

# Castlechurch Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124203
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	359605
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Horwood

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	414
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris Knight
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jonathan Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Tennyson Road Stafford ST17 9SY
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<b>Email address</b>	office@castlechurch.staffs.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 22 lessons and saw 16 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of staff, governors and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation including pupils' work, minutes of staff and governors' meetings, the school development plan, progress monitoring records and school policies. The responses to 95 parental questionnaires were scrutinised.

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

- Did pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who did not make the same progress as others in previous years make reasonable progress considering their possibly complex needs?
- Have all levels of management been actively involved in school improvement and are secure systems fully embedded for further improvement?

## Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school where most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are very few who have English as an additional language or who are at an early stage of speaking English although numbers are slowly rising. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school has an above-average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities covering a wide range but includes a significant number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties or severe learning difficulties. Among the awards obtained by the school are the National Award for Learning Outside the Classroom and the Eco School Gold. The headteacher took up his post at the start of term. A Children's Centre operates on the same site. Both before- and after-school care as well as extended nursery provision are managed by a private provider on the school site.

**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

Castlechurch Primary School provides a good education. Standards are rising steadily and attainment is broadly average. This represents good progress for pupils having started in Nursery with skills below those expected for their age. All groups of pupils make good progress including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because of the well-planned support. Pupils who did not make such good progress in past years were mainly those who were only in school for a short time and they had made good progress in the short time in school. Very effective strategies are in place to deal with the increasing number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities by early identification and very good support systems. Pupils with English as an additional language are initially put on the special needs register to ensure they get close monitoring. They get good support from an experienced teaching assistant who works across the year groups and quickly acquire the strategies to learn in lessons while developing their language skills. Most only stay on the register for a short time.

Teaching is good and learning has been enhanced by the introduction of the 'Wow' curriculum which has resulted in high levels of enjoyment by all pupils. As well as exciting topic work, the curriculum includes a range of visits to support the learning and this is recognised by being awarded the national award for Learning Outside the Classroom. The curriculum, however, does not always enable teachers to set challenging work for the more-able pupils. In all lessons there is well-planned questioning but the questions are often directed at individual pupils and limits the opportunities to discuss the response with their fellow pupils. Pupils' work is marked regularly and gives helpful guidance but pupils are not given time to follow up the comments.

The school's outstanding care for pupils includes outstanding safeguarding provision. The work of the inclusion officer and the bursar are particularly effective at promoting links with parents and carers, as well as external agencies, to support all aspects of pupils' welfare and learning. The care is further enhanced by working with the external provider and the children's centre to make seamless links over the extended day. Very effective procedures have led to above-average attendance and good behaviour.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The cultural development is well supported by the curriculum but pupils have little direct contact with those from different faiths and cultures. Although the school and the local community work as an outstandingly cohesive society, the school does not do enough to develop effective links with more distant schools and communities to ensure a greater impact on pupils' awareness of the world around.

Self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders at all levels and members of the governing body are fully involved in school improvement. Actions taken to raise attainment have been effective and are particularly apparent in the 2010 test results. The areas identified from

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the previous inspection, improving attainment in English and involving all levels of management in school improvement, have improved significantly. The outstanding care has been maintained and strengthened. The new headteacher has quickly gained the confidence and support of staff, pupils and parents and carers. Because systems of management are embedded and improvement has been driven forward by the new headteacher's team approach the school continues to have a good capacity for sustained improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by:
  - developing the curriculum to enable teachers to plan more challenging activities for the more-able pupils
  - ensuring that the way teachers ask questions gives pupils time and opportunities to discuss and think through their ideas
  - ensuring that pupils are given time to follow up written comments on their work about the next steps to improve their learning.
- Improve opportunities for pupils to enhance their understanding of different faiths and cultures through effective partnerships with pupils in other schools and whose backgrounds are different to their own.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

There is no significant variation in attainment between the key subjects or between any groups of pupils. Pupils make good progress in lessons they really enjoy because of the good relationships that exist and the exciting curriculum. Pupils are very supportive of every aspect of the school and all say they feel safe and are well looked after by adults.

In a Year 1 literacy lesson which followed a visit to a local museum, pupils were able to talk about the visit and the video they had seen. They were very proud of the drawings and posters they were producing and all had appropriate tasks to help them make good progress. In an outstanding Year 4 poetry lesson the pace and challenge resulted in all the pupils being actively involved and contributing to a very effective discussion. Pupils enjoy teachers' questioning and also work well in small groups or pairs. In most lessons pupils make use of information technology systems to support their learning. Pupils are well prepared for their move to secondary school because of their secure key skills and their good personal skills.

Pupils get on well together and their behaviour is good, both in and out of lessons, ensuring that all pupils feel safe and can learn and enjoy school. Pupils say that any poor behaviour is dealt with very quickly. They adopt healthy lifestyles by participating regularly in sport and most eat healthy food. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community by helping in class and, for example, as members of the school council which has its own budget to spend. They interact well with the local community. For example, they consulted with the police and the Community Learning Partnership about the lack of local facilities and this led to Dodge Ball and Street Dance sessions weekly.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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 school provides an extremely caring environment and ensures that all activities are well supervised and carried out safely. Monitoring of pupils' progress and teachers' knowledge of pupils' prior attainment are good. Most teaching is good with none inadequate. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan well to make the lessons enjoyable. The support by teaching assistants is good and they work seamlessly with the class teacher supporting a group of pupils. During the introduction session this is usually with the least able to ensure they will be able to access the learning. During group activities support is generally on a rota basis so that the less able also have the opportunity to develop skills of independent working. Appropriate strategies are used to motivate pupils as was seen in a numeracy lesson when a Carroll diagram was chalked on the tarmac so that those in the low-ability group were physically involved in the lesson.

