

# Castle Carrock School

Castle Carrock, Brampton, Cumbria CA8 9LU

## Inspection dates

4–5 June 2019

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	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The progress that pupils make in mathematics across key stage 1 and key stage 2 is not strong enough. The whole-school approach to teaching mathematics needs embedding.
- Over time, the quality of teaching and learning has been variable. As a result, there are gaps in pupils' learning, particularly in mathematics. The opportunities to develop problem-solving and reasoning skills are limited.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. In some instances, the activities planned for pupils do not provide the appropriate challenge across the wider curriculum.
- Too many leadership responsibilities lie with the headteacher, which limits the effectiveness of some subjects.
- There are no subject leaders for several foundation subjects. Consequently, the level of challenge in topic work is not routinely checked to ensure that pupils are making enough progress.
- The teaching of phonics is variable. This is because staff have not had recent training.
- Governors lack systems with which to evaluate some aspects of the school's work. They also lack clarity about how well pupils achieve in foundation subjects.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has sought external support to address the improvements needed in mathematics. She has a steely determination to raise standards in all aspects of school life.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They settle extremely well into school, respond well to the interesting curriculum and make good progress.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified early. Bespoke and effective support is quickly put into place for these pupils.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are safe. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Their above average attendance demonstrates their enjoyment of school.
- Staff organise trips and visits beyond the school environment that bring learning to life for pupils.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - establishing consistently good teaching across key stage 1 and key stage 2 in order to secure good progress, particularly in mathematics
  - ensuring that staff are trained in using one systematic approach to the teaching of phonics
  - appointing and developing subject leaders so that they can effectively improve pupils' outcomes across the wider curriculum
  - ensuring that governors have the necessary skills to develop systems to accurately measure how well the school is doing.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise pupils' achievement by:
  - ensuring that staff plan the teaching of daily phonics sessions effectively to make sure that pupils develop their early reading skills, particularly in key stage 1
  - providing more regular opportunities to develop pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics
  - building on the whole-school approach to teaching mathematics and addressing gaps in previous learning
  - ensuring that teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve across all subjects.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not good enough in some aspects of key stage 1 and key stage 2. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge, particularly in mathematics.
- The headteacher has an accurate view of the strengths of the school and the areas for improvement. She has wisely instigated external expertise to provide additional training and support for staff to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics. However, some pupils still have gaps in their knowledge due to previously weak teaching when they were younger.
- There are plans to drive forward the school's improvement which have been endorsed by the governors. Based on the plans, the headteacher has introduced ambitious targets for staff to achieve.
- The headteacher has a heavy workload. She is currently leading on English and mathematics, although there are plans for another teacher to take on the role of mathematics leader from September. In addition, the headteacher has a significant teaching commitment which includes plugging the gaps in pupils' knowledge due to previously weaker teaching.
- The headteacher has introduced a broad and balanced curriculum. However, there are no specific subject leaders in areas such as the arts and humanities. As a result, pupils' achievement across the wider curriculum is not monitored closely enough.
- Parents and carers rightly praise the staff for providing a broad range of additional activities, including a computer coding club, a running club and cycling excursions. This helps to promote pupils' love of learning and the importance of leading healthy lifestyles.
- Leaders plan opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through topics, assemblies, trips and visitors to the school. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 animatedly spoke to the inspector about their pending residential trip to Lockerbie. These types of experience enhance pupils' understanding of life beyond the local village and develop pupils' understanding of British values.
- The limited additional funding for pupils with SEND is used well. The special educational needs coordinator implements individual education pathways that address the specific needs of pupils, with bespoke support from teachers and teaching assistants. When needed, the school sources external professional support from a wide range of agencies with whom staff work well.
- The very limited additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for the specialist funding for physical education and sport is used wisely.
- The vast majority of parents would recommend this school. Several told the inspector that they travel significant distances so that their children can attend the school. They say that 'staff communicate brilliantly' with them and, as a result, parents feel well informed of how their children are doing.

