

Castleway Primary School

Castleway North, Leasowe, Moreton, Wirral, Merseyside CH46 1RN

Inspection dates	22–23 March 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and the governing body have a clear vision for the school. Their strong leadership has ensured that pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are good.
- The subject leaders are making good checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their specific areas of responsibility.
- Pupils throughout the school make good progress from their starting points in a range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school provides well for children in the early years. They achieve well in most areas of learning and reach a good level of development at the end of the Reception year.
- Strong teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that pupils with additional needs make good progress.
- Pupils are proud of their work and always present it to the best of their ability. Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is good.
- In all situations pupils are highly respectful toward adults and each other. Pupils say that they feel very safe and well cared for in school.
- Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum, including a variety of visits and out-of-school activities. This makes a strong contribution to their achievement and to their understanding of the wider world.
- Governors are effective and fully involved in all aspects of the school's work. They demonstrate a good knowledge of the school, which enables them to hold school leaders to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some of the most-able pupils are not consistently challenged in all lessons.
- Pupils are sometimes too dependent on their teachers and do not have sufficient opportunity to practise basic skills.
- When doing their topic work, pupils do not always ensure that spelling, grammar and punctuation are at a good standard.
- A small number of pupils are not attending as well as they should be.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning so that an increased proportion of pupils make better than expected progress, by teachers:
 - consistently providing tasks for pupils that challenge them to achieve at the highest level, particularly the most able
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to practise basic reading, writing and mathematical skills independent of teachers
 - ensuring that when pupils write in their topic work and across the curricular subjects they focus on key grammar, punctuation and spelling skills.

- Further raise attendance so that it is at least in line with the national average, by:
 - developing more creative and innovative approaches to engage those families who are hardest to involve in the school
 - working in partnership with external professionals to maximise pupils' attendance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, with the support of the governing body, has created a strong and resourceful leadership team who are committed to making Castleway Primary as good as it can be. Together, they have ensured that staff share their vision.
- Since the previous inspection school leaders have tackled barriers to improvement and have established a culture in which relationships are positive, teaching can flourish and pupils are expected to behave well and achieve their best.
- The leadership of teaching is good and there are effective systems for managing teachers' performance. Leaders carry out detailed checks on teachers' work and provide them with clear guidance and support. Teachers said how much they appreciated the advice and coaching they had received, as well as opportunities to attend relevant courses.
- The deputy headteacher who has responsibility for English, and teachers responsible for mathematics and special educational needs make a valuable contribution to improving teaching and raising achievement. They are enthusiastic about their roles and strongly focused on raising pupils' achievement and promoting their well-being.
- Leaders conduct regular checks on pupils' progress and use this information well. All teachers are using this information to help them plan lessons to meet the needs of all groups of learners.
- The school has a broad and balanced curriculum which is well adapted to enable pupils with different ability levels, including pupils who have special educational needs and disability, to achieve well. Pupils have some good opportunities to develop their basic skills of literacy and numeracy and are motivated by a variety of interesting topics, educational visits and special events. Pupils enjoy learning topics and are very appreciative of visits, such as to Liverpool Museum. The deputy headteacher is keen to ensure that the same good quality of spelling, grammar and punctuation evident in English books is at the same standard in their topic work.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils take part in a wide range of out-of-school activities which help broaden their horizons. They are able to learn about the different cultures and traditions represented in the United Kingdom and the world beyond. Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, and Islam are taught as part of the pupils' religious studies curriculum. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and that they understand the fundamental values of respect for others and their different views.
- The school has made good use of the extra funding it receives to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. By employing, for example, additional staff to teach small groups of pupils, leaders have enabled these pupils to close gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils. They have also helped families to meet the costs of school trips and other activities which have enhanced these pupils' personal development. This shows the school's successful commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and to tackling discrimination.
- Links with the wider community are strong, including those with St Chad's Parish. The school works in partnership with other schools, including Clare Mount Specialist Sports College. Sports specialists are employed through government sports funding to support staff in the school and enhance the sporting curriculum. There is good attendance at the after-school dance, handball and gymnastic clubs. The school ensures that older pupils are well supported as they make decisions about moving on to secondary school.
- The school works well in partnership with parents and they express a high level of satisfaction with the quality of education provided. Parents are kept informed about the topics their children are covering and learning journals in the early years promote communication. The school has provided workshops for parents on how to support their children's reading at home. The school is working hard to support the attendance of a small number of pupils.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body is knowledgeable and committed to the school. Governors understand the school's data and know how well the school is performing compared to other schools. They know what the quality of teaching is like as they receive regular reports from the headteacher and other senior members of staff.