The very motivating curriculum caters well for most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It does not fully provide for the more able pupils. There is a good focus on promoting pupils' personal, social and health education, citizenship and their awareness of how to stay healthy. There is good coverage of other faiths and cultures ensuring that pupils are enabled to gain a good understanding of the community. There are very few direct links with other communities to enable pupils to communicate with pupils in different parts of the world. Not enough opportunities are built

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in to the curriculum to enable teachers to provide sufficient challenge for the more-able pupils.

Good procedures encourage high standards of behaviour and help maintain above average attendance. Transition arrangements with pre-school groups and with the local secondary school are outstanding. All aspects of care, health and safety are well addressed and there is an exceptionally good approach to safeguarding and the welfare of pupils. There are good arrangements to support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The care is extended beyond the school through children's centre links and a very good partnership with parents.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The new headteacher, school leaders and the governing body share the same vision for the school and a commitment to school improvement. Governance is good. The governing body is well led and is effective as a result of being well informed about outcomes. Its members provide support and ask challenging questions of the leadership team. Monitoring systems are well organised and give an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school fully meets requirements for promoting equal opportunities and avoiding discrimination thus ensuring all groups of pupils make similar progress.

The new headteacher continues the previous headteacher's dedication to a cohesive community and leads the school to work well with local groups building outstanding links with the local community. Links with communities further afield are at an early stage of development. Safeguarding procedures are exceptionally well developed and reviewed regularly. All aspects of risk assessment are very secure and the required checks on adults who work in school have been made. Issues about safety are well integrated into the curriculum and are enhanced by visitors from the community. Training in child protection and the school's work with other agencies are excellent.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well managed and provides a good start for children. Children's skills on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage are below nationally expected levels for this age especially in social and emotional development and language and communication. Children make good progress across all areas of learning and have skills close to the goals expected of children at the end of the Reception year. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world are still lower than expected. Children play and learn well together. There is lots of laughter and cooperation around the activities.

The learning environment is exciting and stimulating promoting eagerness in children to engage and concentrate on activities. Children's interests are used to help them learn. One boy had brought in his cars and was experimenting with making tracks for them in the sand tray. Children have a good understanding of keeping safe because of effective adult guidance.

Children are well cared for. There are clear monitoring activities planned which give the team leader a good understanding of where to focus individual child support. Data is not always sufficiently accurate to enable teachers to analyse progress. Parents and carers are very happy and satisfied with support for their children and communication between them and the school. They all agreed that they knew all they needed to about their children's start in the school. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported in all aspects of their learning.

Teaching and learning are good. Staff place a strong emphasis on basic skills including language development and personal, social and emotional development. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those chosen by the children. The outdoor areas are safe and secure and link directly to the classrooms. Children are able to move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas under good supervision.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

The vast majority of parents and carers who replied to the questionnaires are happy with all aspects of the school. A very few parents or carers made written comments. Most of these were supportive of the school with comments like 'happy, friendly staff', 'I really love the time and effort teachers put into planning and preparing the creative curriculum' and 'the school has been a wonderful support over five years, very understanding'. A very few had individual concerns which were considered as part of the inspection process but which were not consistent with inspection findings.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Castlechurch 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 95 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 414 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	57	38	40	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	48	47	49	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	32	34	60	63	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	38	48	51	7	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	36	38	57	60	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	38	55	58	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	38	55	58	4	4	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)	25	26	57	60	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	32	59	62	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	27	57	60	6	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	29	54	57	6	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	33	35	53	56	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	47	47	49	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



7 October 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Castlechurch Primary School, Stafford, ST17 9SY**

Thank you for welcoming us and helping us when we came to inspect your school. We really enjoyed visiting you and talking to you in lessons and around the school. Your school is giving you a good education. You are making good progress in your work and are able to do the things that we usually expect by the time pupils reach the end of Year 6.

There are many other things we admired about your school and these are a few of them:

You all feel very safe as a result of the excellent work by the staff to ensure you are kept safe in an outstandingly caring environment.

You are very happy and enjoy being at school and the adults look after you extremely well.

Your behaviour is good and you all get on well together.

You find the new 'Wow' curriculum really interesting.

Teaching is good and lessons are made exciting through your topic work.

Children in the Reception class make a good start to their education.

There are a few things we have asked the school to do to make it better:

- to help those of you who find learning easy to make even better progress by ensuring the lessons give you more opportunities to extend your knowledge
- ask you questions in lessons which need you to think about and discuss your answers with others
- to always give you time to look at teachers' written comments in your books and to follow these up
- to improve the opportunities you have to communicate with children in other schools so that you get a greater understanding of different faiths and cultures.

You can help the school to improve by carrying on working hard.

Yours sincerely

John Horwood

Lead inspector

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