

Castletown Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108792
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	337155
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Brian Blake HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	349
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Joan Wilson
Headteacher	Mrs Joan Lumsdon
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2007
School address	Grange Road Castletown, Sunderland Tyne and Wear SR5 3EQ
Telephone number	0191 5535210
Fax number	0191 5535212
Email address	castletown.primary@schools.sunderland.gov.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2010
Inspection number	337155

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors saw 17 part lessons, which involved observing a total of 13 teachers. A range of documents was scrutinised and meetings were held with members of the senior leadership team, members of the governing body, nominated staff and a group of pupils. Other informal discussions were held with staff and a significant number of pupils during lessons and around the school. Inspectors also read 167 inspection questionnaires returned by parents and carers, in addition to considering the views of those staff and pupils who completed separate questionnaires.

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

- The children's start and finish points in all areas of learning for the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils' attainment and progress, especially those on the special educational needs register at school action plus.
- Exemplification evidence to support the school's assessment of outstanding provision for the care, guidance and support of its pupils.
- The school's promotion of equal opportunities, especially in relation to the context of the school.

Information about the school

Castletown Primary School is larger than average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, and a very small number have a statement of special educational needs. Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage. The school has gained The International School Award, Healthy School Award, Active Mark, Eco School Bronze Award, Quality Mark 10 year award, and the Financial Management Standard in Schools Award. A new headteacher was appointed at the start of the last academic year, together with a new assistant headteacher and there have been changes to staff responsibilities. The local area has also undergone a significant amount of redevelopment.

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

Castletown Primary School is providing its pupils with a good and improving standard of education. Almost all aspects of its provision are at least good, with some that are outstanding. For example, the outstanding quality of the care, guidance and support underpins the positive ethos of the school. Staff are sensitive to pupils' needs. As a result the pupils feel extremely safe in school, which makes a significant contribution to their outstanding behaviour in lessons, breaks and lunch times, and when moving around the school site.

Although the vast majority of children start at the school in Nursery with lower than the expected levels in skills and personal attributes, by the time they reach the end of Year 6 and are ready to move on to their secondary school, attainment has reached a broadly average level. This means that overall progress is good. However, attainment and progress for some pupils do not always reach these standards, especially for boys in writing. While most work is well presented and marked diligently, some is not. Occasionally, poor presentation undermines the quality of the pupils' work, as does some limitations in teachers' marking that makes little or no reference to how the work could be improved. Some other areas are outcomes

Teaching is good, and characterised by good quality working relationships, good planning and effective organisation and management of pupils. Some does not yet take sufficient account of the pupils' interests or learning needs, including the development of those important skills needed to develop greater pupil independence in learning; this applies to all key stages, and especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers' use of assessment information is developing satisfactorily, but has not yet reached the point of it fully informing their lesson planning and the targeting of activities to meet the specific learning needs of all pupils.

All staff in the school share a common sense of purpose and direction for future improvements. Senior leaders and managers know what they want to improve, with the school development plan highlighting the key priorities and actions needed for future improvements. There is currently too little detail about the impact that these actions will have on improving the outcomes for all pupils. The school has made good overall progress since the previous inspection, while going through some significant staff and local area changes. Overall, therefore, the school has a good capacity for future improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, develop a better balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated learning by:

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

- providing a range of focused activities that support all areas of learning and which are informed by the interests of the children
- improving planning so that it takes equal account of teacher-directed and child-initiated learning activities.
- Improve school development planning by:
 - focusing on improvements in pupil outcomes for each of the main priorities for action
 - using clearer and more measurable success criteria to aid evaluation and monitoring of provision by senior leaders and managers.
- Raise pupils' levels of attainment in writing and spelling, especially for boys, by:
 - focused teaching of these aspects in all curricular areas
 - targeting improvements in the presentation of work by pupils, and in the marking of their work by teachers.
- Continue to improve the consistency of good quality teaching by:
 - developing strategies in lessons which encourage the greater independence of the pupils
 - making better and more regular use of assessment information to set more challenging work for all abilities.

