at Castle School.
- Governors seek the right information about teachers' performance to help them understand pay recommendations from the headteacher. They also effectively monitor the headteacher's professional development and performance, which has meant she has been well supported through a time of significant challenge and change for the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Keeping the pupils safe in school is a high priority and a key focus for all. Leaders are regularly trained to keep up to date with current safeguarding requirements, and they ensure that all members of staff, and all adults who work alongside pupils, have the right guidance and support.
- There is a strong culture of vigilance and an understanding of the need to follow up concerns within the school. All staff regularly respond and report concerns, however small they may appear. Leaders do not delay in taking the appropriate action. They liaise with other authorities, such as for children's social care, as needed, and speak to parents regularly to ensure action is being taken.
- The school site is safe and secure with a strong perimeter fence and gates that are closed when pupils are on site. Pupils feel safe in school and say 'nothing is going to harm us'.
- Leaders follow a clear protocol for employing staff. References and employment history for new members of staff are thoroughly checked before they take up their posts.
- Governors regularly monitor the school's systems and ensure that safeguarding is reviewed at their meetings.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Over time teaching has not been consistently strong enough to secure good outcomes for pupils, particularly in key stage 2 reading and mathematics.
- Historically teachers have not intervened quickly enough and have not modified the work they provide to support those groups of pupils who were not making expected progress.
- Time is not used productively for pupils. This slows down pupils' understanding and progress.
- The most able and middle-ability pupils are not always given sufficient challenge to help them make rapid and sustained progress.
- Teachers' determination and dedication is evident through the professional discussions they have, and in the care and attention that goes into the work and activities they plan for pupils. However, many of the developing strategies to increase pupils' progress have not had sufficient time to have the strong impact that is needed to improve pupils' learning and progress.
- Historically pupils have not made good progress in their reading; however, there is evidence that this is now improving. A new reading scheme was introduced in January 2017 and parents are now encouraged to come into younger pupils' classes for weekly 'reading mornings'. Pupils in Year 2 can read confidently. Those who did not meet the expected standard in phonics last year are now beginning to use their phonics knowledge more confidently to read words that are unfamiliar to them. Pupils in Year 6 feel confident in their reading. They can answer challenging questions about texts.
- Reading records are not regularly completed at home or in school, which means some parents may not be aware of how well their child is reading at school. Some parents

who spoke with inspectors said they would like more information about their child's reading progress.

- Teachers do not consistently help pupils understand misconceptions such as incorrect spellings or mistakes in grammar. Current assessment information shows that progress in writing is slower than progress in reading and mathematics.
- The school now provides supportive and timely 'catch up' sessions for many pupils who are falling behind. These contribute to the improved progress most pupils are now making, especially in Year 6.
- Learning is enhanced by the school's new assessment policy. Teachers give pupils planned activities to reflect and edit their work. Evidence in books shows that this approach is making a positive difference to their learning and pupils happily talk about how much they enjoy opportunities to improve their work.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well cared for in the school. The school has a strong ethos of nurture and support. New leaders are beginning to ensure that these pupils are given appropriate challenge and guidance in their learning. Parents who spoke with inspectors also reported that the school responded well if their child needed additional support.
- Leaders comment that the school is 'at the beginning of a different picture' with regard to the quality of teaching in the school. Inspectors endorse this view. While the impact of recent school improvement initiatives is not yet proven in outcomes, there is clear evidence of increasing strengths in this area.
- Phonics teaching is effective over time. Most pupils meet the assessment expectations for the end of Year 1. This is due to pupils concentrating well in lessons. Pupils are grouped in a way that allows teachers to provide appropriate challenge for all. Current pupils' ability to recognise and make appropriate links between groups of letters and sounds is in line with what is expected for this age nationally. In some lessons, pupils' spelling skills are not adequately supported.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud to attend this school and speak highly of the care, guidance and support they receive. They value the opportunities to speak to adults through 'Place2Talk' and 'Place2Be' and say that this is a place you can go 'if you have a worry'.
- The school places a high emphasis on supporting pupils and ensuring that their personal development and well-being are nourished. For example, after lunch, a member of the midday staff carefully helped a group of older pupils resolve their differences after they had fallen out at play.
- Pupils engage well with the school values of respect, creativity, resilience and responsibility. Older pupils undertake tasks such as delivering the registers to classes, and they enjoy these roles. The school council contributes to the development of the school. For example, they regularly report to the governors.

