

Castle View Primary School

Mead Way, Halton Brook, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2DZ

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2017

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	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. He has a clear vision for the school and a detailed understanding of its strengths and areas for development. He is ably supported by a strong senior leadership team.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, and provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.
- The governors know the school well and make good use of funding to support pupils' learning and to provide them with a high-quality environment.
- The additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and to develop physical education and sports is used appropriately.
- At present, the website does not include all the information that it should. Plans do not always include precise targets and measures of success.
- Teaching is good and staff are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their expertise.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective and pupils feel safe at the school.
- Good use is made of the money to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and provision for these pupils is well managed.
- Children enter the school at a very low level of development. They make clear progress which quickens as they get older. Although they do not reach national averages by the time they are seven, most do so by the time they leave the school.
- Standards in English, particularly in writing, have generally been better than in mathematics.
- Pupils behave well in and around the school. They respect each other and their environment and are keen to take part in the wide range of exciting activities offered to them in and outside the classroom. Any bullying is dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Attendance has been variable. At present it is average. However, the school does not check on the patterns of attendance of specific groups of pupils, such as girls or disadvantaged pupils, whose attendance has at times been poor.
- Provision in the early years is good. The setting is well led. During their time in Nursery and Reception, the children make very clear progress. However, because of their low level of development on entry, they are still below average by the time they move into Year 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all plans and reports relating to the physical education and sport funding are up to date and published on the school's website.
- Ensure that all plans have clearly defined expectations against which their impact can be measured.
- Refine the recording and analysis of attendance, so that leaders have a clear picture of how well specific groups of pupils are attending and take timely action to bring about improvements where necessary.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership for the school, based on a clear vision and a detailed understanding of its strengths and areas for development. He is supported by dedicated, experienced, well-qualified senior staff who share this vision. They work together very effectively as a team.
- The self-evaluation document is unwieldy and confusing, and does not do justice to the succinct, clear way in which leaders are able to present their view of the school in discussions. The three-year school development plan focuses on the right priorities and includes clear aims, actions and responsibilities. However, it does not include precise criteria against which the impact of the planned actions can be assessed.
- Leaders are very committed to developing the expertise of the staff and providing them with many and regular opportunities to reflect on and share their practice. In collaboration with neighbouring schools, leaders have established a rich programme of in-service training which the staff clearly value.
- The curriculum leaders take their responsibilities very seriously. They keep themselves well informed about the subjects for which they are responsible, and share new ideas with colleagues through regular staff meetings. They produce clear and helpful plans to encourage coherence, continuity and development in teaching and learning across the school. Staff work together to monitor the impact of these plans.
- The funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively. The special needs coordinator is well qualified and experienced. She works closely with a range of external agencies, as well as with colleagues and parents. Through very efficient plans and systems, she ensures that the pupils she is responsible for have appropriate support and intervention. The impact of this is monitored carefully.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. The work of the full-time staff is supplemented by that of visiting teachers of art, music and dance, as well as specialist teachers from local secondary schools. They all provide pupils with a wide range of stimulating experiences. The school uses the individual strengths of staff to good effect. For example, provision for modern language teaching has been modified to draw on the expertise of a native speaker of Spanish.
- The headteacher has a very strong commitment to providing pupils with experiences that they might not otherwise encounter, and which extend their horizons and aspirations. This underpins the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is a strength of the school. These experiences also contribute to the preparation of pupils for life in modern Britain.

Governance

- The governors have a good knowledge of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. They take an active role in reviewing performance and in producing the school development plan.

- The chair of the governing body holds weekly meetings with the headteacher to brief himself on developments in the school. He and other members of the governing body pay frequent visits to lessons to meet staff and pupils and observe teaching and learning. They produce formal accounts of their visits, so that their perceptions can be shared with senior leaders.
- The governors use funding well to ensure appropriate staffing and resources. They have invested in a rolling programme of improvement to the fabric of the building, creating new teaching and learning spaces to ensure that staff and pupils have a pleasant, stimulating environment in which to work.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive the necessary support to make good progress. The physical education (PE) and sport funding has also been used well to develop teachers' skills and confidence. As a result, pupils are provided with a good range of activities and opportunities to take part in regular tournaments and competitions. The pupils who spoke to the inspector are very enthusiastic about the clubs and sports available to them.
- There is no report on the school's website on the use of the PE and sport funding for this year. The reports on the additional pupil premium funding and the PE and sport funding that are included on the website show what improvements have been made. However, because of a lack of clear targets, it is difficult to determine to what extent these improvements match the school's intentions.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safeguarding policy is up to date and takes full account of the most recent legislation and guidance. It makes appropriate reference to all the required areas, including sexting, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, honour-based abuse, and combating extremism and radicalisation. It includes helpful advice on how to recognise signs of possible abuse. It also gives clear advice on whom to contact, when and how, if there are concerns about safeguarding. It is supported by clear, well-written policies on combatting bullying and maintaining good behaviour.
- All staff have received the relevant safeguarding training. The governor with lead responsibility for safeguarding has received full training and, by the end of this term, all governors will have been trained.
- The pupils who spoke to the inspector said they feel safe in school. Bullying does occur but is dealt with effectively and there is no recurrence once it has been tackled. Pupils know whom to contact if they have any worries and are confident that they will receive help. Through a range of annual events, weeks devoted to particular themes, residential courses, visits from members of public services and work in lessons, they learn about road, rail and fire safety, and how to deal safely with electricity. Through the e-safety week and work in the curriculum, pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using technology and social media. Parents also receive regular advice on how to protect their children in these circumstances. All the parents who spoke to the inspector were highly complimentary about the school and were confident that the school keeps their children safe.
- The school has a clear medical policy which staff have been trained to apply. Several staff have also been trained in first aid, including paediatric first aid.

