

# Castle Primary School

Castle Street, Stoke-Sub-Hamdon, Somerset TA14 6RE

## Inspection dates

18–19 October 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</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 good school

- This is a rapidly improving school. Since its re-opening in 2015, leaders have built trust within the community. As a result, parents recognise the positive changes of recent years and are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.
- The new head of school, along with the senior leadership team, is ambitious and provides clear direction for improvement.
- The school benefits from sharing good practice with other members of the Redstart Learning Partnership. This has a positive impact on staff development and pupils' progress improves as a result.
- The school's inclusive culture ensures the welfare of vulnerable pupils and those who have particular needs.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently positive and their behaviour reflects the school's successful encouragement of high standards.
- Teachers plan work effectively for pupils who have gaps in their learning. As a result, they catch up quickly.
- Nursery provision is effective. It prepares children well to start school.
- Since 2016, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has increased.
- Good-quality teaching has led to improved standards in phonics. Pupils' achievement in the Year 1 phonics screening check is now well above the national average.
- Current pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics.
- Careful monitoring of the performance of disadvantaged pupils contributes to a large majority of them making good progress.
- The school's successful approach to the teaching of writing means that an increasing number of pupils achieve the standards expected for their age.
- Leaders' development of wider responsibilities for teachers, to monitor teaching, learning and assessment across the school, is not yet focused sharply enough on increasing pupils' achievement.
- Pupils do not routinely practise calculation skills through reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics, especially the most able pupils.
- Teachers' checking of key stage 2 pupils' understanding in mathematics is not effective enough. As a result, too few pupils receive timely support.
- Leaders' actions to improve pupils' attendance have not been sufficiently effective. As a result, the level of persistent absence is still too high.

## Full report

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

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - ensuring a relentless focus to reduce levels of persistent absence
  - further developing teachers' responsibilities for effective monitoring of teaching and learning across the school
  - closely scrutinising pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics, to ensure consistent challenge for the most able pupils.
- Strengthen teaching, learning and assessment by teachers:
  - consistently ensuring that pupils practise their calculation skills through reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics
  - checking pupils' understanding to ensure that they receive timely support when needed.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders and governors have created a culture of ambition and high expectations for academic achievement and social behaviour. As a result, the school is an orderly environment where most pupils are keen to learn.
- The new head of school has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Consequently, the school is working on the right areas for improvement. He receives good support from the wider leadership within The Redstart Learning Partnership.
- The leadership's commitment to improvement is recognised by the school community. Almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that they would recommend the school to another parent.
- Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the level of support they receive from leaders. Membership of the trust provides opportunities for effective staff development. As a result, teachers and support staff members share best practice.
- Leaders and governors carefully scrutinise use of the pupil premium funding to ensure that the funding is spent effectively and disadvantaged pupils achieve well.
- Leaders scrutinise pupils' learning across the school well. They have a clear view about the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders challenge and support teachers and teaching assistants effectively to improve their practice. As a result, most pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers have strengthened their assessment of pupils' progress and this enables them to help those pupils who need to catch up more effectively than in the past.
- Leaders are developing teachers' responsibilities for the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. However, this is not yet precisely focused on raising outcomes for pupils.
- The curriculum is well organised. Leaders correctly identified the need to improve pupils' reading and writing skills in order for them to succeed in other subject areas.
- Leaders have introduced a new strategy for teaching mathematics. This approach is having a positive impact on improving outcomes in mathematics. However, there are inconsistencies in teaching which result in some pupils not routinely practising their calculation skills through problem-solving activities.
- Pupils take part in a wide range of activities, which enhance their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. During a breakfast club session, staff guided pupils to reflect calmly on their feelings and the feelings of others. A forest school initiative reinforces the need for perseverance, teamwork, listening, leading and helping. Visits to contrasting locations help to broaden pupils' horizons. For example, trips to Bristol help to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils demonstrate respect and tolerance towards others. The school council reinforces the idea of democracy. Pupils can discuss why they have respect for the law.

