



Castlemorton CofE Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 116791
Local Authority Worcestershire
Inspection number 290634
Inspection date 1 November 2006
Reporting inspector Martin James

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Castlemorton
School category	Community		Malvern
Age range of pupils	4–11		WR13 6BG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01684 833282
Number on roll (school)	92	Fax number	01684 833 282
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	M Williams
		Headteacher	M C Worthington
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2002		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
4–11	1 November 2006	290634

Amended Report Addendum

Date of Previous Inspection

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Castlemorton Primary School is smaller than most primary schools. All pupils are of White British heritage. The school experiences significant levels of movement of pupils joining and leaving the school each year. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Children enter Reception with skills and abilities in line with those expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is slightly higher than found nationally.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Castlemorton is a good and effective school. Children really enjoy attending, and one reason for this is the good and stimulating curriculum that engages them and creates in them a desire to learn. The 'Forest School' in particular excites the pupils, and it is used most successfully to support their learning in most subjects. The school makes exceptional use of visits and lunchtime and after-school activities to enthuse pupils, and the introduction of French has further extended the range of activities on offer.

Standards are above average and achievement is good overall. When pupils start in the Reception class, their knowledge and skills are broadly as expected for their age. Good provision for these children ensures that they make good progress, especially in their personal and social skills. Good teaching and learning continue through Years 1 to 6. As a result, pupils achieve well and reach above-average standards. By the end of Year 6, standards are particularly high in English. Standards are above average in mathematics, but pupils' progress is not as good as it could be because there are some weaknesses in the curriculum and in target setting in this subject.

Pupils are well cared for and receive good guidance and advice. This good care, advice and support that pupils receive contributes to their learning and progress. Sensitive support for pupils with learning disabilities, and to those who join the school part way through the year, helps to ensure that they too learn effectively. Marking of pupils' written work does not always provide the same high level of support, because comments are too general and do not always identify to the pupils what they need to do to improve their work and make more progress.

Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well, and they say that they are well looked after and know who to turn to if they need help. They understand the need for a healthy lifestyle. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school's strong links with schools in The Gambia has increased the pupils' understanding of other cultures. For example, pupils readily explain the differences between their experiences in Castlemorton school with those of pupils in The Gambia.

The headteacher, staff and governors are a dedicated team providing good leadership and management. Self-evaluation is effective in pinpointing where improvement is required to help move the school forward. For example, detailed analysis of pupils' progress has led to action being taken to remedy weaknesses in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. The great majority of parents are supportive of the school, and most feel that the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. The school has developed well since the last inspection, and has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Providing pupils with more problem-solving tasks and opportunities to use their mathematics in different situations.
- Ensuring targets for pupils are more specific so that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work and progress.

- Ensuring that comments on pupils' written work identify how pupils' work could be improved.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. During their time in Reception the children make good progress, and they reach and occasionally exceed the early learning goals. They develop good personal and social skills through well-structured play and clear routines. In Years 1 and 2 pupils achieve well and by the end of Year 2, standards are above average.

Through Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to achieve well. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average, being exceptionally high in English. Standards are above average in mathematics, but pupils' progress in some areas of the subject is not as good as it might be. A significant number of pupils in Years 3 to 6 join and leave the school during the year. Often pupils joining the school enter with some gaps in their knowledge. The school supports these pupils well and they make good progress, although the standards they achieve are often not as high as those of pupils who have been in the school throughout Years 3 to 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils love coming to school. This is shown by the above-average rates of attendance and by pupils' eagerness to take part in all school activities. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good, although very occasionally a small number of pupils lose concentration and then their work rate slows. Pupils relate very well to one another and to their teachers, who they say 'explain everything well so you can understand and do really well'.

Pupils are confident that their views are taken seriously and they feel valued. Members of the school council carry out their duties earnestly, and talk proudly of their achievements in improving playground equipment and of their participation in interviewing their new headteacher.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They understand and respect how others live, and this is fostered actively through the school's close links with a school in The Gambia. They understand the benefits to be gained from exercise and healthy eating. The pupils' good basic skills prepare them well for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

As a result of good quality teaching, the pupils achieve well. In the Foundation Stage, children's learning is fostered well through a good balance between teacher-directed tasks and activities chosen by the children themselves. In Years 1 to 6, well-planned lessons, where pupils are often encouraged to make their own contribution, capture their interest. The use of the outdoor classroom enhances many lessons, allowing pupils to develop confidence and independence, as well as skills in teamwork. As a result, pupils are happy to try things out for themselves. Pupils with learning difficulties, and those who are newly arrived in the school, receive effective support from both teachers and teaching assistants, and this helps them to progress well. During lessons teachers provide much help and advice to pupils about improving their work. However, the quality of feedback through marking is not as good, particularly in mathematics, where written comments are not sufficiently well focused to help pupils understand exactly what they need to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The range of additional activities is outstanding. A rich variety of clubs, some organised in collaboration with other schools and colleges, meets a wide range of pupils' interests and aptitudes, for example, in sport, cookery, engineering and bird-watching. A particularly strong and exciting feature of the school's curricular provision is its involvement in the 'Forest School'. This provides valuable opportunities for pupils throughout the school, including Reception, to use the attractive grounds and woodland area to extend their learning, and to develop their social and physical skills and their concern for the environment.

Appropriate emphasis is given to developing pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. The school has recognised that problem solving in mathematics has not been a strong area. Changes have been made to the curriculum in order to develop pupils' skills in this area. Early indications look promising, but it is too early to evaluate the impact on pupils' learning and progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Staff know pupils and their families well, and close liaison with parents and external organisations ensures that any problems are detected and dealt with quickly.

Pupils' safety and security are paramount, and parents are confident that their children are well cared for, and they value the support given to them. A close relationship with the on-site playgroup means that pupils are well prepared for the start of school.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils' health and safety are well considered, and risk assessments are carried out regularly. Teachers are involving pupils in their own learning by setting them individual targets. This initiative is proving successful in raising standards in literacy, but is less so in mathematics because the targets are too general to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve the standard of their work

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads with dedication and skill, and she is supported effectively by her staff colleagues and the governing body. They work together with a sense of purpose to develop the school further. Governance is good, and governors have an active role in planning for school development, and monitoring these developments. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

The school has good systems for finding out how well it is doing, including seeking the views of pupils and parents. This self-review accurately identifies strengths and areas for improvement. For example, actions to remedy the weaknesses in mathematics are a direct result of such self-evaluation.

Monitoring provision and standards in English, mathematics and science by the subject leaders is becoming firmly embedded. This has enabled the leaders to contribute successfully to improvements over the last few years, and to identify areas for further development.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed talking to you, and I know that my colleague particularly enjoyed talking to the school council. I am writing to tell you what we found out about the school, what we think is good and what we think needs to be made better.

- Here are some of the highlights: You are in a good school where good teaching means you learn well and make good progress.
- You behave well and you help to make the school a happy place.
- You are sensible about making decisions on how to improve your school.
- Your lessons are made interesting and you really enjoy all the clubs and outings, and especially using your 'Forest School'.
- All adults in school are kind and very caring and give you good support when you are struggling with your work in lessons.
- You know all about how important it is to eat healthy food and take exercise.
- Your headteacher and governors are working hard to make the school even better.

We have found a small number of things to help make the school better, and these relate to mathematics. This means that we have asked the school to:

- Provide those of you in Years 3 to 6 with more tasks where you have to use your mathematics to solve problems.
- Provide you with more comments in your books, and clearer targets, so that you have a better understanding of what you need to do to improve your work and make better progress.