

The Castle Primary School

Barrington Street, Tiverton, Devon EX16 6QR

Inspection dates

18–19 July 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders and governors are driven in their quest to improve the school. They have managed change skilfully for the benefit of all pupils.
- Senior leaders and governors ensure that there is good-quality teaching, learning and assessment in place across the school.
- Pupils make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, not all learning is closely matched to pupils' needs, including for the most able.
- Teaching and learning in mathematics is strong. It is well led and pupils enjoy the breadth of learning activities that they engage in.
- Teachers are skilled in providing inspiring and motivational learning experiences for pupils. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. However, questioning does not support rapid progress effectively for some pupils.
- The quality of teachers' feedback in some lessons is inconsistent and pupils' repetitive errors go unchecked in some year groups.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils are catching up with their classmates but where work is mismatched to their needs it limits their progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They conduct themselves calmly and positively throughout the school day. Pupils feel well cared for and they want to achieve well
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are good. Staff promote and support pupils well in developing spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills throughout the curriculum.
- Children make an excellent start to their school life in the early years. Staff ensure that each child makes rapid progress from their own starting points.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Parents agree that the school is a safe place and that they receive accurate information about their child's progress. The school has high expectations of pupils and their behaviour.
- Children are well prepared for the next stage in their learning when they leave the early years foundation stage.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that all staff use questioning effectively
 - closely matching learning activities with the needs of pupils, including for the most able, so that they make more rapid progress
 - improving the consistency of ongoing feedback to pupils.
- Senior leaders and governors should ensure that:
 - recent improvements in the progress of vulnerable groups is maintained
 - the attainment of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils continues to improve to match that of other pupils
 - outcomes for all pupils reach or exceed national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders are ambitious for all pupils and set high standards and high expectations. As a result, pupils' outcomes are rising, particularly in mathematics and reading.
- Through rigorous monitoring and assessment, all leaders have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Leadership of mathematics is strong. All staff have received quality training to meet the high expectations and standards set by the senior leaders. As a result, pupils have made good progress.
- The recently appointed English leader has worked collaboratively with staff to strengthen teaching, learning and assessment. A clear approach to improvement has had a positive impact on pupils' reading in key stage 2.
- The support provided for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. Pupils are monitored closely to ensure that their needs are met. Consequently, well-targeted support is put in place quickly. The funding for this group of pupils is used well to ensure that they make good progress from their starting points.
- The school's appraisal system ensures that all staff have clear targets for improvement. High-performing teachers are encouraged to share their good practice with their colleagues and other schools.
- Leaders provide a well-organised, broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that challenges and motivates pupils. It is well planned to deepen pupils' thinking and to encourage them to use their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics effectively. Many of the starting points for learning are inspired by fiction and non-fiction texts and include application of mathematical skills, which enables pupils to deepen and further progress their learning. Pupils have a range of opportunities to develop further skills in additional activities including sports.
- Leaders effectively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are encouraged to make good choices and understand right from wrong while developing values, including tolerance and respect.
- Parents have positive views about the school. Many parents feel that their children are happy and that staff listen carefully to any concerns that they may have. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View would recommend the school to other parents.
- Leaders have used external support from the local authority effectively to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

Governance of the school

- Governors bring effective support and challenge to the school. They ensure that there is a good balance of expertise among the governing body. They regularly develop their

skills by attending training.

- Governors have a clear view of the strengths of the school and work with senior leaders to strategically plan for further improvement. The new school building is a good example of this.
- The school's appraisal system enables governors to set challenging targets for senior leaders. They also monitor teachers' performance to ensure that any weaknesses are quickly tackled and support is put in place.
- Governors hold leaders to account well for the spending of the pupil premium and sports funding. Consequently, targeted pupils are catching up well.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- As a result of strong leadership, there is a clear safeguarding culture in the school. Strong systems are used to keep pupils safe at school. Checks on staff and visitors are effective. Child protection training for all staff is up to date.
- Systems are in place to enable pupils to express their worries or concerns. Pupils say that they feel 'safe and protected' by staff at the school. Pupils are developing a good understanding of online safety through lessons.
- Staff have a good awareness of safeguarding and know the procedures to follow should they be concerned about a pupil's welfare.
- Although there have been challenges during the building of the new school, leaders and staff have ensured that the school site has remained secure and safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Throughout lessons, teachers promote equality and diversity, while challenging stereotypes. This was very evident in Year 6 science lessons on evolution.
- Teachers use the information they have about pupils' knowledge and understanding to set work that meets their learning needs. However, occasionally teachers are not consistent in matching learning activities to the needs of all pupils. In these instances, the most able pupils are not moving onto more challenging work quickly enough and the expectations for the least able pupils are too high.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed to support pupils' learning needs in lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants use a range of well-chosen interventions to support those who are falling behind or need to catch up, including those who are disadvantaged or who speak English as an additional language. However, this is less effective when pupils are taught in small groups outside the classroom.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good, and this enables them to teach with confidence and accuracy. Where this is strongest, teachers and teaching assistants skilfully question pupils to check their understanding and move their learning forward. Pupils are able to explain their thinking and draw on previous knowledge and their understanding of the learning they have engaged in.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have high aspirations for every pupil. Pupils are keen

to do well and there is a positive learning atmosphere in classrooms. Where teachers provide feedback in lessons to give the next steps in their learning, pupils make further progress. However, where ongoing feedback is inconsistent, some pupils repeat errors over time, and therefore progress is limited.