## **Governance of the school**

- The board of trustees, with the support of the local advisory board, provides good challenge and support to the executive principal and head of school. The regular visits that governors make to the school and the reports they receive ensure that they have an accurate picture of the quality of education that the school provides.
- Governors carefully monitor the spending of the pupil premium and physical education and sport premium. This clear focus is successfully improving pupils' achievement.
- The trust rightly recognised the need for significant physical changes to the school premises. As a result, they initiated changes to buildings and the introduction of new technological resources, which ensure that the school is a suitable environment for pupils to learn and thrive.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have created a culture where safeguarding is seen as everyone's responsibility. Staff protect pupils against a wide range of possible risks.
- Staff are trained and familiar with procedures necessary in the event of an incident. Staff know the pupils well and monitor vulnerable pupils carefully.
- Administrative staff complete and keep up to date all the necessary checks on the suitability of staff, volunteers and visitors to the school. Leaders and governors check these processes thoroughly.
- Pupils are safe and articulate clearly how the school supports them to stay safe online and within the school site. Almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that they felt that their children are safe in school.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teaching is good and this results in pupils progressing well. Teaching builds effectively on what pupils already know. Consequently, the activities that teachers plan help pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- The head of school sets high expectations. Teachers and other adults expect and encourage pupils to work with positive attitudes. As a result, most pupils are keen to learn and ready to find out more.
- Teaching for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. Teachers and other adults support these pupils well. Teachers and teaching assistants help them to learn alongside their peers and make good progress.
- Pupils with lower starting points get the support they need to complete tasks successfully. As a result, these pupils make good progress.
- The teaching of reading is increasingly effective, leading to good outcomes, especially for younger pupils. Pupils use phonics successfully and work well together to build their skills and confidence in reading.
- Pupils make good progress in writing. As part of their work within the trust, teachers

have refined their approach to assessing pupils' written work. This has improved the rate of progress made, as pupils are clear about the next steps to take their learning forward.

- The school has accurately identified the need to improve outcomes for pupils in mathematics. A common approach to teaching across the school is having a positive impact upon most current pupils' progress.
- The most able pupils in mathematics sometimes find work too easy. Teachers' questioning does not consistently challenge the most able pupils and teachers' checks on pupils' understanding in lessons are not as effective as they could be. There are inconsistencies across the school in deepening pupils' abilities to use reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics.
- Strategies to support pupils who need to fill gaps in their learning are effective. Pupils appreciate the additional focus they receive, which helps them to catch up quickly.
- Parents receive useful information on their child's progress. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are very positive about the school's work to identify and meet these needs.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently positive. This helps them make good progress. Teachers, and other adults, have high expectations and as a result, classrooms are calm, ordered and purposeful.
- During break and lunchtimes, pupils have a range of play equipment, which they use to engage in physical activity. Pupils know how to keep themselves healthy. Not all pupils are confident and self-assured. However, the school's staff regularly seek to build their confidence and self-esteem.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe. All pupils responding to Ofsted's online survey said that they feel safe in school. They are confident that the adults in the school will deal with their concerns. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online. They say that bullying is rare and that it is dealt with quickly if it occurs.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The conduct of pupils throughout the school day is very positive. The changeover between lessons is calm and orderly. As a result, pupils start each lesson ready to learn.
- The school encourages pupils to be respectful. Lessons flow smoothly without interruption.
- Pupils respond quickly to instructions and requests from staff. Their good conduct

reflects the school's efforts to promote high standards.

- Persistent absence is too high. Leaders and governors analyse information in this area and seek to maximise the attendance of all pupils. The head of school has been proactive in taking measures to improve whole-school attendance. As a result, there is already a marked improvement in overall attendance this academic year. However, leaders have not yet succeeded in reducing persistent absence.

### Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Current pupils make good progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- The on-site nursery provision is effective in ensuring that children make good progress.
- Children in Reception make progress that is at least typical for their age and sometimes better. Children with lower starting points make rapid progress to catch up with their peers. An increasingly higher proportion of children reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.
- In Year 1, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in phonics increased between 2016 and 2017. This proportion is now well above the national average.
- Pupils make good progress throughout key stage 1 and their attainment at the end of Year 2 is broadly in line with that seen nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The progress of most current pupils is strong in reading and writing. As a result, increasing proportions of pupils are achieving the standards expected of pupils their age.
- Most current pupils are making strong progress in mathematics. The proportions of current pupils working at age-related expectations increased in mathematics, in every year group, from 2016 to 2017.
- A large proportion of disadvantaged pupils are relatively new to the school. The school is effective in identifying, working with and addressing barriers to learning for these pupils. Intervention work is effective for disadvantaged pupils, as well as with other pupils who need to catch up, where there is a need to improve attainment in English and mathematics. As a result, disadvantaged pupils typically make good progress in the core areas of learning.
- Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress from their different starting points. The school's special educational needs coordinator ensures that these pupils receive pastoral support which is effective in meeting their needs.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 2, in English and mathematics, is improving. However, it remains below national averages.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- The early years provision offers a supportive environment, which ensures children's safety and welfare while developing their social skills effectively. Collaboration between the experienced staff in the nursery and the Reception class is close and productive. As

a result, most children are well prepared to start school.

- Children behave very well, in a way which shows that they feel safe. Teaching assistants ensure that movement between lessons and activities is calm and orderly. They care for the children well. They establish clear routines so that children know what they expect. Children listen carefully to adults' instructions, and behave sensibly, as they explore and learn.
- Staff in the nursery class interact well with children, successfully encouraging them to be independent and develop their speaking. Children enjoy a spacious outdoor area with equipment to inspire their learning.
- In the Reception class, children are ready to learn and fully attentive. Teaching ensures that children understand the link between their phonics learning and writing skills. As children learn new sounds in phonics, they immediately practise letter formation in a variety of ways to improve early writing skills. Pupils with low starting points make good progress and in some cases rapid progress towards the early learning goals.
- Most children achieve a good level of development. Where children do not achieve a good level of development, teachers ensure that important gaps in their learning are quickly filled, especially in phonics.
- The early years leader has a clear understanding of her role. She receives effective support from senior leaders when making improvements. Her assessment of children's progress is accurate. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has increased over time and is now in line with national averages.

## School details

Unique reference number	141695
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10042651

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	137
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Eric van den Barselaar
Headteacher	Gareth Nation (head of school) Suzanne Flack (executive principal)
Telephone number	01935 822342
Website	<a href="http://www.castleprimaryschool.com">www.castleprimaryschool.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:castle@redstartpartnership.co.uk">castle@redstartpartnership.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- 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.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school opened as a sponsor-led academy on 1 Mar 2015.
- Castle Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school. There are five classes.
- The school is part of The Redstart Learning Partnership. This multi-academy trust comprises five primary schools in the south west of England. The head of school is



supported by an executive principal from the trust. The executive principal is a national leader of education, and provides support to four other schools in the trust.

- The vast majority of pupils are White British and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below that found nationally.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited classrooms. Many of these visits were made jointly with senior leaders. Pupils' learning was observed across the school.
- The inspector looked carefully at pupils' work from all year groups and across a range of subjects.
- The inspector talked to pupils from different year groups about how they feel about school, how teachers help them with their learning and how the school keeps them safe.
- The inspector held discussions with school leaders, staff, members of the governing body and the trust. The inspector also took into account responses to questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.
- The inspector looked at the school's evaluation of its own performance, its improvement plan, and a number of key school policies and the minutes of meetings of the governing body. He also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector listened to a selection of pupils read.
- The inspector took account of 37 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including a number of free-text responses. The inspector also spoke to a number of parents during the inspection.

## Inspection team

Mike Brady, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2017