

Castle Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116083
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	357877
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2011
Reporting inspector	John Seal

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	408
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Denise Fletcher-Lance
Headteacher	Justin Bartlett
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. They observed 28 lessons which involved seeing 18 teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, staff and members of the governing body. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at: data on pupils' progress; a range of policies and planning documents; minutes of meetings; the school's self-evaluation documents; risk assessments; financial information; and the single central record of safeguarding checks on staff. The team analysed questionnaires returned by 168 parents and carers, 85 pupils and 33 staff.

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

- The precision of how teachers provide different groups of pupils with clear, helpful directions for the next steps in their learning during lessons.
- The rates of pupils' progress in lessons and throughout the different stages in the school.
- How the newly formed leadership team checks that the quality of teaching makes a difference to pupils' progress.

Information about the school

Castle is a larger-than-average primary school. The vast majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average. Their needs include physical, moderate learning and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school has achieved the Sportsmark, Artsmark and Healthy Schools Status. It has also been accredited by UNICEF as a Rights Respecting School. There is a privately managed on-site breakfast club which runs every weekday during term-time. This provision is inspected and reported on separately.

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

Castle Primary School provides a good quality of education. All aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding. Attainment is above average. The progress pupils make overall is good. Pupils enjoy their learning and demonstrate overwhelming excitement and enthusiasm for their learning. Teaching is generally good across the school. There are a small number of lessons which are satisfactory. During these lessons, strategies to help pupils know what their specific next steps in learning should be are not consistently applied. This is more frequently the case in Key Stage 2 than in other classes. The school is inclusive, caring and welcoming. The recently completed purpose-built physiotherapy room is a testament to the school's approach to successfully encouraging pupils with a wide range of needs to thrive, both socially and academically. Pupils feel safe and trust the staff to look after them. The curriculum is wide ranging, well balanced and offers a good range of practical activities. A real strength is the extensive number of extra-curricular clubs and educational visits for all year groups. Pupils' attendance is above average and their behaviour is good, sometimes exemplary. The school is led and managed well. Since his arrival in September 2009, the headteacher has galvanised the staff into focusing on ensuring all pupils make good progress and achieve higher levels of attainment. Systems for monitoring and evaluation have rapidly taken root and the strengths and areas for improvement are known well to all. The governing body is a strong business-like body. It has an accurate view of the school. It is able to hold it to account and is beginning to develop a clear, purposeful approach to its involvement in how the school develops in the future. A track record of above average attainment, good progress and strong, robust and effective self-evaluation systems which ensure all aspects of pupils' performance are carefully checked, provides the school with good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress by:
 - raising the quality of all teachers' use of assessment during lessons to the very best in the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Several pupils told different inspectors that 'Learning is fun!' Children start school with skills, knowledge and ability which are broadly typical for their age. By the time they finish Years 2 and 6, they are above average in reading and writing. Recently, at the end of both Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment in mathematics has been broadly in line with the national average. Through its effective monitoring and evaluation, the school has identified where particular groups of pupils require additional

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support. As a result, the work seen and in the school's current assessment information, pupils' attainment overall including mathematics is above average. Children's progress in Reception is outstanding. They make good progress throughout Years 1 and 2. In previous years, pupils made satisfactory progress from Years 3 to 6 because of a wide range and quality of assessment strategies. Since the arrival of the headteacher in September 2009, the school has rapidly established effective systems which identify pupils requiring additional support. As a result, almost all pupils are now making good progress including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and vulnerable groups. In conversation with inspectors and in questionnaires, the majority of pupils say they feel very safe. Bullying is rare and pupils demonstrate high levels of tolerance and understanding towards each other and adults.

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	2
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	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
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?

Inspectors saw a high proportion of good lessons and a few which are outstanding. There are some notable features that are common across year groups and classes.

- Learning objectives are clear with precise and specific personal or group targets for all pupils.
- Pupils know their targets well and are able to use them in their learning to make good progress.

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- Planning identifies the different learning needs of pupils and matches the activities accurately.
- During lessons, teachers regularly provide pupils with feedback about what they need to do next.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge informs their questions which challenges pupils' thinking and swiftly corrects any misunderstanding.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and work very closely with pupils, asking them questions and helping them to become independent learners.
- Marking of work provides informative written comments, suggestions for improvement and information about how pupils can improve further.

On occasions, however, these features are not consistently evident. As a result, in this minority of lessons, pupils' progress slows down and different abilities do not receive the targeted support, feedback and challenge required to maintain their good progress. This was particularly the case in a small number of lessons observed in Key Stage 2.

