

Castle Batch Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109135
Local Authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	356480
Inspection dates	9–10 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Joyce Cox

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	437
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Flannagan
Headteacher	Robin Strawbridge
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 16 teachers and visited 24 lessons. They held meetings with members of the governing body, parents, staff and pupils, and looked at the school development plan, assessment information, teachers' planning, pupils' work and safeguarding procedures. They analysed 296 parental questionnaires, 100 pupil questionnaires and 45 staff questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether all groups of pupils are making at least satisfactory progress throughout the school with particular focus on pupils' achievement in writing and the achievement of more able pupils and pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities.
- The effectiveness of the strategies to monitor and improve teaching and learning.
- How successfully staff use assessment information to meet the various learning needs of all pupils.

Information about the school

This is a much larger than average primary school. There are fourteen classes in the school and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the two Reception classes. The school has a Speech and Language Resource Base, which currently caters for 18 pupils, most of whom have a statement of special educational needs. A quarter of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The main areas of need are speech, language and communication, and moderate learning and behaviour difficulties. A few of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. No pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. A below average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Castle Batch provides its pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. The outstanding safeguarding procedures and the warm and caring relationships in the school help pupils to feel very safe and secure. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are clearly determined to raise pupils' achievement, but this ambition has been hindered by staff illness and several other periods of staff absence. Nevertheless staff morale is high. Although teaching is typically satisfactory, some good teaching was seen in all parts of the school. There is, however, a lack of rigour in senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning to effect improvement. Senior leaders' priorities are founded on accurate self-evaluation informed by a careful analysis of pupils' achievement as compared with national performance data. The school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory; the school is poised to move forward with confidence.

Pupils' attainment is average, although results in national tests in Year 6 have been uneven in recent years. Nevertheless, improvements in mathematics in the 2010 tests have been sustained. Given their starting points, pupils' progress is satisfactory. However, progress is uneven. Some teachers' expectations are not consistently high and in some lessons pupils are not given enough opportunities to get involved actively with their learning. Pupils' attendance is average and they say they enjoy school but find some lessons boring and would like more challenge. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is promoted well, which results in their good behaviour. Their sensible and conscientious attitudes to learning make a strong contribution to the progress they make. They have a good understanding of a healthy lifestyle, eat healthily and enjoy sport. Children in the Early Years Foundation Start settle quickly and make good progress but this is not always built upon effectively enough through the rest of the school. Effective teaching and support ensures pupils in the Speech and Language Resource Base make good progress in developing communication and personal skills.

Ironing out the uneven quality of teaching is one of the improvement issues for the school. Progress is more limited when teachers do not use assessment to set work at the right level for all pupils, and when marking does not help pupils understand how to move on. The curriculum has been reviewed and the school has rightly identified the need to provide increased links between subjects. A myriad of interesting enrichment activities enlivens the curriculum for many pupils. Monitoring is currently insufficiently systematic and governors, who are very supportive, are not yet sufficiently involved in effecting school improvement. Virtually all the parents and carers are pleased with the school. They particularly praised the happy, positive, welcoming and approachable ethos.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' learning and accelerate their progress by:

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- ensuring teachers have high expectations and challenge all pupils
 - making sharper use of assessment information to modify tasks in lessons to meet the needs of individual pupils
 - ensuring there is more pupil involvement in practical activities and that all lessons engage and motivate pupils' learning
 - making sure teachers' marking clearly tells pupils how to improve their work.
- Embed ambition and accelerate the pace of school improvement by ensuring that leaders and managers at all levels, together with the governing body, play a full part in:
- rigorously monitoring the school's work, especially teaching and learning
 - identifying improvement priorities
 - evaluating the impact of their actions to raise pupils' attainment and achievement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Most pupils say they like school and talk enthusiastically about the wide range of clubs and visits they enjoy. Overall, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 has been average over the last five years, but has varied. A steady decline in attainment in mathematics was halted and improved in 2010. Writing standards dipped recently and a recent focus on providing interesting activities to inspire boys to write is starting to pay dividends. The good attitudes and behaviour of pupils helps some good learning and progress to take place. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils made good gains in multiplying and dividing numbers by a thousand because of the teacher's skilful strategies to clarify any misunderstandings. Outcomes were enhanced by the good pace of learning and the teacher's sharp awareness of how well individual pupils were progressing. There are no significant differences between the outcomes for boys and girls, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. The use of learning support and teaching assistants is developing well, with good support seen in many classes. However, targeting assistants' strengths and skills to support specific literacy and numeracy interventions is underdeveloped. Pupils in the Speech and Language Resource Base make good progress due to the staff's expertise and skill in encouraging communication and raising self-esteem. Pupils clearly feel comfortable in the supportive environment and enjoy regular opportunities to experience and practise social language when they join their mainstream classes. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

