

Castle Cary Community Primary School

Park Street, Castle Cary, Somerset BA7 7EH

Inspection dates

16–17 January 2018

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is not good enough in English and mathematics, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of the school's performance is not sufficiently accurate. As a result, leaders have not driven school improvement quickly enough.
- Checks on the progress that pupils make do not lead to more effective teaching and learning.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is not used effectively. These pupils do not make the rapid progress they need to in the core areas of learning.
- Teachers do not have consistently high enough expectations for the achievement of their pupils.
- Teaching does not consistently challenge the most able pupils. These pupils do not move on in their learning quickly enough. As a result, too few achieve the highest standards, especially in mathematics.
- Expectations of children in Reception are not high enough. This means that too many children do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Where good practice exists, it is not being shared effectively across the school.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is systematically tackling weaknesses. She understands the priorities for the school.
- Leaders have established a culture where pupils, including children in the early years, are well behaved, respectful and tolerant of others. Their conduct throughout the school day is very positive.
- Pupils are happy, safe and well cared for. They are supported to keep themselves safe online.
- The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils' personal development, such as sporting festivals and tournaments. Pupils are actively involved in a variety of community projects.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Pupils make a good start with reading.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - governors hold leaders stringently to account for pupils' progress
 - leaders' priorities for improvement are firmly rooted in accurate school self-evaluation
 - subject leaders are empowered to drive school improvement in English and mathematics
 - funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to ensure strong progress in English and mathematics
 - the monitoring and analysis of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, leads to stronger progress for these pupils
 - monitoring activities scrutinise the progress of the most able pupils
 - reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics are embedded across the school, so that pupils apply their calculation skills to make strong progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by teachers:
 - having the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve in the core areas of learning
 - supporting pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities effectively to improve the progress they make
 - effectively monitoring the progress of pupils' reading so that attainment continues to improve
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are sufficiently challenged, especially in mathematics.

External reviews of governance and the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have not acted swiftly enough to improve the decline in academic standards. The headteacher, since her appointment, has introduced measures to improve teaching, learning and, in particular, assessment. These changes have not been carefully monitored to ensure that the impact on pupils' learning is consistently positive.
- Leaders' expectations have not been high enough for staff and pupils. Consequently, the rapid improvements necessary in pupils' outcomes have not been achieved.
- Subject and middle leaders' roles are not sufficiently developed. Where improvements have been introduced, for example the school's approach to the teaching of reading, these effective changes are not used consistently by teachers in all classes. As a result, pupils' progress in reading is too variable.
- The impact of teachers' professional development is not consistently effective. Where good practice has been shared, for example the teaching of English in Year 6, it is not having a successful impact elsewhere.
- Leaders and governors do not possess a strategic approach to improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. These pupils do not make strong enough progress because teaching and learning for these pupils are not effectively monitored by leaders. As a result, teaching staff do not prioritise this group of pupils.
- The monitoring of progress made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not effective. Interventions to support these pupils are not typically successful in improving their achievement in the core skills of reading and writing.
- Leaders have created a school community where pupils are nurtured to be responsible citizens. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced by the school's curriculum.
- Pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, older pupils understand fundamental British values. They can explain why the rule of law is important in their lives. Pupils demonstrate their understanding of equality and tolerance.
- The curriculum ensures wider experiences for pupils to improve their skills in a range of artistic, creative and sporting activities. Pupils enjoy residential opportunities, such as a trip to the Cornish coast to experience bodyboarding, surfing, canoeing and kayaking. The school's commitment to physical education (PE) and wider sporting activities provides pupils with many opportunities. However, leaders and governors do not use additional funding appropriately to develop high-quality PE and school sport for the future.
- Leaders ensure that pupils engage positively with their community. Pupils visit local residential homes, and the school is proactive in inviting community members in to help with pupils' reading development.

Governance of the school

- In recent years, governors have not stringently held leaders to account for pupils' outcomes. The school's self-evaluation is not wholly accurate. As a result, governors do not have a comprehensive understanding of the quality of education in the school.
- Governors' monitoring of the impact of pupil premium funding is not strategic. Expectations are not high enough to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make strong progress in English and mathematics. An external review of the pupil premium is recommended in order to support improvement.
- Governors are committed to improving the school and wish to deepen their understanding. The headteacher is proactive in developing greater involvement of governors, but this is not yet securing stronger academic outcomes for pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Training ensures that staff recognise vulnerable pupils and that they know how to protect pupils from extremist views.
- Checks on the suitability of staff, volunteers and visitors to the school ensure that pupils are protected. However, leaders and governors do not check these processes sufficiently and so some record-keeping is not as thorough as it should be.
- The school's approach to ensuring pupils know how to stay safe online is effective. Pupils' safety on the school site is carefully managed. All reasonable measures have been taken to prevent unauthorised access.
- Almost all parents and carers 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

Requires improvement

- The monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently improving pupils' progress. Improvements made to assess pupils' ability levels are not being used consistently to build on what pupils already know, can do and understand.
- Teaching is not routinely meeting the needs of different groups of pupils. Too often, work is not appropriately matched to pupils' needs. Pupils who need to catch up, including some who have SEN and/or disabilities, are not challenged effectively to improve. This is because adults often provide an unnecessary level of help, making the work too easy.
- In too many classes, teachers' expectations are not high enough. In Years 1, 2 and 3, disadvantaged pupils do not receive the additional support they require to make rapid progress in reading. This includes those disadvantaged pupils who need to catch up quickly.
- Positive initiatives introduced to boost pupils' achievement in reading are not used consistently to drive improvement. The school correctly recognised the need to improve pupils' higher-order reading skills and introduced the regular use of guided

reading tasks. In year groups where this happens frequently, such as Year 6, pupils make good progress. The teaching of reading is less effective elsewhere in key stage 2.

