

# Caston Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

The Street, Caston, Attleborough, NR17 1DD

**Inspection dates** 15–16 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Not enough pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In some lessons, pupils do not get on with their work quickly enough because of time wasted on organisational matters.
- Work is not always well matched to pupils' abilities and so is too easy for some pupils.
- Guidance in pupils' books as to how they can improve is not of consistently good quality across the school.
- Pupils' progress is not tracked closely enough to quickly identify any who may be falling behind.
- School self-evaluation and improvement plans are not detailed enough to ensure that improvements are effective and easily measured.
- The governing body does not check how well the school is doing thoroughly enough to confirm that good progress is being made.

### The school has the following strengths

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen over the last two years. Pupils now leave the school with average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Some pupils are now making good progress, including those eligible for additional funding and those who have special educational needs.
- Provision for the spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of pupils is a strength of the school.
- Behaviour in and around school is good.
- The senior leaders and managers have written new policies to support the governing body in holding the headteacher to account for improving progress and raising standards.
- The interim headteacher has introduced new procedures to check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress and these are already contributing to improved performance.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons or parts of lessons, all of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, school staff, and a representative of the local authority. Informal discussions were held with parents.
- The inspector took account of the five responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including: information from the school's checks on its performance; school improvement plans; analysis and tracking of pupils' progress; leaders' records of classroom observations; safeguarding arrangements; and minutes of governing body meetings. She also sampled pupils' work and checked information on pupils' attendance.
- The school was closed to pupils on the second day of the inspection owing to extreme weather conditions.

## Inspection team

Susan Hughes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average sized primary school. After a fall in the number of pupils on roll, numbers are now rising again.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and the children of service families) is above average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and of those who speak English as an additional language are both lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action is lower than average, and those supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school has a higher-than-average proportion of pupils who join the school during Key Stages 1 and 2 or mid-way through the school year.
- The interim headteacher has been in post since September 2011 and works in the school for two and a half days a week.
- There have been a considerable number of changes to teaching staff in the Key Stage 2 class over recent years, but a full time permanent teacher was appointed in September 2012.
- The Chair of the Governing Body took up post six weeks before the inspection.
- No pupils are taught in alternative provision away from the school site.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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

- Improve teaching by ensuring that:
  - work is always well matched to the abilities of all pupils, especially the more able
  - the pace of lessons is brisk and purposeful so that best use is made of learning time
  - Marking in books and the use of pupils' individual targets are used consistently across the school so that all pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that rigorous self-evaluation informs school improvement plans, which show clear measurable targets that are checked regularly
  - tracking pupils' progress in smaller steps and more often so that any pupils who may be falling behind are identified quickly
  - Ensuring that governors regularly check the progress that the school is making in achieving the objectives in the school improvement plan. An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils make the expected progress throughout the school. School tracking data shows that progress is improving, especially in reading and writing. Some pupils, especially in Year 2 and Year 5 are now making good progress. For example, Year 2 pupils wrote creative poems about the snow and enjoyed reading them to each other. However, good progress is not consistent across all year groups.
- Although cohorts vary in size and skills, children typically start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with language skills that are broadly in line with age-related expectations and number skills that are slightly below. They make expected progress and start Key Stage 1 with reading, writing and mathematics skills that are in line for their age.
- By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly average last year. Pupils show an understanding of the sounds letters make when reading and writing and make good attempts at spelling new words. The results of the national screening check on how well pupils know the sounds letters make in Year 1 were well below the national average, although in line with the school's assessments given the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this very small group.
- In July 2012, Year 6 pupils left the school with average standards in English and mathematics. Lower attainment in previous years resulted from pupils' slower rates of progress, a trend that has now been reversed. During the inspection, for example, Year 5 and 6 pupils showed good research skills in extracting important facts from texts in order to construct well organised and creative fact files about famous people.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding make good progress and reach standards at least in line with other pupils. Much of the money has been spent on extra adults to provide individual or small group teaching for these pupils. Most of the pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs make the expected progress, as do other groups of pupils. Those pupils who join the school at other times than usual also make as much progress as other pupils.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The pace of work in lessons is sometimes slow. For example, pupils are not always ready for work at the beginning of the lesson and activities such as sharpening pencils and organising equipment or furniture means that learning time can be wasted.
- Sometimes the work is too easy so that some pupils, particularly more-able pupils or older pupils in the mixed-age classes, do not make as much progress as they could. For example, in their science lesson, the Early Years Foundation Stage children and Key Stage 1 pupils were investigating 'forces', working outside after a heavy snowfall. They thoroughly enjoyed pushing and pulling each other across the snow, but the challenge for both younger and older pupils in thinking about science was very similar.
- Good teaching was observed where work was well matched to pupils' attainment levels, and provided interesting and challenging activities. In these lessons pupils made good progress. For example, pupils in Key Stage 2 wrote poems for a national competition and some have been chosen for publication.