Most pupils say they feel very safe in school and they develop a good knowledge of how to eat healthily and keep fit. Several pupils enjoy the daily breakfast club which provides healthy food served by smiling adults. Pupils take on many responsibilities such as school councillors and playground friends. Year 5 pupils are trained as peer mediators called Batch Buddies and maturely settle any potential disputes. All pupils take responsibility for promoting a good learning environment and setting standards for behaviour. In every class, at the start of each new school year, pupils say what they need to be like to work hard, to work safely and to work fairly. This is called a Full Value Contract, and pupils' behaviour is consistently good or better at all times. Pupils work closely with their local

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community through activities: Year 6 recently persuaded the council to include the school in the kerbside collection of cardboard. Pupils are very sensitive to the need of others and all classes are currently raising funds to sponsor a pupil in an orphanage in Zambia. Their satisfactory academic skills and good personal skills mean they are soundly prepared for later life and learning. ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	3
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	3
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?

Relationships between teachers and pupils are very respectful and caring, which helps to create calm classrooms. Good teaching was observed in several classes where lessons are conducted at a smart pace and teachers have high expectations for all pupils. Assessment information was used well to plan the next steps in learning and consequently pupils made good progress. However, this high quality is not seen in all classes because expectations are insufficiently high in some cases. Work given to pupils sometimes fails to provide enough challenge. In some lessons, there is too much teacher-talk and insufficient time for pupils to engage in practical activities. On some occasions, all pupils were given the same work to complete which restricted progress for pupils of different abilities. The curriculum has been reviewed but links across subjects to promote pupils' appreciation of the relevance of their learning are underdeveloped. An exceptional number and range of visits, visitors and clubs considerably enrich pupils' learning experiences. Year 4 and Year 6 pupils have residential visits and several pupils enjoy gifted and talented workshops at

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Kilve Court. The majority of pupils take part in after-school clubs, which include music, sport, art, drama and construction. Clubs are monitored closely to ensure all pupils have the opportunity to take part. The school provides a good framework for the care, guidance and support of pupils. Transition arrangements are well established and children settle quickly into school routines in the Reception classes. Good links with home and external agencies ensure that all pupils, and especially the most vulnerable, are well looked after. Learning mentors make an extensive, varied and valuable contribution to caring and supporting the most vulnerable pupils and families. Lunch Bunch club provides a safe, purposeful haven for those who find lunchtimes difficult. Attendance figures are rising as a result of the school's work to promote regular attendance. Pupils with speech and language disorders receive loving care and guidance and individual learning programmes, that enable them to take part in as many school activities as possible. The fact that other pupils throughout the school learn sign language means that pupils from the resource base can communicate at all times.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher ensure that all staff have a clear view of pupils' progress, which provides a secure basis for realistic self-evaluation. Senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning is regular but it is not sufficiently rigorous in terms of setting action plans to impact swiftly on improvement, and to raise the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good and ensure that expectations are levered up. Nevertheless, senior leaders set ambitious targets for pupils to achieve and staff are very enthusiastic about school improvement. There is a strong commitment to equal opportunities, inclusion and removing barriers to individual pupils' achievement. The governing body is providing solid support and increasing challenge. Parents and carers are regarded as key partners. The school works successfully to keep them in touch through newsletters, the school's website and curriculum information and regular meetings. The popular 'Batch Blokes' activities enables fathers to get together, fundraise and have fun. A wide range of well-established partnerships effectively support pupils' sound achievements and good personal skills. The Speech and Language Resource Base has outstanding links with local schools. Every Wednesday pupils who have language disorders come from other schools to the base for 'Chatter Batch' with their support staff. Pupils clearly enjoy these sessions very much and it is a first-rate method of spreading knowledge and understanding of ways to support pupils with communication difficulties. There are excellent policies, strategies and procedures to ensure the welfare of all pupils. Safeguarding policies and risk assessments are high quality and constantly reviewed to ensure pupils' safety. Staff and governors have