- The site is secure and entry to the building and to teaching and learning areas is strictly controlled. Care is taken to ensure that pupils using the science garden are supervised. The grounds have been organised to ensure that sports activities can take place without any danger to other pupils

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The school has invested heavily in providing teachers with a wide range of professional development opportunities. A significant element of this is the 'peer coaching' system. This is where staff observe each other teaching and share ideas which they have developed themselves or through attending in-service training courses. Staff evaluate each other's work and, on occasion, pupils are also involved in this process. As a result, there is a coherence to the style of teaching across the school which ensures continuity in pupils' experiences.
- The teachers and teaching assistants work closely together on the planning and delivery of lessons. This ensures that pupils receive timely support, including those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Teachers and pupils relate well to each other. The atmosphere in lessons is positive and constructive.
- Teachers place a considerable emphasis on encouraging pupils to review, edit and improve their own and each other's work. They also encourage pupils to develop an understanding of the technical language appropriate to a subject and to apply this in their discussions. For example, pupils are confident in identifying and creating noun phrases and adverbial phrases, and using these to extend and improve their writing.
- Teaching is generally delivered at a lively pace. At times, pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their ideas before being asked to move on to the next task. Some become confused as a result. The inspector observed that there was a considerable reliance on answers volunteered by the pupils and limited focus on checking on the understanding of pupils who were less forthcoming in answering questions. On occasion, statements made by the teachers were grammatically incorrect and did not provide good models for the pupils.
- The teachers mark books regularly, in accordance with the school's policy. The progress of pupils is tracked against clearly defined expectations. At the end of a piece of work, teachers often ask pupils to apply their developing skills to an additional task or problem. The pupils do not always complete these. This attracts little comment from the teachers.
- In English, the teachers place considerable emphasis on developing pupils' writing. However, there is little focus on ensuring that this is further extended through other subjects. For example, in terms of quality, content and presentation, the writing in pupils' science books is often of a lower standard than that found in their English books. Leaders have already recognised this as an area for improvement.
- By conducting regular checks, staff have a very clear understanding of the progress being made by individual pupils, classes and year groups. Parents are kept regularly informed on how well their children are progressing.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's records show that there have been some incidents of prejudicial bullying in recent years. Staff have been quick to tackle these. As a result, there were no such incidents last year although one has been recorded this year. The pupils who spoke to the inspector confirmed that any incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and successfully. Those who had been bullied had not experienced a recurrence of it. They all said that they feel safe at school.
- The pupils treat each other and the school environment with respect. They show a clear interest in learning, although some pupils are rather diffident and lack the self-confidence to offer answers or present their own ideas.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils of all ages are given the opportunity to contribute to the running of the school by taking on leadership roles, such as acting as monitors, play leaders or librarians. They welcome these opportunities and take their responsibilities seriously. They show concern for the wider community by raising money for charities and take part in projects involving pupils from other schools.
- As part of their work in history, pupils visit places of interest, such as National Trust properties, museums and castles. Their science work is enhanced by visits to the Catalyst Museum and to Jodrell Bank. The library is well stocked with books on a very wide range of subjects which pupils are encouraged to borrow to read at home. The electronic recording system enables staff to monitor borrowing patterns regularly. This means that pupils who are not taking advantage of the opportunity to borrow books can be given additional encouragement to do so.
- The work done with the visiting drama and music teachers leads to regular performances in and outside school. A series of projects with sculptors, potters and textile workers has resulted in very high-quality work in a variety of media. This has not only provided memorable experiences for those directly involved but also left a rich legacy of sculptures, paintings and ceramics which make the environment within and outside the building very exciting, stimulating and attractive for staff, pupils and visitors. The school organises exhibitions of pupils' work regularly and, during the week of the inspection, several pupils' paintings were being exhibited in Chester cathedral.

Behaviour

- Pupils behave well in and around the school. They show respect for each other, their teachers, other adults and visitors. In the discussion with the inspector, they listened carefully to each other and took turns in presenting their ideas. Pupils show the same positive attitudes to their learning and most work with enthusiasm. Occasionally, one or two pupils lose concentration when an activity has gone on too long or when they are not sure what to do. The pupils who spoke to the inspector said that, in some classes, they do not learn as much as they might because they are 'very chatty'.

