

# Castercliff Primary School

Marsden Hall Road North, Nelson, Lancashire BB9 8JJ

## Inspection dates

25–26 April 2018

<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>Outstanding</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

- Strong and determined leadership has been very successful in significantly raising standards and accelerating progress at Castercliff.
- The school has created an ethos of high expectations and a relentless desire to want the best for all pupils.
- Significant improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have resulted in the vast majority of pupils making good progress.
- Progress at the end of key stage 2 is very strong and in the top 10% nationally for reading and mathematics in 2017. However, attainment is still catching up, particularly at greater depth and higher standards.
- A strong sense of community permeates the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and pupils' attendance has improved. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said they always feel safe.
- Leaders have created an inviting and exciting learning environment. Leaders and teachers work to promote pupils' personal development and their appreciation of British values is strong. As a result, pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and their behaviour is outstanding.
- Children in early years make a good start to their school life. They work happily and cooperatively. They benefit from warm, engaging relationships with adults. This ensures that they make good progress.
- Leaders' continuing ambition to provide the best teaching, outcomes and experiences for all pupils is translated into action, and this means that the school is continuing to improve.
- Middle leaders are enthusiastic that they are developing their skills and benefiting from the good-quality professional development opportunities that the trust offers, especially in English and mathematics. However, monitoring of standards and quality by middle leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics is at an early stage of development
- The increased focus on disadvantaged pupils is having a positive effect on their achievement, but leaders agree there is still more work to do to ensure that the most able disadvantaged pupils achieve all of which they are capable.
- Teachers generally match work accurately with pupils' abilities, but occasionally work is not sufficiently challenging, especially for the most able.

## Full report

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

- Continue to raise the attainment of pupils in English and mathematics, so that as many pupils as possible achieve at greater depth and higher standards, including pupils who are disadvantaged.
- Further develop the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers take every opportunity to challenge pupils to think more deeply about their work.
- Continue to develop middle leaders so that tracking in all subject areas is as rigorous as in English and mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Since the most recent inspection of the predecessor school, the principal has been unwavering in his determination to improve the standard of education for pupils at Castercliff. He has had strong support from the executive principal, senior leaders and the governors of the school.
- Leaders have worked very hard to eliminate underperformance, improve the quality of teaching and accelerate the progress pupils make in their learning. They are not complacent, recognising that there is still more to do, particularly in ensuring that pupils achieve all they are capable of at higher standards.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of what the school does well and what it needs to do to be even more successful. Regular evaluation and the tracking of actions are incisive and detailed, ensuring that no time is wasted in bringing about further improvements. This is particularly evident in English and mathematics.
- Middle leaders are eager and enthusiastic to lead the many subject areas other than mathematics and English. For example, the science lead, new in post this academic year, is enthusiastically monitoring and evaluating the subject across the school and has established a means by which staff can track pupils' progress. There are some good models of subject leadership emerging across the school, including in the tracking of geography. However, this is still a relatively new development and is not as rigorous or as well established in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- The school's curriculum captures the interests of pupils. Its design ensures that pupils have many varied opportunities to benefit from real-life experiences. This includes opportunities to inspire pupils with a range of experiences, such as visits to the local library, attendance at a Commonwealth Service with the wider community, a visit to Burnley Football Club's outdoor centre and a chance for pupils to 'pitch' their innovative ideas to a panel of 'dragons' in the Pendle Reading Challenge.
- An important feature of the curriculum is the emphasis on the well-being and personal development of pupils. Examples are the 'keeping pupils safe online' provision, and the experiences on offer to inspire the pupils. A suitably wide range of after-school activities, such as choir, guitar and sports, enhances the curriculum. There is also a well-attended breakfast club. Committed staff and governors ensure that the school provides a safe, nurturing environment in which pupils can learn.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding is used well. Pupils take part in a wide range of sporting activities, such as dodge ball, netball and football, during and after school.
- Leaders have very recently appointed a member of staff to be a pupil premium champion. Although new in the role, she has made a good start. There is a much greater focus on the progress of this group of pupils. Resources give support where they are most needed. Regular evaluation of what impact this has is to start very soon. As a result of the decisive action of leaders, there is effective use of pupil premium spending, which provides targeted support for this group of pupils.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors share the passion and commitment of the principal and senior leaders of the trust. Lines of communication and accountability are clear and the governors monitor and support the school well. Governors' half-termly 'challenge meetings' allow them to question school leaders and hold them to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, as well as for pupils' outcomes.
- Governors and members of the Challenge and Improvement Board make it their business to know about the work of the school and have an accurate and incisive view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors ensure that the school prioritises the development of the 'whole child'.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff have a good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding matters. They know exactly what to do if a pupil approaches them with a concern relating to their safety or welfare. All staff are familiar with the latest government guidelines on how to keep children safe. Well-trained staff recognise all forms of abuse and spot pupils in need of help and support.
- Staff take prompt action on safeguarding matters and work with a range of professionals. The school's central record of checks on the suitability of staff to work with children is up to date and contains all the necessary information. There is minimal risk to pupils due to the stringent systems in place. Leaders have been successful in creating a school culture in which safeguarding is of paramount importance.

