

Inspection of Castleway Primary School

Castleway North, Moreton, Wirral, Merseyside CH46 1RN

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. Everyone is welcome and everyone is valued at Castleway. It is a vibrant and happy place. Pupils understand leaders' high expectations of their behaviour and they make every effort to fulfil them.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are polite, confident and articulate. They develop empathy for others and get on well together. Pupils understand the importance of treating everyone with equal respect, regardless of their differences.

Pupils feel safe and secure. They explained that if anything was bothering them, they would feel comfortable talking to any member of staff. Pupils said that they would not stand by if someone was being treated unkindly. They know how to recognise bullying and are confident that staff would act swiftly to sort out such issues.

Pupils are starting to benefit from an improved curriculum and leaders' higher expectations of what they can achieve. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are motivated to try their best. However, in some subjects, pupils, including children in the early years, do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils eagerly carry out responsible roles such as eco-councillors. They are proud to make a positive difference to their community by litter-picking on their local shoreline.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Through their sharp focus and decisive actions to improve the school, leaders have firmly established their high expectations. Their ambition for pupils, combined with the support that they provide, have inspired the trust and confidence of staff, parents and carers and pupils alike. The culture is shifting. Staff morale is high. Castleway is an exciting place to learn and to work.

Leaders have ensured that pupils, including those pupils with SEND, have access to a broad and ambitious curriculum. For each subject, leaders have identified the important content that pupils need to know and remember and have ordered this carefully. This provides clarity for teachers on what should be taught and how it builds on pupils' previous learning.

Some subject leaders have strong expertise. They provide valuable guidance for teachers on effective approaches to deliver the content of the curriculum. This helps teachers to develop their subject knowledge. As a result, teachers present information clearly and use assessment well when designing learning. In these subjects, pupils achieve well.

This is not the case in all subjects. Some subject leaders are still developing their expertise in checking on how well the new curriculums are delivered. As a result, a few teachers do not receive the guidance they need to deliver important content confidently. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in these subjects.

Leaders have placed reading front and centre in the improved curriculum. Older pupils enthusiastically discuss their favourite books and authors. They develop strong comprehension skills through their exposure to carefully selected high-quality texts.

Leaders have ensured that the early reading curriculum is structured clearly. Staff receive training in how to deliver the phonics programme effectively. Leaders keep a careful check on how well pupils, including children in the early years, are progressing with their phonics knowledge. Staff provide additional support for any pupils who fall behind. However, leaders do not check that this support is working successfully for all pupils. Added to this, a small number of pupils do not have regular opportunities to practise their reading. This delays these pupils in developing their fluency and confidence in reading. Despite this, most pupils learn to read accurately by the end of Year 2.

Children in the Reception class are happy and socialise well with their friends. However, some aspects of the early years curriculum lack clarity. This leads to some of the activities that staff organise for children lacking purpose. Consequently, children in the early years do not achieve as well as they should.

Leaders have strengthened systems to ensure that pupils' needs are identified early. Pupils with specific needs receive effective support. Teachers adapt their approaches so that pupils with SEND can access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Pupils are polite, friendly and caring towards each other. Lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour, so pupils can concentrate without interruption. However, some pupils do not attend school regularly enough which hampers their learning.

Pupils benefit from carefully designed opportunities to develop their understanding of the wider world. The celebration of diversity and equality are common threads in all aspects of school life. Pupils talk passionately about their work to protect the environment. This includes organising a biodiversity conference to which pupils from other local schools were invited.

Members of the governing body have strong expertise and provide appropriate levels of challenge and support to school leaders. They are determined and highly ambitious for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders arrange regular training for staff to ensure that they remain alert to the signs that indicate that pupils could be at risk from or suffering harm.

Staff understand their responsibilities for keeping children safe. They follow clear processes to report any concerns promptly. Staff work effectively with other agencies to provide the support that vulnerable pupils and their families need.

Through the curriculum and in assemblies, pupils have opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe both online and in the wider community. For example, from Reception class, pupils benefit from regular swimming lessons.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few pupils do not benefit from effective support to catch up with phonics and early reading skills. This means that they do not become fluent or accurate readers quickly enough. Leaders should check that the support these pupils receive focuses sharply on their particular difficulties. Leaders should also ensure that these pupils practise their reading regularly so that they develop fluency and confidence in their reading.
- Some subject leaders lack expertise in checking the implementation of their subject curriculums effectively. This means that teachers do not receive the guidance and support that they need to deliver the curriculums consistently well. It also means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders are sufficiently well trained to improve the delivery of the curriculum in their subjects to enable all pupils to achieve well.
- Leaders do not always act early enough to intervene when pupils' attendance falls below an acceptable level. This means that some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Leaders should ensure that they communicate with parents and carers and take effective action to improve pupils' attendance so that these pupils attend school more often.
- The curriculum in the early years is not structured coherently. Staff are unclear about what children need to learn. This prevents some children from getting off to a strong start, particularly in terms of communication and language. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum in the early years sets out the important knowledge and vocabulary that children need to know and remember as the foundation for their future learning.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	105002
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10210919
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	126
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve Carney
Headteacher	Stuart Mycroft
Website	www.castleway.eschools.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 and 23 March 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- After the previous inspection, there followed a period of considerable instability in school leadership. A new headteacher was appointed in April 2021. There have also been several changes in the membership of the governing body, including the appointment of a new chair of governors.
- The governing body of the school is responsible for the school's federation with Castleway Nursery School. The headteacher of Castleway Primary School is the executive headteacher over both schools.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other leaders. They also spoke with subject leaders and members of staff.
- The leader inspector spoke with two members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority and an independent school improvement consultant whose support has been commissioned by senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, during playtimes and around the school. They spoke with different groups of pupils to discuss their views of the school, their learning, their behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. They reviewed documentation, checked attendance information and spoke to leaders, governors, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. The lead inspector also considered aspects of several other subjects on the school's curriculum.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and carers and considered their views which were shared through Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text comments received from parents. Inspectors also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff. There were no responses to the survey for pupils.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation shared by school leaders, including the school development plan, the minutes taken at governors' meetings and leaders' self-evaluation documentation.

Inspection team

Janette Walker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tim Sherriff

Ofsted Inspector

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