- Pupils demonstrate respect for each other, in the playground and in lessons. Adults' strong relationships and polite language demonstrate to the pupils their high expectations of good manners and kindness.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school club. This is a safe and welcoming environment where pupils are happy to engage in a range of activities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- There have been significant improvements since the last inspection. A new, clear behaviour system is in place. This was developed with parents and pupils and is widely understood by all.
- Clear reporting of incidents enables the school to track individual pupils and classes. Quick action is taken, with parents involved, if a child's behaviour becomes an ongoing concern, but this is rare. The number of incidents of poor behaviour has reduced dramatically in the past year.
- Pupils themselves have noticed the different approach being adopted by the school and they are very aware of the higher expectations. They say the rewards and consequences are applied fairly.
- Behaviour and approaches to learning are good; pupils are attentive and they work hard. They do not disturb others and settle well to their learning for the majority of the time.
- Pupils respond very well to adults around the school. They quickly settle when asked and good strategies for gaining their attention are in place. Pupils are polite when waiting for their lunch and respectful to each other.
- Behaviour in the playground is safe. Space is plentiful and pupils respond well to adults and line up sensibly at the end of the session. Children in the early years have good established routines for 'tidying up' at the end of play.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection and since 2015/16. The school has worked hard to engage parents – especially those of pupils who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Good attendance is celebrated with 'Otis' the owl (On Time In School) and the children are engaged with this reward strategy. Current figures overall, and for vulnerable groups in particular, are now much better and drawing up to national expectations.
- The school has rightly taken decisive action where pupils' attendance falls below 90%. This means that the numbers of pupils with persistent absence have also reduced.
- Incidents of racism or bullying are taken very seriously. Action is swift and concerns are followed up robustly. However, these incidents are very rare.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress of pupils in the last two years has been significantly below expectations. For example, in 2016 at the end of key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils' progress in writing and mathematics was in the lowest 10% nationally. Also, the group of middle-ability pupils in this cohort did not make expected progress from key stage 1 in reading and mathematics.
- The percentage of key stage 2 pupils meeting expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was 27%, well below the government's 'floor standard' of 65%.
- In 2016 the key stage 1 pupils, who had previously met the expected standard in the early years, did not meet the expected standards for this group in reading and writing. Their attainment was well below similar pupils' attainment nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils that met the expected standard in their phonics check last year was below that of their peers.
- Current assessments show that, in Years 1, 2 and 3, boys and disadvantaged pupils are still not achieving as well as other pupils in their cohort.
- The school's current assessment information shows an improving picture. It shows that pupils' progress in most year groups is better, and pupils are now catching up. More pupils this year are on track to achieve the expected standards. However, this is a very recent improvement.
- Current information about progress and attainment in the school, particularly in Year 6, shows a stronger picture in reading and mathematics. The school's assessments, matched with work seen in books and lessons, show that more pupils across the school are on track to achieve expected standards at the end of this academic year.
- In a range of subjects, pupils develop skills of investigation and enquiry. This is particularly evident in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 where topic books show that pupils are developing historical, geographical and scientific understanding., Pupils in key stage 1 are encouraged to use their observational skills, for example to see what a map represents.
- Encouragement of creativity is one of the school's values and there is evidence of pupils having engaged in some interesting art work and developing strong skills in key stage 2 as a result.
- Over time some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make expected progress by the end of key stage 2. However, work in books and observations in lessons indicate that currently these pupils are making stronger progress.

Early years provision

Good

- Pupils in the early years make good progress. Some join the school as young as two, and many when they are three years old. In the summer term effective transition arrangements are in place which means these children are prepared well for their start in Reception.
- Leaders ensure that staff are well trained and that children's progress is at the heart of the activities that are planned. Assessment outcomes were checked by a local authority

representative last year and were found to be accurate. This is because staff plan learning activities well so that the children develop in learning and confidence quickly.

- The Nursery classes provide a safe, happy, spacious and well-equipped area in which the children can grow and develop. Staff are knowledgeable about the steps children need to take to improve. Key workers are assigned to individual children and careful records of their progress and achievements are kept. The school uses a system that enables parents to have instant access to photographs and videos and which is very popular. This contributes to good home/school communications and progress as many parents follow up their child's learning at home.
- Children demonstrate effective approaches to learning. They collaborate kindly and are learning to share tasks such as tidying up, as well as playing together.
- Children are given the chance to explore learning on their own and many do this with determination and confidence. The activities set out for them to explore are particularly inviting in the Nursery where children can move from, for example, organising pom-poms into coloured boxes, to playing on the swing, to pruning a small shrub with scissors! As children move up through the early years the opportunities for playing outside continue to be exciting and interesting.
- Adults quickly and effectively monitor and change the learning activities when needed. For example a group in the Nursery class had lost interest in a singing activity so the adult moved to a bubble blowing activity which immediately excited and engaged the children once more.
- Current assessment information shows that children are making good progress and most are on track to achieve well by the end of the year. Children's current work broadly reflects this view.
- In 2016 only 44% of the children met the expected levels for this age. However, this cohort made good progress overall from their starting points, as many had started with very low language and communication skills.
- Adults support children's learning by asking questions that encourage them to think deeply. For example, children in the Nursery were observed developing a good understanding of shape as their teacher shared with them new language and concepts, such as straight and curved edges.
- Children's behaviour across the early years is good. Occasional disagreements or tears are quickly sorted by kind and attentive staff. One child in Nursery was given the responsibility of looking after a boy who had started that day. She rose to the challenge and did not leave his side while he got used to the new environment and new people.
- Safeguarding is a high priority for all the staff. They receive the right training and are particularly vigilant to ensure the environment is safe and secure for these young children.

School details

Unique reference number	109081
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	10033134

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Edmondson
Headteacher	Rachel Harris
Telephone number	0117 986 4489
Website	www.castle.bathnes.sch.uk
Email address	castle_pri@bathnes.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 June 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school does not meet the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at key stage 2.
- Castle Primary School is larger than the average primary school. Children in the early years are taught in separate Nursery and Reception classes. The number of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium is above the national average.
- The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Other pupils are from a variety of minority ethnic groups.
- The number of pupils who start or leave the school other than the usual starting or

leaving points is in line with national averages.

- The school provides before- and after-school care.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors evaluated learning and teaching, in many instances alongside the headteacher, through visits to a range of lessons or parts of lessons and looking at pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with a group of teachers, governor representatives, a representative from the local authority, each of the middle leaders and the headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised assessment information provided by the school, and published assessment information from recent years. They looked at a range of evidence including behaviour reports, attendance information and procedures for safeguarding. Inspectors carefully considered the school's self-evaluation and its current development plan alongside governors' minutes and anonymised performance management reports.
- Work produced by the pupils since September was examined carefully, alongside other electronic assessments in the early years and work on display around the school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and spoke with a number of pupils from across the school.
- The inspection team spoke to parents and took into account the comments made by parents on Parent View.

Inspection team

Liz Wilson-Chalon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Robert Lane	Ofsted Inspector

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