- Over the last three years, attendance has been variable. In 2014, it was worse than the national average for all pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In that year, it was in the lowest 10% nationally for girls. The following year, persistent absence was worse than the national average. The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was in the lowest 10% nationally. Last year, there was an improvement but the attendance of disadvantaged pupils was below average. So far this year, the attendance for the school as a whole is just above the most recent national average. However, leaders do not monitor the attendance of specific groups and therefore cannot be certain that past weaknesses have been eradicated.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils come into the school at a very low level of development. From then on, they make clear progress, which quickens as they move through the school. Although they do not reach national averages of attainment by the end of Year 1 or key stage 1, they generally do so by the end of key stage 2.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in phonics at the end of Year 1 has been below average for the last three years. Over that time, results for seven-year-olds have also been below or well below average.
- From 2011 to 2013, the attainment of 11-year-olds was significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics. After that, there was greater variability, especially in mathematics. In 2016, results in reading and writing were average or better. In mathematics, they were significantly below average. The school attributes this to the nature of the cohort and a local incident on the night before the test which upset some pupils and caused them to underperform.
- Results in spelling last year were in line with the national figure, with boys and disadvantaged pupils performing better than that.
- The progress made by pupils between the ages of seven and 11 was significantly above average in all subjects from 2012 to 2014. In 2015, it was significantly above average in writing, and average in the other subjects. Last year, it was average in reading and writing. In mathematics, it was significantly below average and in the lowest 10% of schools nationally for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school's figures on the pupils currently in Year 6 show that they are on track to exceed last year's national averages in all three subjects at expected level and at greater depth of understanding. These figures have been moderated with other schools and through a national pilot on comparative marking. They reflect considerable progress, given that, at the age of three, only 11% were at the level typical for their age.
- An examination of the work of younger pupils shows that they are generally making good progress. However, the good standard of writing in English is not being consistently maintained in other subjects. In mathematics, lack of care over presentation and drawing diagrams detracts from the accuracy of some pupils' work. Middle-ability pupils are not being stretched consistently.

- The pupils who were heard reading did so with a fair degree of fluency, accuracy and expression. At times, they rushed their reading and this led to a loss of meaning. In the best instances, they were able to give a concise, coherent summary of the books they were reading.
- The school's figures show that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress from their starting points

Early years provision

Good

- The leader of the early years is an experienced, well-qualified teacher who has a firm command of her subject. She works closely with colleagues in a cluster of early years settings locally to share ideas and to develop her expertise further. She is well organised and has a clear knowledge of the strengths and areas for development in the setting. Her records are detailed and she monitors children's development regularly and carefully.
- The leader ensures that she and her colleagues receive regular training through attendance at external courses or through taking part in whole-school training, which always has an early years element.
- The children's ability on entry is typically very low. They make good progress during their time in the early years, even though they fall short of national averages at the end of this stage in their education. For example, when the pupils who are currently in Year 1 entered the Nursery, none of them was at the expected level for that age. By the end of the Reception class, just over a third were at a good level for their age. Their current performance indicates that almost two thirds are on track to reach the expected level in phonics at the end of the year.
- The leader has established strong links with parents. The 'come and play' sessions held every six weeks have proved very popular with parents. They welcome the opportunity to take part in phonics, mathematics or reading sessions, and to learn how to use the specially prepared materials to support their children's learning at home. The recently established class email has proved a popular way for parents to provide staff with evidence of their children's development outside school.
- Close links have also been created with other early years providers to ensure that those children who have not attended the school's Nursery are prepared for entry into Reception. In the half term immediately before entry, these children are invited into the setting for three or four times a week in order to help them settle in quickly.
- The environment, both inside and outside, is attractive, well resourced and kept in a good state of repair and cleanliness. Children have easy access to the outside garden area and there is free flow between the Nursery and Reception areas. The canopied area in the central quadrangle is used very effectively for focused activities.
- Safeguarding arrangements in the early years are effective. All staff have received the required training. Two of them have paediatric first-aid qualifications and have also been trained to deal with asthmatic attacks and anaphylactic shock. Children are always supervised when using larger equipment. The site is secure and access to the classrooms is carefully controlled.

School details

Unique reference number	111116
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10032807

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	141
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Richmond-Webb
Headteacher	Mr Ian Worthington
Telephone number	01928 563 970
Website	www.castleviewprimary.ik.org
Email address	head.castleview@halton.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 April 2007

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements for the publication of information about PE and sport funding on its website.
- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is over twice the national average.
- The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school other than at the normal times is lower than average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. He observed learning in classes. This included joint observations with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at examples of pupils' work and talked to them about their work.
- The inspector talked to parents as they brought their children to school. He also examined 57 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspector met the chair of the governing body and four governors. He also spoke to a representative of the local authority and the school's improvement partner.
- The inspector met with eight pupils chosen at random from Years 3 to 6.
- The inspector also spoke to pupils in lessons, in the corridors and the playground.
- The inspector examined a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and the school development plan.
- The inspector also scrutinised documents relating to standards, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Aelwyn Pugh, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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