

Camestone Lower School

Jowitt Avenue, Kempston, Bedford, MK42 8NW

Inspection dates 10–11 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress during their time at school and attain above-average standards in English and mathematics.
- There are successful procedures for tracking the progress of pupils and providing effective additional support where it is needed.
- The quality of teaching is good so that most pupils achieve well during their time at school.
- Pupils behave well. They feel very safe, are polite, attend regularly and enjoy school.
- There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school organises a range of outside visits and extra activities which greatly increase pupils' enjoyment and experience of school.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are providing good leadership which has led to the better rates of pupil progress.
- Parents and carers speak highly of the work of the school and are very pleased with the support for their children.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Marking of work is variable and does not always show pupils what to do next to improve their work.
- Not all teachers are regularly checking whether pupils understand what they are being taught or how to complete their work successfully.
- Performance targets set for individual teachers do not address the areas for development that leaders identify when they observe lessons.
- Senior leaders are not involved enough in monitoring teaching or sharing outstanding practice.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, a local authority representative, senior leaders, staff and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 41 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire, the 136 responses from the school parent questionnaire issued in November 2012, and the 37 responses from the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors examined a range of evidence, including the school’s self-evaluation, the school development plan, the systems to track pupils’ progress, and records relating to behaviour and attendance. They also looked at records of lesson observations by the headteacher, performance management information, safeguarding documentation and a sample of pupils’ work.

Inspection team

Stephen Walker, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lin Bartlett	Additional Inspector
Philip Scull	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized first school.
- The school was built in 1977 and has been recently extended and refurbished.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Over 40% of the pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average but there are only a small number of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English.
- A smaller-than-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils with a parent in the armed forces and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. So, too, is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding, and never less than consistently good throughout the school, by:
 - ensuring that teachers are checking regularly throughout lessons that all pupils understand what they are taught and how to complete their work
 - improving feedback to pupils so that they know the next steps they need to take to move their learning on
 - making sure that the performance targets that leaders set for teachers address weaknesses identified in their teaching
 - involving senior leaders more in the monitoring of teaching and the sharing of outstanding practice.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement is good during their time at school. Most pupils make the progress they should and an increasing number exceed expectations. Attainment at the end of Year 4 is above average, which demonstrates good progress from their broadly average starting points.
- Children make good progress in the Reception classes because of the well-planned provision and the good teaching by both the teachers and the teaching assistants. Structured activities and the good use of the inside and outside resources are having a significant impact on children's personal development, as well as encouraging number and language skills.
- Reading is a key focus in the school, and pupils read regularly in school and at home each day. The school has been active in addressing the previous lower attainment of boys in reading, particularly in Years 1 and 2, by ensuring that there is a good range of interesting and suitable books. Pupils make good progress in reading so that attainment is above the national average by the end of Year 4. The school has been effective in using a structured approach to teaching phonics (the sounds represented by letters) across the school.
- The school is improving the quality of writing for both boys and girls through a greater emphasis on helping pupils to write in a more structured way in all subjects. The emphasis on speaking and listening in class through 'talking partners' and encouraging all pupils to answer questions is greatly supporting the improvement in writing skills.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics and attain above-average standards. Teachers have developed a well thought-out course on calculation and problem solving which has led to considerable improvements across the school. The increased emphasis on problem solving in groups and applying numeracy to real-life examples captures the imagination of the pupils, consolidates understanding and supports good progress. The more focused work on key skills in mathematics in Year 2 has increased the number of pupils who are on target to gain the higher levels this year.
- The progress of pupils from minority ethnic groups is as good as that of other pupils. Many of these pupils speak English as an additional language although most arrive in school with a reasonable proficiency in speaking English. Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English are well supported by teaching assistants and quickly gain confidence in their language development. Subsequently, the pupils make good progress, particularly in the key skills of reading, writing and mathematics.
- The well-developed systems to track pupils' progress are used quickly to spot any pupils who are at risk of underachieving. Leaders and teachers make sure that extra support is provided for these pupils and enables them to achieve well. Progress records for each year group show that pupils are making good progress. Most pupils in Year 4 are on track to make at least the expected one level of progress in reading, writing and mathematics from Key Stage 1, and over half the pupils are on track to make more than the expected progress.
- The school has addressed the previous decline in attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, which was partly due to the introduction of more rigorous checks on the accuracy of teachers' assessments. There has been a focus on improving boys' reading and writing, as well as ensuring that all pupils understand key numeracy skills. Progress data for the present Year 2 indicates that pupils are on target to gain above-average standards in reading, writing and

mathematics.

- Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in line with their peers. This is because effective work from teaching assistants helps them to overcome barriers to learning and take part in lessons with the other pupils.
- The school is using additional funding effectively to narrow the gap between the attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, almost all of whom are those known to be eligible for free school meals, and other pupils in the school. Money is allocated for additional help in reading, writing and mathematics so that these pupils make good progress across the school. Records show that, in Years 3 and 4, the gap between these pupils' attainment and that of other pupils is narrowing significantly so that their attainment is now in line with their classmates in reading and no more than one term behind in writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in most classes is good, with some examples of outstanding practice. As a result, most pupils make good progress and achieve well over their time at school. The vast majority of parents and carers feel that their children are taught well and pupils agree.
- The supportive atmosphere in lessons and good quality of planning ensure that pupils are fully engaged in their learning. Lessons involve a range of interesting activities so that pupils display enthusiasm and good concentration. Displays in classrooms provide a stimulus for learning and opportunities to celebrate pupils' work.
- Pupils learn well because the activities chosen by teachers are normally well matched to pupils' different abilities. Teachers are conscientious in their planning of lessons to make sure that the tasks are achievable but sufficiently challenging, so that each pupil learns well. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils who require additional help with their work.
- Teachers encourage pupils to work independently and in groups, which greatly support the development of their social skills. Pupils benefit from the opportunities to solve problems in groups which develop their thinking skills and help them listen to other children's ideas.
- Teachers generally use questioning well to engage pupils, check their understanding and challenge them to develop their understanding further. Supportive questioning enables all pupils to make contributions to class discussions, and a number of teachers are very skilled at getting pupils to explain their understanding of concepts to the rest of the class.
- Some teaching requires improvement. In these lessons, teachers often assume that pupils have understood what they are being taught without reviewing this with the whole class. Similarly, they do not regularly check with pupils that they understand how to complete their work successfully.
- Marking is supportive but there are some inconsistencies in its quality across the school. Marking of literacy work tends to be more detailed and informative than in numeracy and other subjects. Feedback from teachers does not always help pupils to recognise what they need to do next to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, and this contributes to a calm and orderly atmosphere. Pupils are considerate, polite and courteous to staff and each other, and this contributes well to their learning.
- Pupils feel valued as individuals, even in this larger than average-sized school. Parents and carers speak very highly of the work of the school and are very pleased with the support for their children. Pupils say they feel safe in the school and display a good understanding of the issues relating to safety, such as crossing the road and talking to strangers. The family support worker provides high-quality support and advice for a number of pupils and their families.
- Pupils are encouraged to keep themselves healthy as acknowledged by the National Healthy Schools status. The regular programme of personal and social education in each year makes sure that pupils are aware of the dangers of smoking, alcohol and drugs.
- Attendance is above average and reflects pupils' enjoyment of school. The school is active in following up absences and discouraging holidays during term time. All pupils adhere to the uniform regulations and the vast majority are very proud of their school.
- The inspectors found that pupils who display challenging behaviour are managed well. Pupils confirmed that disruptions are rare and that any misbehaviour is dealt with appropriately by the teachers and other adults. The clear expectations of behaviour and the very effective reward systems support good behaviour in the school.
- The large majority of parents and carers are positive about behaviour in the school. Parents, carers and pupils confirm that bullying is very rare in the school. Pupils say that any unkind behaviour, such as name-calling or teasing, is dealt with quickly and effectively. They are developing their awareness of the different forms of possible bullying, such as prejudice-based bullying related to gender, race and disability.
- There is a good level of supervision at break and lunchtime which provides a clear framework for expected behaviour. Lunchtime supervisors and teaching assistants take an active part in encouraging the pupils to enjoy their playtime. Pupils are developing their skills in taking responsibility for their own behaviour and volunteering for responsibilities within the school such as the school council.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is providing clear and effective leadership, which is driving the significant improvements in the school. He has introduced rigorous systems for tracking the progress of pupils and supporting pupils who need extra help with their work. All staff are dedicated to the further improvement and continued success of the school.
 - The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. The school development plan is a comprehensive, working document with clear actions and targets that are focused on improving the quality of teaching and the rate of pupils' progress.
 - Leaders have been successful in ensuring improvements in the school so that teachers are now more accurate in their assessments of pupils' work. Additional support for pupils is now fully evaluated at the pupil progress meetings. The introduction of daily lessons of literacy and numeracy has greatly supported the learning of key skills. The school has effectively tackled the
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previous underachievement of boys in reading.

- The headteacher is well supported by members of the senior leadership team, who are taking on more responsibility in the school. The Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and 2 leaders are providing good support for their teams, and the literacy and numeracy leaders are increasingly involved in providing training for the teachers. However, these senior leaders are not fully involved in the monitoring of the quality of teaching or the sharing of outstanding classroom practice.
 - The systems of setting targets for teachers have been rigorous in ensuring that teachers are held to account for the good progress of their pupils. Professional development is effective for teachers and support staff so that they are continually reflecting on their practice in order to improve further the quality of learning for the pupils. However, teachers' performance targets do not address the specific areas for improvement in teaching as identified in lesson observations by the headteacher.
 - The local authority provides a range of effective support for the leaders and teachers. The School Improvement Partner has worked closely with the headteacher in developing the school's self-evaluation systems and providing training for the senior leadership team.
 - The school has developed an imaginative curriculum which is relevant to pupils' needs and provides a good range of activities. The topic approach encourages the teaching of literacy and numeracy across other subjects. The environmental area is used well to support learning in all years. A range of outside visits provide effective extension of the curriculum, as do the large number of extra-curricular activities, which greatly increase pupils' enjoyment and experience of school.
 - The broad range of experiences in the curriculum contribute well to pupils' achievement and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, the school is a harmonious community and pupils develop a good appreciation of each other's different traditions and cultures.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a good awareness of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Its members are involved in monitoring pupils' progress and they hold leaders and staff to account for the quality of education provided. Governors have a regular programme of visits to the school so that they can make informed decisions at meetings. The headteacher ensures that governors have a good understanding about the quality of teaching and about pupils' achievement in relation to other similar schools. This allows them to make confident decisions on salary progression that are linked to the progress pupils make. The governing body ensures that the procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. Governors oversee the use of the pupil premium funding and ensure that it is spent effectively to support eligible pupils.
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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

Unique reference number	109462
Local authority	Bedfordshire
Inspection number	412641

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	295
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Mantle
Headteacher	Paul Stanyard
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2010
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