

Castlemorton CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116791
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	338890
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Derek Aitken

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Meirion Williams
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Adsett
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2006
School address	Castlemorton Malvern WR13 6BG
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Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2010
Inspection number	338890

Registered childcare provision	Castlemorton Caterpillars Pre-School
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	20
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	Not previously inspected

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Seven lessons were observed, five teachers were seen and the majority of the time was spent looking at pupils' learning. Meetings were held with staff, governors and pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, assessment data, monitoring and evaluation records, policies and procedures. Questionnaires from 36 parents and carers were received and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

pupils' progress in writing

- the progress of more able pupils
- the impact of pupils' contribution to the community on their enjoyment and achievement.

Information about the school

Castlemorton is a small rural school. The majority of children join Reception from the school's own pre-school setting, Castlemorton Caterpillars. This provision is also managed by the governing body and, as such, formed part of this inspection. All pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award, Activemark and the Eco-Schools Silver Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Castlemorton's strengths are reflected in the good quality of its pastoral provision. This ensures that all pupils, including those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, enjoy school and achieve well. The school's effective strategies for promoting pupils' well-being are shown in many positive outcomes for pupils' personal development. In particular, pupils' cultural awareness and contribution to the school and wider community are excellent.

Children get off to a good start both in Caterpillars and Reception. In part, this is as a result of effective teamwork and shared staffing which smooth the transition for children between the two settings and this ensures children feel safe. Reception children make good progress, especially in their social development, but sometimes they do not have enough opportunities to express and develop their ideas orally. Pupils also make good progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 to reach above-average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils' progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6 as a result of outstanding teaching combined with mature attitudes to work. While pupils' overall achievement is good, for example, in reading, mathematics and art, their progress in writing is only satisfactory. Partly this is because the school's plans to improve standards in the subject are at a relatively early stage. A further factor is that teachers do not always sufficiently challenge pupils to enable them to develop the self-confidence they need to express and extend their ideas orally and in writing.

The school's outward-looking vision is reflected in a curriculum which promotes pupils' personal and academic development well. Well-established links with Boraba School in the Gambia come alive for pupils in shared curriculum projects, art work and letter-writing activities. Topic lessons, Spanish lessons, after-school German club and a project on Traveller children ensure pupils acquire a well-informed perspective on the lives of people from different backgrounds. The school's firm commitment to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is demonstrated by the good progress they make.

The school knows itself well. Comprehensive records are kept on pupils' progress and for other key aspects of the school's work. Senior leaders review the school's performance very accurately. They have high aspirations for pupils' academic achievement and have implemented well-considered measures, which have been successful in raising standards in mathematics since the previous inspection. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing by:
 - ensuring pupils are consistently challenged to enable them to develop the self-confidence they need to express their ideas orally and in writing
- Provide more opportunities for Reception children to express, develop and share their ideas by:
 - making more use of probing questions to extend their thinking skills.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Lesson observations confirmed that all groups of pupils generally learn well over time in school. Some pupils join Year 1 with weaknesses in literacy, especially in writing. Work in lessons and pupils' books indicates that pupils catch up quickly and go on to reach above-average standards in reading. Progress in writing is relatively slower, but improves in Year 5 and Year 6. Standards are above average in science and have risen to a similar level in mathematics. Standards in writing are average. This represents good achievement overall from pupils' starting points, and especially so for the year-groups where there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. More able pupils progress at a similar rate to other groups of pupils. Pupils of all abilities say they relish problem-solving tasks in mathematics. This was evident in a lesson where more able pupils quickly made accurate calculations on expenditure while remaining within a set budget. Some pupils are reticent in oral activities and this restricts their ability to generate imaginative ideas for writing tasks. Nonetheless, the mature attitudes and courtesy of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils were evident in their precise, reflective questioning in a lesson where they interviewed a panel of school governors. Relationships, which are never less than good and often excellent, underpin pupils' outstanding sense of community. Pupils contribute very effectively to the school as school- and eco-councillors, having made a greenhouse out of plastic bottles, and older pupils pair up with the younger ones as reading buddies. Pupils all play together, share experiences and are therefore very knowledgeable about each other's lives in school. Older pupils, in particular, are quick to provide the younger ones with a quiet word of sound advice. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles well, as is shown by the school's Active Mark and Healthy Schools awards. They feel secure in school and have a good knowledge of safety-related issues. Pupils' above-average level of skills and good behaviour and attitudes set them up well for secondary school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this effectively to plan to meet the different needs of all groups of pupils. Good relationships ensure that pupils have positive attitudes, concentrate well and sustain their interest in their learning. The activities teachers plan are usually focused well on developing the academic skills pupils will acquire or develop in the course of the lesson. On a few occasions, planning is too focused on enhancing enjoyment of learning rather than achievement. A few other lessons provide only limited opportunities to use oral feedback to develop pupils' learning. This results in reduced aspirations for pupils, including those pupils who are less naturally confident in expressing their ideas. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously, following a consistent system which pupils understand well. However, not all pupils follow up the good tips, for example, on handwriting, that their teachers provide. Skilled support from pro-active teaching assistants enables pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those pupils who find learning more difficult to make good progress. The extensive variety of curricular enrichment promotes pupils' achievement well, and their cultural awareness and community spirit exceptionally well. For example, a problem-solving task in mathematics in a lesson for Year 3 and Year 4 pupils was linked to an imaginary situation for the pre-school children. Teachers know their pupils well and staff provide a good level of pastoral support and academic guidance. School leaders have taken prompt action to restore the rate of attendance to its customary above-average level after a slight dip last year.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school benefits from strong, stable leadership which has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. This has enabled the school to tackle successfully areas where pupils were formerly weakest, for example, in mathematics. Similar methods are now being applied to writing, and showing signs of impact in some year groups, but this initiative is not yet firmly bedded in to ensure pupils make consistent progress in this skill. Pupils' progress is tracked very effectively to ensure that above-average standards in Year 6 are maintained, even in years where the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high. This effective use of tracking data enables pupils of all abilities to meet or exceed the challenging targets set for them. The headteacher monitors teaching carefully and leads a cohesive, forward- and outward-looking team, which is constantly seeking to enhance pupils' experiences. The headteacher is well supported and challenged by an effective and knowledgeable governing body. The school promotes equalities well, as reflected in the way all groups of pupils make good progress. All safeguarding checks on adults are robust and the school's other procedures for ensuring pupils' safety are good. Community cohesion is promoted well. Apart from the valuable ties with Boraba the school is steadily developing a link with an inner-city school in Birmingham.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money

