

Inspection of Castleway Primary School

Castleway North, Moreton, Wirral, Merseyside CH46 1RN

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 November 2024

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

At Castleway, everyone is made to feel welcome. This is especially important for the number of pupils who join from other schools. It does not take long for new pupils to embrace the 'Castle Way'. The school prides itself on supporting each pupil to develop their individuality. This is evident from the self-confidence that pupils display. Relationships between pupils and staff are kind and caring. Pupils feel nurtured at this school.

Children in the early years, and pupils throughout the rest of the school, are friendly and polite. They are kind to one another and respectful to visitors. The school's principles, such as friendship and respect, are apparent in the way that pupils treat one another.

The school has high expectations for pupils' academic success. Most pupils, especially pupils in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2, achieve well across a broad range of subjects. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils benefit from all that the school has to offer. They enjoy trips that bring learning to life. There are opportunities for pupils to discover their wider interests and talents. For example, pupils can choose from a range of clubs including football, girls' rugby and coding. Music is an important part of school life. In Year 3 all pupils learn to play the violin. Their weekly lessons culminate in a concert for parents and carers. In addition, the school is proud of its radio station, Castlewave Radio. During lunchtime, pupil DJs select and broadcast their favourite songs.

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

The school has implemented a new curriculum. It is ambitious. Pupils typically progress well through the curriculum. This is especially true for those pupils who have had the longest time to benefit from the new curriculum. The school has thought carefully about the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. Well-trained staff deliver the curriculum effectively. They check on pupils' learning and review the curriculum to make sure that pupils gain the knowledge that they need.

The achievement of current pupils is not reflected in the 2024 results. The attainment of Year 6 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics was significantly lower than the national average. This was caused by weaknesses in the previous curriculum. Pupil mobility in and out of school also played a part. For example, in 2024, half of the Year 6 pupils joined the school at different points during key stage 2. Although the school had identified gaps in learning, pupils did not have enough time to catch up.

Some older pupils at the school continue to have gaps in their learning due to the weaknesses in the previous curriculum. This makes it harder for them to remember what they have been taught in the past. This hinders them when they encounter new learning.

The school has made sure that reading has a high priority. The school's phonics programme begins swiftly in the Reception class. Children begin to learn the sounds and

letters that they need to know. This continues into key stage 1, where pupils become more fluent readers. Pupils develop a love of reading. The school's regular reading café is enjoyed by pupils and their parents. It provides an encouraging space for families to enjoy books together. Although pupils are given sufficient time to practise their reading, some pupils in key stage 1 do not have enough opportunity to apply their phonics knowledge in their writing. This means that some pupils are not developing fluency as writers as quickly as they could do.

The school ensures that pupils with SEND, including children in the early years, are identified quickly. Well-trained staff adapt their delivery of the curriculum so that pupils can learn alongside their peers. This includes for pupils with the most complex needs.

The school offers a rich array of experiences to promote pupils' personal development. These are designed to enhance the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils recently visited a museum about slavery as part of their work in history. The school places great emphasis on building positive relationships with families. Due to this work, Castleway has become the heart of its local community. The toddler group, coffee mornings, adult learning classes, pride picnic and the annual visit from Father Christmas mean that school is a hub of activity. Pupils especially enjoyed 'CastleFest', the school's recent 60th birthday party.

Pupils are helped to develop pride in their local area. For example, through going on litter picks. In addition, the school is committed to supporting pupils' mental health. Weekly opportunities for outdoor learning develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem in a nurturing space. Pupils are encouraged to develop their leadership skills. Those with roles of responsibility take this seriously. Captains and the junior leadership team wear their badges with pride.

Pupils, including children in the early years, are expected to behave well, and they do. They enact the school motto of, 'Be kind. Be confident. Be your best.' In lessons, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They listen to their teachers and to one another. This helps pupils to learn well.

Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They offer support and challenge and are particularly mindful of supporting staff's workload. For example, staff are able to request time for additional tasks. As a consequence, staff feel well-supported and valued.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some older pupils have gaps in their knowledge due to weaknesses in the previous curriculum. This makes it difficult for them to build on what they already know when new learning is introduced. The school should ensure that the gaps in pupils'

knowledge are addressed quickly so that these pupils are ready for the next stage of their learning.

- Some pupils in key stage 1 do not have sufficient opportunities to practise the letters and sounds that they know in their writing. As a result, some of these pupils do not develop fluency in writing as quickly as they could. The school should provide regular opportunities for these pupils to practise writing utilising their phonics knowledge so that they can become confident writers.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	105002
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10347927
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	165
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mark Melvin
Headteacher	Stuart Mycroft
Website	www.castleway.wirral.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 November 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is federated with a nursery school. Both schools are led by one executive headteacher and share a governing body. Some staff work across both schools.
- The school offers before and after-school provision.
- The school does not use any providers of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, including early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, looked at a sample of pupils' work, spoke with teachers and talked with pupils about their learning.
- An inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- An inspector also considered the curriculum in other areas. This included talking with pupils and scrutinising curriculum documentation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders. An inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector met with representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at home-time and during lessons and breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their views of school life.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents. They looked at the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. An inspector also spoke to a number of parents at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey.
- There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Frith Murphy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kevin Simpson

Ofsted Inspector

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