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

Pupils' attainment is average overall, although there are some variations between girls and boys across the two key stages, especially in writing. The overwhelming majority of pupils make good progress in their learning but the rate of progress is slower at Key Stage 1 than it is at Key Stage 2, as it is for a very small minority of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils are developing their skills in a number of curricular areas, together with acquiring new knowledge and greater understanding; this applies, in particular, to them developing and consolidating their understanding of key literacy and numeracy skills. This key skills work is helping to prepare the pupils well for the next stage of their education. The pupils are enthusiastic learners and willing participants in class and group discussions. They are able to sit and listen carefully in lessons, and are able to respond quickly to questions posed by the teacher in whole-class plenary sessions. The overwhelming majority of pupils say they enjoy their work, which was evidenced in those lessons observed by inspectors.

Pupils say that they feel extremely safe in school, which was confirmed in conversations with inspectors, and in the overwhelmingly positive response in the pupil questionnaire used for this inspection. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, although there are a few occasions when they are not as attentive as they could be, primarily due to overlong teacher talk, or work that does not challenge them sufficiently. The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles is good. The school makes satisfactory provision for the pupils to engage in regular exercise through programmed physical education and a range of out-of-school activities, both of which are helping the pupils to appreciate the need to engage regularly in some form of physical activity. The school actively promotes healthy eating

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

among its pupils, the outcome of which has been the significant increase this year in the number now regularly taking school lunches.

The pupils' contribution to the school and wider community is good. Their involvement in, and commitment to, the different enrichment activities provided by the school, especially extra-curricular, is good.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, but most effective in the moral and social aspects. The school is very successful in helping the pupils to work cooperatively with each other in all learning environments, and to know the difference between right and wrong. Although there are good opportunities for the pupils to appreciate and develop a greater understanding of different international cultures, including different world faiths, local and regional aspects of cultural development are less well developed.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good, although not all lessons consistently reach this standard. In those lessons where the most effective learning occurs, teachers are well organised, using familiar and well known routines, which ensure that the pupils enjoy their work and that they make satisfactory or better progress in their learning. Lessons are typically characterised by detailed lesson planning that identify what the pupils will learn. Focused

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

support by teaching assistants makes a positive contribution to the quality of learning in lessons. All staff use praise to good effect to help motivate and enthuse the pupils. While there are sufficient opportunities for individual pupil work, the skills and attributes necessary for them to work more independently are not yet clearly established as part of the lesson format. This means that the pace of learning is too often directed solely by the teacher, placing little or no responsibility for certain aspects of learning on the pupils themselves. This results in some work lacking the necessary challenge, especially for the higher attaining pupils. The use of assessment to aid pupils' progress is satisfactory. Although there are now robust systems in place to collect and analyse pupil performance data on a regular basis, this electronic process is relatively new to the school and not yet populated with a full range of information. Performance data are being used to help set targets for future achievements, but these have yet to be used by teachers as part of their lesson planning and, in particular, for ensuring that work is suitably matched to the full ability range.

The extent to which the curriculum meets the needs of pupils is good. The curriculum is well planned, and includes a careful balance of key National Curriculum subjects and other areas of learning that are helping to develop the pupils' personal, social and emotional skills. For example, the personal, health and social education provision is taught effectively through a nationally recognised programme. A varied programme of enrichment and extra-curricular activities also makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' progress and enjoyment of school, with a good take-up from the pupils in a range of activities that run outside of normal lesson time.