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an excellent awareness of safeguarding measures. The school effectively promotes community cohesion and has developed close partnerships with diverse communities both nationally and globally. For example, Year 5 pupils correspond with and have met pupils from a Wolverhampton school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are similar to those of other four-year-olds. Some children enter with lower early reading and writing skills. Effective leaders and managers, good teaching and tender care ensure that most children attain slightly above the expected levels for their age on entry to Year 1. Staff make learning fun and very enjoyable, and help children to work and play together well. For instance, during the inspection, children who had only been in school for a very short time were happy, confident and clearly loving many new experiences such as making and painting large rocket models. Children experience an interesting and highly appropriate curriculum which provides constant pleasure, excitement and adventure. There is a good mix of carefully planned adult-led and child-selected learning. Regular 'debriefing' enables children to discuss their learning and say how they could improve their work. Part of the outdoor area has been covered and provides good outdoor learning opportunities in all winds and weathers. Reception staff work as an effective team and have good knowledge and understanding of the personal and learning needs of young children. This ensures that children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and are well equipped for future learning. Staff are currently and correctly devising ways to encourage boys' early writing and mark-making skills as they do not attain as well as girls in this area of their learning. A strong partnership is quickly formed with parents and carers who feel their children have a 'great start' and appreciate the kindness, enthusiasm and endless patience of all the staff.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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

Well over half of the parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, which is a high number. Virtually all of these parents and carers feel that their child likes school, that teaching is good and that their children are kept very safe. Inspection evidence supports most of these judgements but feels that the quality of teaching varies. Eight per cent of the parents who completed the questionnaire felt that the school does not deal well with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors looked closely at this and found that pupils' behaviour is consistently good or better. A very small number of parents raised other concerns, but there were no issues that were relevant to the school as a whole. Parents' particular concerns were summarised and raised with the school without identifying any individual.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Castle Batch Community 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 296 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 437 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	191	65	101	34	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	203	69	88	30	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	139	47	142	48	8	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	150	51	131	44	2	1	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	160	54	126	43	1	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	133	45	150	51	8	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	148	50	139	47	3	1	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)	144	49	130	44	3	1	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	157	53	126	43	3	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	102	34	150	51	20	7	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	101	34	169	57	6	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	176	58	106	36	5	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	195	66	93	31	2	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.



11 November 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Castle Batch Community Primary School, Weston-super- Mare
BS22 7FN**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed coming into lessons and talking with you about school life. We have judged your school to be giving you a satisfactory standard of education.

These are some of the things we found out.

- You enjoy school, feel very safe and your behaviour is good at all times.
- Teachers help you to make satisfactory progress in your work.
- Reception children have a happy and successful start to school life.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you work hard for them.
- You go to a very caring and safe school. Everyone has your best interests at heart and wants you to be safe and happy, and to do as well as you can.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to do the following things to help the school improve further.

- Help teachers to make sure you always have good lessons so that you all make even more progress in all subjects.
- Make sure senior staff and governors carefully check up on how well you are doing in lessons and make improvements quickly when they are needed.

You can help by always working hard, attending school regularly and continuing to behave so well.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joyce Cox

Lead inspector

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