- Pupils require greater opportunities to practise their writing skills, including children in the early years. Expectations are not high enough in key stage 1. In some classes, teachers do not adapt tasks to meet the needs of different abilities. As a result, teachers' questioning is not skilfully probing pupils' responses in order to help them to better understand learning objectives.
- In mathematics, pupils who grasp concepts rapidly do not receive sufficient challenge to apply their skills to more sophisticated problems, especially in key stage 2. The school recognises the need to develop reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics. However, this approach is not yet embedded across the school.
- Teachers reinforce high expectations for conduct and pupils respond accordingly in all classes. Pupils typically focus well on their learning. However, where work is too difficult or too easy, positive attitudes to learning suffer as a result.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. By the end of Year 2, most pupils can use their phonics skills to read unfamiliar words. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to learn how to organise their ideas and make progress quickly in writing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's nurturing environment is based on clear values. As a result, pupils demonstrate care for each other. They interact well during break and lunchtimes. Pupils enjoy physical activity and they know how to keep themselves healthy.
- Most pupils are confident and self-assured. They know how to behave in social situations. They show respect for others' ideas and views. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about their involvement in the local community, trips to London and residential visits.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe. They are reassured by the adults who deal with their concerns and look after them with care. They say that bullying is rare and that it is dealt with quickly if it occurs.
- PE and school sport is a strength of the school. Opportunities exist to compete in team sports against other local schools, alongside inclusive festivals where all pupils take part.
- Pupils' personal development is supported through the curriculum. However, the spiritual aspect of the curriculum is not planned well enough to ensure consistent progress in pupils' understanding.
- The management of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not sufficiently developed. Needs are identified and support is put in place. However, checks on the impact of support for these pupils are not effective. Expectations for academic outcomes are not high enough.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good and their conduct throughout the day is very positive, including during break and lunchtimes.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive across the school. Pupils are keen to learn. Classrooms are safe environments and staff ensure that pupils learn in a positive atmosphere.
- Attendance levels for all pupils are in line with those found nationally. However, persistent absence increased recently. Leaders and governors monitor these trends and the school's work to reduce persistent absence is having a positive impact.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Current pupils do not make consistently strong progress in English and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is not strong enough. The monitoring of their progress lacks a robust, strategic approach by governors, leaders and teachers.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not make enough progress in the core areas of learning. This is due to leaders and teachers not systematically checking the impact of support for these pupils.
- The most able pupils do not achieve as well as they can at the end of key stage 2, especially in mathematics. The proportion of pupils working at greater depth in mathematics at the end of Year 6 is below that found nationally. Teachers do not plan learning that ensures that the most able pupils receive enough challenge.
- Progress for children in the early years is not consistently strong. However, most children achieve a good level of development at the end of Reception.
- A high proportion of pupils achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. Outcomes in phonics are in line with those found nationally.
- Current pupils' progress in reading is not as strong as it needs to be. At key stage 2 in reading, progress over time is well below the national average. The attainment of pupils in reading improved from 2016 to 2017. However, it remains below the national figure for pupils at the end of Year 6. The proportion of pupils working at greater depth in reading improved in 2017 and is now broadly in line with the national figure.
- Current pupils' progress in writing is not as strong as it should be. Teachers' expectations are not high enough, including expectations for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Current pupils typically make better progress in mathematics than in English. The headteacher led the improvements in mathematics. The introduction of greater opportunities for pupils to reason mathematically and use their skills to solve problems is not yet embedded across the school.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the combined expected standard at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics improved from 2016 to 2017. As a result, more pupils are prepared for the next phase of their education. However, this proportion remains below that found nationally.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Expectations are not high enough to ensure that children's progress is as rapid as it should be. This is particularly evident in early writing skills. Children do not experience enough opportunities to build on their phonics knowledge and practise early writing skills in order to make strong progress.
- In learning about number, teaching enables children to make progress but they are not pushed to make the progress of which they are capable.
- The Reception teacher knows the children well and carries out regular checks on their learning. However, assessments do not play enough of a role in challenging children. Activities can be too hard or too easy for many children.
- Parents are involved with their children's education. Early years staff are accessible and increase parental engagement, through the use of technology, by sharing pupils' achievements.
- The dedicated outdoor space is used well as a learning resource. Children experience exploring and making choices as a result.
- Children are safe and well cared for. They mix well with each other and have strong relationships with the adults supporting them. Children typically engage enthusiastically with their learning.
- Children are curious, polite and respectful. The class teacher has established effective routines to encourage positive behaviour in the Reception class. Children respond well to the teachers' expectations for good conduct.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development, the standard expected at the end of early years, declined in 2017.

School details

Unique reference number	123640
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10042691

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	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Weldhen
Headteacher	Sarah Martin
Telephone number	01963 350520
Website	www.castlecaryschool.org.uk/
Email address	office@castlecaryschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 February 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the pupil premium on its website.
- The school does not meet requirements on the use of the PE and sport premium.
- 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.
- Castle Cary Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are eight classes.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is higher than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited classrooms to observe learning. Some of these visits were made jointly with the headteacher and other senior members of staff. Inspectors observed pupils' learning across the school.
- The inspection team looked carefully at pupils' work from all year groups and across a range of subjects.
- The inspection team 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 inspection team held discussions with school leaders, staff and members of the governing body. The inspectors also took into account responses to questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.
- The inspection team looked at the school's evaluation of its own performance, its improvement plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of meetings of the governing body. They also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- The inspectors listened to a selection of pupils read.
- The inspectors took account of 52 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including a number of free-text responses. The inspectors also spoke to a number of parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Mike Brady, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Paula Marsh	Ofsted Inspector
Marion Borland	Ofsted Inspector

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