- Pupils' work is marked regularly. However, teachers' comments are not always specific enough to guide pupils to the next steps in their learning and they are not automatically given time to respond. A new marking policy has been introduced but this is not yet fully embedded. All pupils have targets in their books but they have not yet understood the potential of these to help them make more rapid progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs work well with other pupils. They are supported by additional adults who are well-briefed and sensitively address pupils' specific needs while also developing their independence. This means that they are able to make as much progress as other pupils in the class. Pupils who come from other schools are quickly assessed for any specific needs to establish what support is needed.
- Homework is set regularly. Pupils say it is always linked to what they are doing in the classroom. They spoke enthusiastically about the 'learning logs' that they completed during the summer and Christmas holidays.
- In all lessons, teachers encourage pupils to be responsible and develop good social and moral skills. For example, Early Years Foundation Stage children and Key Stage 1 pupils were all able to say something positive about the day's 'special person' during a circle time activity. The use of a 'candle-chime' to focus their thoughts created a calm and thoughtful atmosphere.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils are extremely polite and considerate. They use 'please' and 'thank you' automatically, for example, when fruit or equipment is distributed. Older pupils accept the responsibility to provide good role models for younger ones. When pupils arrive from other schools, the positive family atmosphere helps them feel a sense of belonging and other pupils welcome them readily into their friendship groups so they settle in well.
  - Pupils are very clear about what is meant by bullying. They understand about different forms of bullying such as name calling and physical bullying and are adamant this rarely happens in school. Pupils feel they can go to any adult or an older pupil for help and any incidents are immediately dealt with. One parent commented that the pupils look out for each other and sort out any problems well.
  - Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. Incidents in school and current affairs are discussed in class and pupils are able to express their thoughts and opinions. Their social skills are developed through community work such as singing at a home for the elderly at Christmas and joining their coffee mornings to talk to local residents.
  - The behaviour management system is clear to all pupils. They feel that the coloured card system linked to 'Golden Time' works well. It is implemented consistently across the school by all adults and pupils feel that behaviour in the school is good. During the inspection, good behaviour was observed at all times. This reflects the school's own records of good behaviour overtime.
  - Pupils know how to stay safe in a range of situations. They talked about members of the fire service, police and road safety officers visiting school. After the heavy snowfall, pupils were able to enjoy snowball fights in a designated area and were mindful of the safety issues involved, such as ensuring that the snowballs did not contain ice.
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- Some pupils who had come from other schools showed inspectors that, whereas they had found it hard to behave well in the past, they have settled well in Caston. The high expectations, attentive staff and clear behaviour policy mean that pupils can make a successful start in their new school.

## **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The headteacher has improved how pupils' progress is tracked through the introduction of pupil progress meetings, regular observations of teaching and a data tracking system. These have contributed to the general improvement in rates of progress. However, the measures of progress are too broad and the intervals too long, so that any underachievement may not be identified quickly enough.
  - Senior leaders have a clear understanding of how the school needs to improve. However there is no formal self-evaluation process and improvement plans are brief: they outline main areas for improvement but are not clear about how success will be measured, or over what period of time to check the effectiveness of actions taken.
  - Teachers' performance is judged against how much progress their pupils make and how well they fulfil their different roles in the school. Targets for teachers are used to measure whether promotion up the pay scale is justified by the results achieved.
  - The subjects pupils are taught are well planned and provide a range of experiences. Work is planned by teachers to offer pupils first hand experiences through trips and visitors to school. Older pupils talked enthusiastically about residential visits and the whole school visited Norwich castle when studying 'Homes and Houses'. Visiting scientists and authors generate enthusiasm for writing but the development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is not yet fully embedded.
  - There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has strong links with the church and local community. Visits to the church and 'pram services' in school are underpinned by its religious ethos. Assemblies and class discussions give pupils opportunities to think deeply about wider issues such as how to deal with challenging situations, perseverance when they find something difficult and achieving personal goals. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to enjoy music, art and drama. They regularly learn poems and a recent art exhibition was well attended by parents. The school works hard to develop an understanding of other cultures through religious education and topic lessons.
  - The local authority has provided limited support for the school, which included the help given to the governing body to secure an effective interim headteacher when leadership of the school was vulnerable.
- ### ■ The governance of the school
- The new Chair of Governors is clear about how the work of the governing body can be improved. New policies have been written on the role of governors in checking school performance and on school visits, although these are yet to be implemented. Governors are very supportive of the school and visit regularly, but these visits are not always focused on key issues identified in the school improvement plan. Minutes of governing body meetings show that governors discuss performance data but do not use this to hold the headteacher to
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account. Governors understand how the pupil premium is spent and its impact, for example how money spent on additional staff to work with individual pupils has helped them to make more rapid progress. The money is also used to ensure all pupils are able to take part in trips and other activities that support their learning. Governors are clear about the quality of teaching in the school and have ensured more stability for the Key Stage 2 class through employing a full time teacher. They have agreed a new policy to ensure that the performance of teachers is checked regularly and only good teaching is rewarded with an increase in pay.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121111
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	405994

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	51
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Susan Lee
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anne Robinson (interim)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01953 483304
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