Pupils' needs are well met by the curriculum. It has many good aspects which include:

- clear, well-planned subject content which provides good continuity between year groups and key stages
- an inclusive approach ensuring pupils with different needs receive personalised support
- good specialist enrichment activities, particularly in science, French, sport and music
- some examples of small-scale topics with practical examples and activities, a good example was observed where Year 3 pupils were able to see a range of historical bicycles first-hand
- a wide range of extra-curricular activities, visits and field trips with a good balance between physical and other cultural activities including an overnight stay in France for older pupils, all of which have high participation and involve different groups of pupils in a very inclusive manner.

The curriculum is good and not outstanding because the school recognises innovation is limited, as is the extent to which the school includes pupils in the evaluation of the activities.

The school demonstrates a strong caring ethos which can be seen in:

- the strong pastoral support for all pupils
- well-managed transition arrangements for pupils from pre-school into Reception and from Year 6 into secondary education
- effective work with a range of professional agencies and providers, particularly to meet the needs of pupils with physical disabilities and pupils and their families who face challenging circumstances
- the way pupils' social and emotional needs are met well, and specifically through the work of the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant
- the well-managed team of teaching assistants who demonstrate care and effective support during lessons.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The restructured team of senior leaders and managers team clearly reflects the headteacher's determination and ambition to maintain a clear trajectory of improvement. In addition, the governing body meets its statutory duties and is keen to be involved in the future development of the school. This has led to:

- a clear understanding by all staff and governors of what needs to be done to drive improvements across the school
- senior and middle leaders being able to effectively monitor and evaluate pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning
- rigorous monitoring systems which identify where the school needs to focus its work, as a result of which the quality of teaching has improved rapidly, having a direct impact on pupils' higher attainment and better progress
- accreditation by UNICEF as a 'Rights Respecting' school which clearly illustrates the school's effectiveness and determination to ensure there is no tolerance of discrimination and a strong promotion of equality for all
- effective safeguarding systems and procedures which promote the safety and well-being of pupils by robust child protection training and checks during the recruitment of staff
- strong, positive engagement with parents and carers, the vast majority of whom, quite rightly, have a high regard for the work of the school
- a clear understanding of the characteristics of the school community, enabling clear planning and actions to promote pupils' understanding of the multicultural nature of British society and different groups, both nationally and in different countries.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The excellent leadership of the Reception classes is illustrated by the seamless teamwork of the staff who ensure children are able to make choices about their learning. Children settle in to their school life quickly and happily. As a result, they are confident and excited learners who make outstanding progress. By the end of their time in Reception, the vast majority of them are ready to start the National Curriculum when they begin Year 1. The learning environment has some striking features, particularly the external area which provides safe, secure but adventurous and stimulating opportunities for all children to learn both independently and with support from adults. Children's learning is carefully and thoughtfully assessed, and recorded accurately and expertly against the six areas of learning in individual 'Learning Journey' folders which are shared with parents and carers and inform the detailed and well-matched planning for each child. Relationships amongst children and with adults are excellent. Consequently, there are many remarkable examples of cooperation and respect. The outstanding leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is further exemplified by the promotion of outstanding safeguarding procedures. Imaginative opportunities are available for parents and carers to be directly involved in their children's learning through 'Stay and Play' and workshops during consultation evenings.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Nearly all of the parents' and carers' questionnaires were highly positive about the work of the school. There were just a few who raised concerns about receiving information about their child's progress and the school's approach to dealing with unacceptable behaviour. During this inspection, inspectors found that the school had a range of effective strategies for dealing with any unacceptable behaviour and provided a wealth of information regarding pupils' progress including very detailed reports.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Castle 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 168 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 408 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	101	60	65	39	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	113	67	55	33	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	85	51	74	44	6	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	80	48	87	52	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	82	49	84	50	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	73	43	90	54	5	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	77	46	85	51	5	3	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)	68	40	86	51	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	83	49	81	48	2	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	66	39	89	53	7	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	65	35	99	59	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	77	46	84	50	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	105	63	61	36	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



21 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Castle Primary School, Portchester PO16 9QQ

I hope most of you remember the inspectors who visited your school not so long ago. Thank you for your really friendly, warm welcome. We were very impressed by your good and sometimes excellent behaviour. We also enjoyed watching you learn, especially when all the historical bicycles were brought in for Year 3. You responded very well to our questions and spoke courteously to us in meetings, lessons and around the school.

You told us that Castle Primary is a good school and we totally agree with you. Some of the good things we found included:

- you learn a lot and have fun
- the Reception classes are excellent
- your attendance is good
- your teachers are good and provide you with interesting and exciting activities
- the school looks after you really well
- your headteacher and his team run the school well.

We talked with your headteacher, staff and governing body about what we saw. They are going to be working on the following area:

- helping you learn even more by making sure you have clear targets and next steps for your learning during all your lessons.

We hope that all of you will help Castle Primary School become even better by continuing to work hard.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Seal

Her Majesty's Inspector

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