- Governors also know how the performance of teachers and other staff is managed and, when teaching is less than good, what is done to tackle underperformance. They ensure that there is a close link between pay and performance. The governing body works closely with the headteacher and provides both support and challenge.
- The school's finances are managed well and money is spent appropriately. All governors attend training regularly.
- Governors promote equality of opportunity by checking that all groups attain well and holding the school to account if they do not.
- Governors are fully involved with the life of the school and ensure that they are present in their roles as governors at a range of events, including community gatherings.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Governors monitor policies and procedures to ensure that they are implemented effectively and they are appropriately trained in safeguarding issues. They work well with stakeholders and ensure that all necessary checks are carried out to ensure the pupils are safe at all times.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Pupils are now making good progress because good teaching helps them to achieve well. Teachers have good working relationships with pupils. They have a good understanding of what pupils are capable of, are keen for them to do well and make their expectations clear to them in terms of both work and behaviour. Pupils are keen to please their teachers and are rightly proud of their work which is presented well with clear joined up writing in books across the school.
- Teachers have a secure understanding of the different subjects they teach. This ensures that they can explain topics and activities so that pupils enjoy learning about new facts and information accurately and in enough depth. Teachers' expectations are on most occasions high and they plan activities which stimulate pupils' interest. However, some of the pupils can be too dependent on their teacher and do not have enough opportunity to tackle problems.
- The teaching of reading is good. Teachers make sure that activities in the early years and in Year 1 are matched well to the next steps in pupils' knowledge of phonics (the sounds linked to letters). Pupils have regular opportunities to practise their reading, and the teaching of guided reading is good. Pupils who found reading difficult commented on how much teachers and other adults have helped them, so that they now enjoy reading.
- Since the previous inspection the teaching of mathematics has improved and this has resulted in better pupil achievement. Teachers make sure that pupils gain a good grounding in mathematical processes so that they can use them effectively to solve problems. Pupils are enjoying the challenge of mental arithmetic. Teachers encourage pupils to reflect on how they have reached solutions, so that they can learn from any mistakes they have made.
- The teaching of writing is generally good. Pupils are benefiting from teachers using whole-class reading books to help them develop specific writing skills. Pupils present writing of a good quality but this can be limited in the amount. Also, they are not always sufficiently challenged to maintain the same standard of grammar, spelling and punctuation in their topic work.
- Teachers provide work which is well suited to the needs of pupils who have special educational needs or disability. They use questioning well to establish that pupils understand the tasks they have been given and to correct misunderstandings.
- The work planned for some of the most-able pupils is not sufficiently ambitious. Work in their books shows that these pupils are challenged well over time but the work they are occasionally asked to do is well within their comfort zone. This means that they do not consistently achieve the standard that they are capable of.
- Teachers mark pupils' work accurately and at regular intervals. They encourage pupils to try their hardest and make sure pupils' efforts are acknowledged. Teachers' comments on pupils' work are consistently detailed and precise enough to enable pupils to build on their successes and understand the next steps to take to improve their work.
- Most parents agree that their children are well taught and that they make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school has a very positive atmosphere and pupils respond very well to the activities it provides. Pupils say that everyone is friendly and they feel valued as individuals.
- The life of the school is enhanced by this willingness of pupils to take on responsibility, such as being a member of the school council. Pupils understand their role and responsibility to look after their school and each other. Pupils who represent their friends in their roles on the school eco committee carry out their work with great maturity. They spoke with great enthusiasm about a recent litter collecting project around the school. In such roles they learn about the democratic process and it also gives all pupils a voice in how the school develops.
- The older children are given responsibilities during the school day. As sports leaders they support the play of the younger children. They do this with great pride and appreciate the importance of their role. The younger children say that the sports leaders are their friends who look after them.
- Pupils are confident that adults deal with any rare instances of bullying effectively. Pupils know what constitutes bullying, including cyber-bullying. There are no recorded racist incidents and name-calling is rare. Pupils confidently say that it does not happen because of someone's race, disability or religion. Pupils have a good understanding of homophobic bullying and understand that it is wrong.
- Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe at school and while travelling on the road, with these topics given a strong emphasis in the curriculum and by first hand experiences. Pupils know how to safely use the internet because there has been an e-safety assembly and class discussions on internet safety.
- Pupils say that they are happy and feel safe in school. Parents agree and say that they are very happy with the ways in which their children are cared for.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They work hard and present their work well at all times. Pupils conduct themselves well in all areas of the school, moving around in a sensible and mature manner.
- At lunchtimes, pupils are well mannered. They enjoy their lunch and chat sensibly at the dining tables. At playtimes, they play well with each other and when it is time to return to class they do so in an orderly fashion.
- In lessons, pupils are eager to learn and willing to work hard. They contribute well, are enthusiastic and readily engage with the tasks teachers set them, quickly putting up their hands to answer questions and listening carefully to instructions. They enjoy their learning, including when working as a whole class, on their own and in small groups. However, pupils are too reliant on their teachers and can waste learning time by waiting for support.
- Pupils are very appreciative and say that they look forward to coming to school. They appreciate 'golden time' for behaving well and merit awards for good work.
- Attendance rates have improved since the previous inspection but are still low in comparison to other schools nationally. While the school has good systems in place to help secure better attendance there are still a small number of families it needs to work with. Staff need to ensure that these families understand the value and importance of consistently good attendance.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Achievement is now consistent across the school. Pupils of different age groups and with different abilities achieve well in English and mathematics, and in a range of other subjects, such as history and science. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard for their age in reading, writing, and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 is increasing. In 2015, the number of pupils achieving this age-appropriate attainment was close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Reading is a strength with the teaching of phonics helping the pupils make a good start to their progress. Most pupils have a good knowledge of how to 'break words down' when they are unsure about new vocabulary. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about the books and authors that are used to inspire and guide their learning, particularly in the powerful reading sessions. Pupils thoroughly enjoy reading for pleasure and are now attaining closer to the national average at both key stage 1 and 2.