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

**Good**

- Leaders have worked extremely hard and have made significant improvements to teaching, learning and assessment in the school. Along with the wider leadership team, they have transformed the school by ensuring that all members of staff have high expectations of what pupils can do. They have introduced new approaches to the teaching of phonics, reading, writing, mathematics, grammar, spelling and punctuation, all to good effect.
- There is a high level of consistency from all teachers in implementing the agreed approaches to teaching English and mathematics. This has been an important factor in accelerating pupils' progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, particularly in English and mathematics. Lessons are usually lively and interesting, capturing pupils' imagination. For example, in one class, the teacher engaged pupils in creating 'magic potions', which led to them finding out about quantities that are needed. In this way, they greatly enjoyed using their mathematical skills for a purpose. Where teaching is not as strong, leaders have put strategies in place to support teachers.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and as a result pupils' attitudes to learning are first class. Only very occasionally, when pupils are not challenged, do they lose concentration.
- Work is usually matched well to pupils' abilities in English and mathematics. Where

teaching is having the greatest impact, teachers adapt and change plans based on ongoing assessments of how well pupils grasp learning. However, on some occasions, work is not challenging enough. This is particularly the case for the pupils who have the potential to reach greater depth and higher standards.

- Skilled teaching assistants give timely help and support to individuals and groups of pupils. They work well as part of the teaching team and play an important part in pupils' progress in their learning.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are positive. Pupils take pride in their work, which is always very well presented. They say they enjoy their lessons and like coming to school, particularly because they like their teachers and because teachers help them learn. When they struggle, they say that adults will always help them to understand.
- Teachers know their pupils well and use good-quality assessment information to track the progress they are making. However, some teachers are not as consistent as others in using their knowledge of pupils to move them on quickly enough in their learning. For example, an activity the pupils completed was not challenging enough for some of the group. These pupils finished the task set very quickly and then had nothing else to do. This is particularly true for most-able pupils.
- The school offers good support to those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. It is broad and clearly targeted. Leaders plan additional support well, resulting in these pupils making good progress from their individual starting points in lessons and over time.
- The development of reading, writing, and grammatical and mathematical skills is a high priority in the school. Teachers use good-quality reading texts effectively in class. These have been carefully chosen to be a stimulus for work across the curriculum and create a range of interesting and stimulating activities. Other reading strategies that have recently had a positive impact on pupils' reading are regular online reading activities and daily opportunities for pupils to read for pleasure. As a result, pupils enjoy reading.
- Pupils have the skills to write for a range of purposes to a high standard. This is due to their written work being systematically developed over time. A focus on increasing pupils' vocabulary across the school has been extremely effective. Books often provide pupils with a stimulus for longer pieces of writing, as well as links to other curriculum areas, such as science and history. This gives pupils a sense of purpose and added interest.
- Teachers are confident in their teaching of mathematics. Pupils are being provided with a structured and thorough understanding of fluency in the use of basic skills. Most are being offered lots of opportunities to practise their skills and apply this learning to problem-solving activities and reasoning. Occasionally, the most able are not being challenged as much as they could be.
- Good-quality phonics teaching has given pupils the skills to read unfamiliar words. Pupils who struggle with reading have appropriate support to practise their skills and are proud of the progress they make.

**Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school offers a high-quality personal, social, emotional and health curriculum that is woven into all that it does. A particular strength is the innovative way that leaders have responded to pupils' mental and emotional health.
- Staff treat pupils with the utmost consideration and ensure that the school makes everyone feel welcome and valued. Adults model respectful behaviour in lessons, around the school and in the way they engage with pupils. As a result, pupils behave similarly.
- The very large majority of parents and carers who spoke to inspectors or responded to the school's questionnaires for parents praised the school and the work of the staff. They said that their children are happy and well looked after. A number of parents were keen to say that their children enjoyed school and that staff were 'easy to talk to' and 'approachable'. They particularly like the way staff go out in the playground and greet the pupils and parents in the morning.
- The vast majority of pupils in the school are happy to talk about their learning. Pupils told inspectors how proud they were of their school and how they were very well looked after by adults.
- Pupils spoken to during the inspection said confidently that teachers dealt with any rare examples of unfriendly or negative language towards pupils quickly. They also mentioned how good the pupils who are 'play leaders' are at being responsible for 'sorting out' problems and making sure everyone plays in a sensible and friendly way. The majority of parents who spoke to inspectors said that bullying has happened in the past, but is now rare. Where it has occurred, it is dealt with well.

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils conduct themselves extremely well. They take pride in their appearance and their school uniform. Improvements in their self-confidence have resulted in them being delightfully polite and well mannered. They are keen to engage with, and smile at visitors as they walk down the corridor. As a result, the school is a calm, orderly and purposeful place to learn.
- A productive atmosphere in the majority of classrooms means that the overwhelming majority of pupils have a very positive attitude towards school and visibly enjoy their learning. Pupils are attentive and eager to participate in lessons and typically work very well in supporting each other in a collaborative way. This is particularly evident in upper key stage 2, where there is a very industrious atmosphere in classrooms. For example, a pupil offered her friend an extra dice so she could challenge herself to create 'harder number problems to solve'.
- A very small number of pupils have difficulties in managing their own behaviour. However, they are very well supported to ensure that this does not get in the way of

their learning and does not distract others. Some of the most vulnerable pupils in the school benefit enormously from the opportunity to be part of smaller groups. These pupils have the chance to work in a cosy, nurturing environment for parts of the school day.

- The systems for checking absence are very thorough and conscientiously applied. Rewards given for good attendance ensure that this has a high profile in the school. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved considerably over the last two years and is now in line with the national average. The level of persistent absence of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, was historically high. However, leaders' hard work has successfully reduced by half the number of pupils who are regularly absent. The school's pastoral team is very successful in supporting pupils and families who might be struggling. The team is well respected and relationships with parents and pupils alike are strong.

### Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- The dynamic actions of leaders and the positive response from staff have resulted in significant improvements in progress in English and mathematics for pupils who were previously considerably underachieving. The vast majority of pupils across the school are now making accelerated progress.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the national screening check for phonics at the end of Year 1 is now similar to that of pupils nationally.
- In 2017, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 improved compared with the previous year. Improvements have led to the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading to being just below the national average. In writing and mathematics, the proportions working at the expected standard were comparable to the national average. However, pupils achieve less well at greater depth.
- Leaders were rightly delighted with progress at the end of key stage 2 in 2017, as it demonstrated the rapid improvements and significant accelerated progress that Year 6 pupils made during that school year. As a result, progress measures in reading and mathematics were well above national averages and in the top 10% of schools nationally. Progress in writing was in the top 20% nationally. However, the proportion of pupils attaining at higher standards in each subject was below the national average.
- Leaders are determined that the attainment outcomes at the end of key stage 2 will reach and exceed national averages both at expected and higher levels. As a consequence of the past underachievement of pupils, many have not had the opportunity to make the achievement gains they could, in particular those pupils who are potentially the most able.
- The school has a large number of pupils identified as eligible for pupil premium funding. The school's achievement information seen during the inspection indicates that the difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils is diminishing and that they are making similar rates of accelerated progress to that of their peers. However, they still do not appear to be achieving at the highest level at the same rate as pupils do nationally and leaders are addressing this. They have recently appointed a pupil premium champion to focus on this area of