The school's provision in the care, guidance and support of its pupils is outstanding. The ethos within the school underpins much of this work, and results in the pupils feeling well supported and safe. The systems that support the pupils as they move through the school and onto secondary education are well known and very effective for both the pupils and their families.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management of the school are good, although some aspects have been slow to improve since the previous inspection. This is due to significant changes to the staffing structure, teacher reorganisation, and some important contextual changes to the immediate catchment area of the school. However, the most recent school development plan highlights a satisfactory range of key priorities and actions for future improvement, including important aspects of developing leadership and management. This plan provides

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

a clear sense of the ambition and drive for future changes and further improvements, although a few aspects are insufficiently focused on the impact that actions have on pupils' outcomes, as opposed to completion of identified tasks. Developing strategies, which involve the governing body in scrutinising and challenging the work of the school, especially the attainment and progress of the pupils, are helping to bring a greater focus on accurate timing of actions, greater awareness of financial accountability and more suitable timescales to tackle known issues. Overall, the governing body is effective in fulfilling its duties.

The school has been successful in addressing aspects of inequalities that have previously affected the pupils' performance. Gaps in attainment between different groups are closing, although the senior leaders and managers accept that more needs to be done to ensure that all pupils achieve in line with their capabilities. In other areas of its work, the school has successfully tackled prejudice and discrimination through positive and affirmative actions that are helping the pupils to appreciate their own and others' differences. All reasonable actions are taken to safeguard the pupils. The school is compliant with statutory regulations and all adults who work in the school understand and apply rules fairly and consistently in order to keep the pupils safe. As a result the school presents itself as a very cohesive community, although the extent to which this applies to local and regional links is relatively underdeveloped by comparison. International links, by contrast, are good and have been recognised in the school's achievement of the 'International Schools Award'.

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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The vast majority of children start in the Nursery with levels of skills and personal attributes below those

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

expected for their age. Because of good quality teaching and focused support, the children make good overall progress so that by the time they start school in Year 1, almost all have achieved the standards expected for their age.

The children's behaviour throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, although there are the occasional lapses when some of the children show an inability to cooperate with their peers. All children respond well to adult direction, showing a good understanding of dangers to their personal well-being and safety. The range of learning activities generally meets the needs of the children well, and includes a number of specific activities to promote their greater awareness of eating healthily, being active, and showing high standards of personal hygiene. However, there is currently an imbalance between teacher-directed and child-initiated learning, with planning not yet taking full account of the children's interests. All aspects of safeguarding are met fully, and the effective leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are helping to foster positive and secure working relationships between the school and the children's families.

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

Views of parents and carers

The percentage number of questionnaires returned by parents, at around 48%, is good. The overwhelming majority of parents are very positive about the quality of education provided for their children. A very small number took the opportunity to write some additional comments on the inspection questionnaire and all were praising of the school and the staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Castletown 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 166 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 349 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	100	60	60	36	4	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	124	75	38	23	3	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	98	59	64	39	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	100	60	61	37	3	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	115	69	48	29	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	101	61	57	34	6	4	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	98	59	62	37	4	2	1	1
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)	87	52	74	45	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	100	60	62	37	3	2	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	89	54	72	43	2	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	81	49	79	48	3	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	107	64	51	31	3	2	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	114	69	49	30	1	1	0	0

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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:	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 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 pupils' 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.



19 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Castletown Primary School, Sunderland SR5 3EQ

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave to us when we came to inspect your school, and your enthusiasm and willingness to talk and share your views about your work. These are some of the key things that we found.

- Your school provides you with a good and improving standard of education.
- Almost all of you achieve average standards by the time you leave in Year 6.
- Teaching is mostly good and you make good overall progress in your learning.
- Your behaviour is generally outstanding. Almost all of you work well with others in small groups and in whole-class activities.
- The staff look after you exceptionally well and, as a result, you feel extremely safe in school.

Despite the many good and outstanding features of the school, inspectors are asking that it works even harder to improve the following:

- Develop a better balance between activities chosen by both teachers and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Continue to raise levels of attainment, especially in boys' writing.
- Continue to improve the consistency of good quality teaching across the school.
- Improve school planning so adults can better see how well the school is doing.

You have an important part to play in helping the school to get better, not least by continuing to work hard, attending regularly and working cooperatively with other pupils.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Brian Blake

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.