2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in their learning in Caterpillars as resources are used effectively to provide them with an enjoyable range of activities. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well not only through healthy eating but also because children have plenty opportunities to be fit and active in Forest School. Relationships between children and with staff are strong and, as result, children develop well both personally and socially. As children learn, the regular assessment of their progress informs planning which enables children to gain greater independence through making their own choices. Children's skills, knowledge and understanding when they join Reception are broadly as expected nationally, but this conceals wide individual variations. Usually, literacy skills are weaker and some children, despite the staff's best efforts, are slower in progressing from mark-making to forming individual letters and on to making recognisable words. Nonetheless, by the end of Reception, children make good gains and the majority of children achieve the early learning goals in most areas of learning. The staff manage and encourage children well. Consequently, children develop good attitudes and enjoy their learning. Children especially enjoy Forest School. These visits stimulate children's sense of adventure, exploration and curiosity. Children work well in pairs or small teams to seek out and examine through the microscope insects hidden under logs. They know that this outside work helps to keep them healthy and they keep themselves safe by avoiding thicker undergrowth and handling twigs carefully. Learning in Forest School is carefully interwoven with children's learning in literacy and numeracy which enables them to recognise connections and recall prior knowledge well. The teacher's questioning is very effective in this regard, but sometimes too much commentary is provided, rather than questioning the children to enable them to formulate and develop their own ideas. Children's achievements are monitored efficiently to help plan the next steps in their learning and to take effective actions to enhance the progress of subsequent year-groups. Leadership and management both of Caterpillars and Reception are good to ensure all requirements for the welfare and learning of children are met. Requirements for registration for Caterpillars are met. Areas which were identified as needing improvement at the last inspection for Caterpillars have been tackled successfully and numbers on roll have increased.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

2

Taking into account:

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

2

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage

2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Views of parents and carers

Proportions have to be treated with some caution in a statistical table for a small school. In this case each response represents approximately 3% of the total. The questionnaire responses, both statistical and in writing, indicate a good level of satisfaction with the school's work and very positive comments were received with regard to the school's ethos and pupils' enjoyment of school. A few negative comments (14%) were raised regarding the quality of pupils' progress. The overwhelming majority of pupils by contrast expressed in their questionnaire the belief that they learnt a lot in lessons. The inspectors found that, overall, pupils made good progress as described elsewhere in the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Castlemorton CofE Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 85 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	72	9	25	0	0	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	27	75	7	19	1	3	1	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	64	9	25	3	8	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	53	11	31	4	11	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	23	64	10	28	1	3	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	58	11	31	2	6	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	58	14	39	1	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	22	61	8	22	1	3	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	58	11	31	2	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	44	17	47	1	3	2	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	47	14	39	3	8	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	24	67	11	31	0	0	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	64	12	33	0	0	1	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be. ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Castlemorton CofE Primary School, Malvern, WR13 6BG

Thank you for making us welcome in your school. I will remember how friendly you were and how willing you were to talk to me about your interests and your school.

Castlemorton Primary is a good school. These are the things it does best

Your sense of togetherness is outstanding. You are also given lots of chances to look far beyond your local area and gain an excellent understanding of the lives of other people in Britain and abroad.

The staff look after you well to make sure you are happy and settled in school. They also keep careful records of your progress so they can step in with extra help when needed to support your learning.

You are taught well so that, by the end of Year 6, your standards are above-average, you have made good progress and are well prepared for secondary school.

The school leaders manage the school well and are always looking for new ways to make your learning really interesting.

Your standards in writing, however, lag a little behind the other subjects. To help you make faster progress in this skill I have asked the staff to:

- make sure you are always challenged so that all of you become confident enough to speak more in class and develop a wide range of ideas for writing.

You can help by paying close attention to your teachers' advice on handwriting.

Children in pre-school and Reception also make good progress. However, I have also asked the staff to:

- use questioning better to make the Reception children think more and give them extra chances to build up and share their ideas.

Yours sincerely

Derek Aitken

Lead inspector

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