development.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. Teachers and teaching assistants offer effective support and ensure that pupils succeed in their learning.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The recent improvements in provision, including a greater focus on activities initiated by the children, are having a very positive effect on their learning. Consequently, progress has been accelerated in early years.
- The vast majority of children start early years with skills and knowledge that are below levels typical for their age, especially in reading and mathematics. As a result of good teaching and provision, careful observation and good questioning, children make good progress and are well prepared to start Year 1. Around half of the children reach a good level of development.
- The relatively new leadership of early years is good. There is a clear view about the strengths and weaknesses of early years and the team has a number of ideas about how to improve further. A focus on the importance of good-quality staff development has ensured that adults are confident that they have the skills and knowledge needed to achieve the best learning for children.
- Teachers use day-to-day assessment information well to plan a curriculum for children that is both interesting and lively. Key workers use information well to plan specific activities that meet children's needs and challenge them sufficiently.
- The early years department's routines are well established and the two classrooms are generally organised effectively to provide children with a varied learning environment. Activities are full of fun; one (based around a 'crime scene') captured the children's imagination and allowed them to practise their speaking skills. For example, children eagerly asked questions about the 'covered crime scene'. When asked by the teacher what might be under the sheet, one child said excitedly, 'It's a motorbike.' A little girl said she thought it was a unicorn. Children listened carefully, took turns in speaking and were eager to respond to adults' instructions.
- There have been significant improvements in the outdoor area for Reception children. Adults regularly join in with children's play, using opportunities to teach skills and model good learning habits. There are plenty of opportunities to explore using a range of equipment that encourages them to build and create and try out their ideas. For example, children enjoyed role-playing and construction work as well as getting messy in the 'mud kitchen'.
- The importance placed on reading, writing and mathematical skills is evident, with regular chances for children to write, practise their letters and sounds and use number. The development of language, including speaking, is also a high priority, along with building self-confidence.
- There are a number of children joining early years who speak English as an additional language. However, as a result of the focused work of adults, many children feel confident and eager to say hello to visitors and chat about what they are doing and are proud of. Adults engage with children very well and skilfully ask questions to draw out



children's understanding, encourage them to talk and help them feel self-assured.

- Safeguarding is effective. Risk assessments are thorough and the classrooms are a safe environment for children.
- Children eligible for additional financial support make good progress. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders recognise that for these children, reading and mathematics are always priority areas.
- All early years statutory welfare requirements are met. Children are safe and well supported. They play and learn with confidence and a sense of fun, indicating that they feel very safe, secure and happy.
- The emphasis on creating a caring and nurturing environment is evident from the very positive relationships adults have with children and children have with each other. Consequently, children's behaviour is good. They play and learn together well.
- There are also positive relationships between staff and parents. Parents describe the adults in early years as 'approachable' and say that they 'help with any worries or concerns'. Staff encourage parental involvement in their child's learning through invitations to reading workshop sessions and involving them in homework projects.

## School details

Unique reference number	142055
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10046630

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	305
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	David Franklin
Principal	Mark Sherwin
Telephone number	01282 617627
Website	<a href="http://www.castercliffprimaryacademy.co.uk">www.castercliffprimaryacademy.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:msherwin@castercliffprimaryacademy.co.uk">msherwin@castercliffprimaryacademy.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Castercliff Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is just above the national average.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is at the national average.
- The school is a member of a multi-academy trust. It has a Challenge and Improvement Board, a chair of governors, an executive principal, a performance director, two trust directors and a chief executive officer of the trust.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school in all classes. Senior leaders accompanied inspectors during the majority of these observations.
- Inspectors listened to three groups of pupils read and held discussions with further groups of pupils. They also talked informally with pupils around the school.
- Meetings were held with the principal, senior leaders, subject leaders and lunchtime staff. Inspectors also met the chair of the governing body, the executive principal and chief executive officer of the trust and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to parents at the start of the school day, as well as taking account of the 37 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during lessons, at playtimes and lunchtimes and around the school site.
- Inspectors examined several documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan and information relating to pupils' achievement and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Moira Atkins, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Joan Williamson	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Ward	Ofsted 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 2018