- Where activities in the mainstream classroom are matched to the needs of pupils who have difficulties with communication and interaction, pupils feel well supported and are confident to have a go. However, when expectations are too high, they struggle and are unable to complete the work for themselves, and this limits the progress some pupils make.
- Parents say that they receive accurate and relevant information on their child's progress and attainment. They feel well informed and get the support they need to enable them to support their child.
- Teachers set regular homework that consolidates pupils' learning and so prepares them well for work in their lessons.

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 confident and self-assured.
- The school is an orderly environment where pupils are independent and organise their resources so that they are ready to learn. Adults work closely with pupils and families in a supportive and sensitive manner.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. They have full confidence in staff to resolve any issues of poor behaviour, including bullying and cyberbullying. Pupils show high levels of respect and care for each other.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In lessons, pupils have positive attitudes to their work. They are attentive and attempt all that is asked of them. Where there is low-level disruption, it is quickly addressed by staff. Parents and staff agree that pupils are well behaved and any rare incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly.
- Leaders and staff have high expectations of standards for behaviour. Bullying or racist incidents are extremely rare. If they do occur, they are promptly challenged, recorded and tracked to ensure that underlying causes are understood and resolved. Pupils know that offensive language is not accepted.
- The strong relationships and high levels of trust between adults and pupils ensure that pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around school. Pupils are polite, courteous and have good manners. Playtimes are harmonious occasions where pupils play happily and can turn to adults if they have any concerns.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average. Leaders track carefully the

attendance of all groups. Leaders can confidently show the positive impact they make on the attendance of individual pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils from different starting points make rapid progress across the curriculum, particularly in mathematics. Pupils are able to apply their knowledge and understanding in wider contexts through projects and text-inspired topics. Pupils are able to use reasoning and problem-solving effectively to support further progress.
- Reading is strongly encouraged. Teachers use fiction and non-fiction text to inspire learning. Consequently, pupils in key stage 2 achieve well and make strong progress. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their own starting points.
- Pupils in Year 1 achieve above the expected standard nationally in the phonics screening check. Most pupils use and apply their phonics skills and understanding well in their wider reading and writing.
- The most able pupils have made good progress and are above national expectations in reading and mathematics in key stage 2. However, progress in writing is not as strong for these pupils.
- Leaders monitor closely the performance of disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils with English as an additional language. As a result, these groups of pupils receive timely interventions and support to enable them to make rapid progress and to achieve in line with pupils with similar starting points.
- In key stage 1, writing has not been as strong as other curriculum areas. However, pupils are performing close to national expectations and leaders have strategically planned for further improvements.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next stages in their education. The school works with secondary schools to ensure that transition is a positive experience for pupils. Pupils have the skills to deepen learning and make further rapid progress when they leave.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the early years provision well. As a result, they are able to identify staff training needs and areas for improvement. The assessment systems in place are consistently contributed to by all staff and parents. Consequently, where there are gaps in learning, leaders are able to plan inspiring activities that will support children's further progress.
- From their own starting points, children are achieving well and making good progress. Consequently, children are well prepared for key stage 1.
- Teaching is good and has a positive impact on the children's progress. The teachers and teaching assistants make learning fun and ensure that all pupils develop their skills to support greater breadth and depth of learning.
- Parents say communication is good and they feel well informed about their child's

progress. Where children need additional support, families and the school work positively together with external services.

- The learning environments are well resourced and provide activities in all early years areas for learning. Children are encouraged to explore, investigate and take risks while engaging in activities. For example, a group of children baked real sprouts, broccoli and peas in muffins. They explained how to follow the recipe they had written and how to use the cooker safely. Children have a strong understanding of safety while using equipment. They follow safety rules set out by staff and understand why they are important.
- Children's language and communication skills are good. Children who speak English as an additional language make rapid progress because staff model good pronunciation and speaking skills.
- Staff use questioning effectively to challenge and probe children's thinking. The children respond by eagerly demonstrating what they have learned. Children are very keen learners, and because their behaviour is good, they listen well and follow instructions promptly so progress is rapid.
- Resources and learning activities support children in understanding respect and tolerance. Activities provide opportunities to explore diversity and learn about each other as individuals. Children are inclusive in their play and celebrate each other's successes.
- Children form good relationships with each other and the staff model this well while developing a positive and nurturing atmosphere. Children are polite and confident with their peers and other adults. They show good levels of resilience and will play with imagination and good levels of concentration.
- Leaders and staff are vigilant and well trained in ensuring that children are safe and that safeguarding systems are effective. Parents agree that their children are safe and happy in school.

School details

Unique reference number	113340
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10033126

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Warren Doe
Headteacher	Catherine Noble
Telephone number	01884 253398
Website	www.the-castle-primary.devon.sch.uk
Email address	admin@the-castle-primary.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 April 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- In 2016, the school met the floor standards which set out the government's minimum expectations for pupils at the end of key stage 2.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. It has a communication and interaction resource base, currently supporting six pupils with difficulties in communication and interaction. All pupils in school attend on a full-time basis.
- The school has two classes in Reception, Year 5 and Year 6. There is one class of each in Year 1 and Year 2, with an additional mixed class of Year 1 and 2 pupils. Years 3 and 4 are mixed across three classes.
- The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of the pupils in the school receiving support funded by the pupil

premium is average.

- The proportion of pupils who are not from White British backgrounds is lower than seen nationally. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed each class at least once.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, governors, leaders, staff, pupils and parents.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with two representatives of the local authority. An inspector also spoke with the local secondary school headteacher.
- The inspection team listened to Year 2 pupils read.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documents, including the school's records on pupils' attendance and behaviour. Checks were carried out on safeguarding systems and documents.
- Inspectors took into account 38 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, 44 responses from staff and spoke to parents at morning arrival.

Inspection team

Debbie Marklove, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jen Edwards	Ofsted Inspector
Paula Marsh	Ofsted Inspector

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