- The quality of the pupils' written work has improved since the last inspection. This was evident during the inspection in a Year 3 lesson in which pupils were developing the use of similes in a task about 'going on a journey'. Pupils worked cooperatively, shared good language and made good progress. However, when writing in their topic work pupils across the school do not always maintain the same standards of grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Across the school a focus on mental mathematics and basic calculation has helped pupils to become more confident when they are asked to tackle problems. Teachers make mathematics interesting, ask pupils to think deeply about which calculation methods they should use, and challenge them to attain high standards.
- In the 2015 end-of-key-stage-2 tests, the most-able pupils made less progress than similar pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in lessons and in current books shows that they are not always asked by their teachers to complete tasks at a challenging level.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress because of the well-targeted extra support they receive. Pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium also receive additional support if it is needed. Test results and pupil progress data show that this effective support helps these pupils to do as well as others in the school. Consequently, the gap in attainment against the national average is narrowing.
- Pupils enjoy subjects other than English and mathematics. Together with the social and communication skills which they develop, this shows that pupils are now well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

is good

- Children join the Reception classes with levels of knowledge and skills which are consistently below those typical for their age. They make good progress so that by the end of the year, an increasingly high proportion are reaching good levels in each area of learning and development.
- The early years is led and managed well. The school has effective systems for assessing what children can do when they join the Reception class. Children's progress is carefully recorded and teachers make effective use of their observations of children at work to make sure that any individual who may need additional help quickly receive appropriate support. For example, during the inspection a teaching assistant was quick to notice that a group of learners needed support in an activity to help them sequence numbers. She acted quickly and provided good support to help them progress in their learning.
- Teaching is of a good quality in the Reception class and children quickly find out that learning is fun. Teachers take every opportunity to develop children's social, observational and communication skills. Activities, both indoors and out, are exciting, purposeful and varied.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are very skilled in ensuring that the children are provided with activities that help them develop in an imaginative way. The children are confident to access the different areas of learning independently of adult supervision. For example, during the inspection a number of the boys chose to work in the writing area. They were able to maintain concentration and made good progress in developing their early writing.
- There are a significant number of disadvantaged children, those with special educational needs and a small number of children who are learning to speak English as an additional language. These children are supported effectively by staff to ensure that by the end of the early years they are well prepared to start key stage 1.
- The development of communication and language is a priority. Children develop their reading, writing and communication skills well because adults model sounds, letters and words accurately for them. Teachers give children plenty of opportunities to practise reading and writing, and encourage them to talk about what they are doing.
- Children behave very well in the early years and concentrate for significant periods of time on the activities provided. They feel safe, develop trusting relationships with the staff and get on well with one another.
- Parents who spoke to the inspector said that they were pleased with the progress their children were making and the ways in which the school looks after them and encourages them to learn. Parents are kept well informed about their children's learning, especially through the high-quality learning journals.
- Early years is not outstanding because teaching is not consistently of a very high quality.

School details

Unique reference number	105002
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10002182

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Owens
Headteacher	Valerie Kermode
Telephone number	0151 6772953
Website	www.castleway.wirral.sch.uk
Email address	schooloffice@castleway.wirral.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 December 2013

Information about this school

- Castleway is smaller than most other primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is above average. Pupil premium funding is additional government funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- A new deputy headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection.
- The chair of the governing body is a national leader of governance.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to classrooms and watched sessions where pupils were taught in small groups.
- Meetings were held with staff and two representatives from the local authority.
- A meeting was held with five governors.
- The inspector talked to pupils informally in class and at breaks and listened to pupils read.
- A number of documents were scrutinised, including the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress, planning and monitoring documents, minutes of governor meetings, the development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding information.
- The inspector met informally with parents and took account of the school's own parental questionnaires. There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Andrew Morley, Lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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