## Governance of the school

- Governors recognise that they need to develop their skills and systems to accurately assess how well the school is doing compared to other schools nationally. They acknowledge that there are gaps in their knowledge of the achievement of pupils across foundation subjects.
- Governors have supported the headteacher in approaching other schools for support, particularly with the implementation of a whole-school approach to the teaching of mathematics.
- Given the limited budget, governors are meticulous in accounting for the funding that the school receives.
- Governors are rightly proud of how effectively staff provide opportunities for pupils to engage with and play a pivotal role in the local community.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding at Castle Carrock. The school provides a safe and caring environment for pupils. Leaders put measures in place to ensure that all pupils stay safe.
- Leaders ensure that staff receive up-to-date safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training. Members of staff are aware of the safeguarding procedures employed in the school. Records are well maintained. Governors effectively fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.
- All statutory checks are in place to ensure the suitability of adults working in the school. The site is secure and appropriate checks are made on visitors when they arrive at the school. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said that they felt safe and this view was shared by parents who spoke to inspectors.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across key stage 1 and key stage 2. The headteacher has identified where improvements are needed and interim solutions have been put in place.
- Some staff who teach phonics have not had updates to their initial training for quite some time. As a result, pupils do not always have enough challenge in their learning and time is sometimes wasted. Pupils occasionally lack clarity about the tasks that they have been set. This slows progress.
- The headteacher has worked with leaders from other schools to address areas for improvement in mathematics. A whole-school approach to the teaching of mathematics has been adopted. Due to pockets of previous weaker teaching, some older pupils still have gaps in their learning, which are now being addressed. For example, there is a focus on pupils memorising their times tables, which is proving effective. Some pupils' books illustrated that there are limited opportunities to develop problem-solving and reasoning skills.

- From scrutinising pupils' writing, it was evident from pupils' English books that teachers have high expectations. Teachers encourage pupils to edit and improve their work and the work of their peers. Over time, pupils make good progress with their writing skills in English, but this is not replicated across other subjects and in pupils' topic work.
- The monitoring of pupils' progress across foundation subjects is at an early stage of development. There are no designated subject leaders in areas such as the arts and humanities to ensure that teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- The headteacher has prioritised a culture of reading across the school. The younger children enjoy story time and parents told the inspector that their children are encouraged to read regularly at home. Older pupils were able to wax lyrical about their favourite authors and the genres of books that they enjoy. This supports pupils in making good progress with their reading during their time at school.
- Across the school, teaching assistants provide valuable support for pupils, including those with SEND. Teaching assistants know these pupils well and provide effective support for individuals and small groups. There have been an increasing number of pupils with SEND joining the school other than at the usual times. Many of these pupils experience success for the first time here because of the nurturing environment and bespoke support provided by staff. However, the local authority is not supporting the school well enough, as pupils' education, health and care plans are not up to date.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff make it a priority to encourage pupils and to help them feel positive about themselves and their lives. The whole-school choir is part of a plan to support pupils' well-being. As a result, pupils have good self-esteem and show respect for each other, staff and visitors to the school.
- Pupils are punctual and quick to return to lessons after social times. They move around the school sensibly. Older pupils who have responsibilities as school leaders act as positive role models to the younger children.
- The school's harmonious culture promotes pupils' welfare effectively. Pupils who talked to the inspector said that they feel safe, enjoy school and are listened to. They have a clear understanding of how to stay safe when meeting strangers or travelling on or near roads. They have a strong knowledge of how to use the internet and social media safely.
- Pupils talked excitedly about being members of after-school clubs and about trips beyond their local environment which enrich their life experiences. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of faiths and cultures found across Britain are evident. The school council is proactive in organising fund-raising events for those less fortunate than themselves.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View believe their children are happy at school. One parent summed up the views of many by saying that 'I do not

have enough praise for the way the staff nurture the children.’

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They listen carefully, concentrate and, for the most part, take pride in their work.
- Leaders and staff work successfully to set clear expectations for pupils’ behaviour throughout the school. Pupils who have struggled in other schools are well supported by staff in developing their social and emotional skills. As a result, they learn to choose appropriate behaviours and respond positively to staff and to other pupils.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. There are clear reward systems for good behaviour and sanctions for inappropriate behaviour that pupils clearly understand.
- Pupils understand what behaviour, including online, might constitute bullying. They say that bullying is rare but staff use transparent systems to deal with issues when they arise.
- Pupils’ attendance is higher than the national average, which reflects how much they enjoy school.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because there have been some pockets of teaching that have not been good enough and this has led to some gaps in pupils’ learning. The headteacher is already taking positive action to compensate for this.
- Published data should be viewed with caution as the number of pupils in each year group can be in single figures. The headteacher has prioritised improving the teaching of mathematics as progress in recent years has been steady rather than good. The progress of current older pupils dipped in lower key stage 2, but the headteacher is ensuring that pupils are now catching up with their learning. In key stage 1, current pupils are making expected progress in mathematics.
- The culture of reading across the school leads to most pupils reaching expected standards by the time they leave Year 6, with several at the higher standards. The pupils whom the inspector listened to in guided reading sessions demonstrated strengths in building their fluency and understanding of what they had read. Pupils develop a genuine love of reading during their time at Castle Carrock and this prepares them well for the next stage in their education and for life generally.
- Pupils generally make good progress with their writing skills so that most reach the expected standard in English by the end of Year 6 and some reach the higher standard. Trips and visitors bring learning to life and stimulate pupils to develop their writing skills.
- There are very few pupils currently supported by pupil premium funding. The progress of individuals is monitored carefully, with regular review of the effectiveness of interventions. Consequently, these pupils catch up well with their learning.

- The achievement of pupils across the breadth of foundation subjects is at an early stage of development. As a result, leaders and governors lack clarity about how well pupils are progressing across the wider curriculum.
- Pupils with SEND have shown that their progress is improving. This is especially the case for those who have been at risk of exclusion from other schools. The leader in this area is working well with external agencies and school staff to provide bespoke support for individual pupils.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Leadership and teaching in the early years are of good quality. As a result, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is usually similar to the national average and in 2018 was higher. Children currently in the early years are set to maintain this high standard.
- Leaders accurately assess and track children's attainment and progress and this has enabled them to revise the curriculum to address any gaps in children's understanding. The curriculum is broad and balanced and based strongly on children's interests and extending their experiences. The early years leader has a very good overview of the assessment data and of children and their families.
- The early years leader ensures that the classrooms and outdoor areas are well resourced and have a good range of equipment to inspire children to explore, play and learn. Children choose areas and equipment to use and work well with others to extend their imagination.
- Storytelling has a high profile and children clearly enjoyed listening to poems about different forms of transport. This led to nursery children embarking on their own imagined train journey using outdoor equipment. Reception children were keen to write about a journey and used their phonics skills well to work out spellings of unfamiliar words.
- Staff effectively plan activities to develop the imagination of children. Each child has a personal learning journal and staff diligently record activities in which each child has been engaged and milestones that children have reached. Parents are also encouraged to record achievements that their children make beyond school.
- Behaviour is good. Excellent transition arrangements prior to starting school lead to children settling extremely well into school life and routines. During the inspection, it was clear to see how happy the children are to come to school and this was reflected in conversations with parents. There are well-thought-out arrangements to ensure a smooth start to Year 1.
- Welfare requirements are met. The provision is well staffed. It is a safe environment and all statutory school policies are in place, ensuring that pupils are safe and feel safe.

## School details

Unique reference number	137653
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10083946

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	69
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mark Hetherington
Headteacher	Rebecca Stacey
Telephone number	01228 670393
Website	<a href="http://www.castlecarrock.cumbria.sch.uk">www.castlecarrock.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:rstacey@castlecarrock.cumbria.sch.uk">rstacey@castlecarrock.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	25 September 2018

## Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school. All pupils, including those of nursery age, are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is higher than the national average, but this is variable across individual year groups.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much lower than the national average.



## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes. Sessions were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector met with representatives of the governing body.
- The inspector held a meeting with two groups of pupils from key stage 2 and talked with pupils in classes and also around the school.
- The inspector listened to a small number of pupils reading.
- A range of pupils' books and tracking records were scrutinised with the headteacher.
- The inspector spoke with a number of parents to seek their views. The responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were analysed. The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted's online pupil and staff questionnaires.
- The inspector scrutinised a variety of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, records of governing body meetings and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance. A range of documentation regarding safeguarding was also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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