

# Nelson Castercliff Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 119281              |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Lancashire          |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 358527              |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 15–16 February 2011 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Stephen Rowland     |

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>                 | 4–11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed   |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 272   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                                      |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Mrs Kim Hubbert   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Mr Ian Chester  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 5 February 2008   |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Marsden Hall Road North<br>Nelson<br>Lancashire BB9 8JJ |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01282 617627  |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01282 693526  |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | head@castercliff.lancs.sch.uk                           |

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|--------------------------|---------------------|
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 15 lessons and observed the work of 11 teachers. They evaluated the school's work, and looked at relevant policies, the school development plan, records of meetings of the governing body; the school's monitoring records and analyses of pupils' attainment and progress. The 121 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were also analysed.

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

- The degree to which the school's tracking system shows that all pupils are now achieving as much as they can.
- How well the school ensures that teaching is monitored and evaluated and good practice shared.
- How effective the school's strategies are for improving attendance.
- The degree to which leaders and managers at all levels take an active role in the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement.
- How well the Early Years Foundation Stage provision secures improvements in children's personal, social and emotional development and in their language skills.

## Information about the school

This school is larger than the average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and about a fifth is a mix of Asian, European and Caribbean heritages. A small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. A large number of pupils are admitted or leave during the school year.

The school has Investors in People Status and the Lancashire and National Healthy School status.

**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**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It has a number of good features. Attainment has risen significantly as a result of the improvements to teaching and the curriculum but it is still low in upper Key Stage 2 as a result of the previous underachievement. The rate of pupils' progress across the school is improving rapidly. The governing body and staff are committed to securing further improvement. This is a school where pupils feel safe, behaviour is good and there is a strong sense of shared values. The school's self-evaluation is realistic and accurate. Leaders have secured good improvements to provision over the last few years and there is a sense of confidence about the future. The school has made good progress with the issues raised at the time of the last inspection. This, along with rising attainment, pupils' good overall progress, the good-quality teaching and an effective curriculum, show that there is a good capacity for sustained improvement.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is good. It provides children with a solid basis of skills in order to move successfully into Key Stage 1. Although attainment remains low in upper Key Stage 2, it is improving well and is close to expected standards in many classes. The quality of teaching is good, ensuring pupils' good progress. There are examples of outstanding practice where learning is strong. The best lessons engage pupils well so that they make good progress. There is a clear focus on basic language skills and pupils have many opportunities to talk about their learning. Pace is brisk and learning is active and engaging. In a few lessons the pace can fade and on occasion, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning and check for misconceptions.

The curriculum is very effective in developing pupils' creativity. The work carried out by visiting artists has proved to be engaging and stimulating. The school is developing pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills with increasing success although there are still insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length. Pupils enjoy school and are very loyal. Of the 100 pupils who completed the pupil questionnaire, almost all were entirely positive about the school. The majority of parents and carers think highly of the school. Many positive comments were received during the inspection. Although health and safety policies are in place and thorough for most aspects fire drills are not carried out routinely enough.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise attainment by:
  - ensuring that the pace of lessons is always brisk and there are regular opportunities to consolidate learning and check on any misconceptions

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- ensuring that writing skills are developed systematically throughout the school by ensuring pupils have opportunities to write at length.
- Ensure that fire drills are carried out more regularly to check procedures are effective.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils enjoy school and appreciate the work and guidance that their teachers provide for them. The vast majority of lessons contain interesting and engaging activities and this ensures pupils make good overall progress. For example, in a very effective lesson on capacity, pupils enthusiastically estimated the capacities of various containers and then took part in a series of experiments to see if they were correct.

Generally children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are low compared with those expected for their age. The school is successfully eliminating any gaps in attainment between different groups of pupils throughout the school and in comparison to pupils nationally. The school's tracking system shows that the proportion of pupils making good progress has improved strongly year on year over the last three years and that attainment is improving rapidly in most classes. This is due to the improvements the school has made to the quality of teaching and assessment. However, the full impact of this work is still to be fully reflected in higher attainment for older pupils. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good and as a result, they make good progress in line with their peers. Those pupils who enter the school at an early stage of learning English are supported well by multi-lingual assistants. As a result, they make good progress and are able to access the curriculum quickly.

Pupils feel safe in school and respect others. Behaviour is good. Newcomers including those who enter the school who speak little English are made to feel welcome. Pupils say they are confident that any concerns they have will be dealt with promptly. They benefit from a wide range of sporting and exercise activities. This aspect of their work is greatly enhanced by the school's partnership with a neighbouring sports college. The school has flagship status as a Healthy School and pupils talk confidently about the importance of healthy life styles. Pupils actively and keenly support the school community and maturely adopt roles of responsibility. The pupil council plays an active role in decision-making and includes pupils who are participants in the national Pupil Parliament. Pupils support a number of local and national charities such as Children in Need. Attendance is improving and is now at the national average. The school is a calm and civilised community which is built upon mutual respect and clear expectations about how pupils behave. Consequently, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

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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>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 4        |
| 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>2</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>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 3        |
| <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?

Teaching is good overall and there are examples of outstanding practice. The best lessons are planned carefully to ensure that all pupils can learn and make good or better progress. In these lessons, learning is active with frequent opportunities for pupils to talk about their ideas with their peers. The pace of learning is brisk, there is little opportunity for interest and engagement to fade and there is a real sense of enjoyment and fun. Pupils understand the purpose of the lesson and can see where it is taking them. In one very strong Year 6 English lesson, for example, pupils had to decide on their own success criteria so that they would know how successfully they had achieved the lesson's learning objectives.

In a few lessons, learning and progress were not as strong. Introductions were too lengthy so that interest waned. Questions did not challenge some groups of pupils sufficiently and occasionally teachers did not check pupils' understanding so that misconceptions were not dealt with. Marking is normally helpful and supportive and helps pupils improve their work. Assessment information is used systematically to plan for learning. Teachers and pupils are aware of what next steps need to be taken to continue individual pupils' good progress.

The curriculum is well-organised and is increasingly effective in ensuring good outcomes. Its full impact on raising overall attainment is not yet fully realised in upper Key Stage 2. There is a strong focus on developing speaking and listening skills and this supports good

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pupils' progress. Creativity is keenly encouraged and this helps to develop problem-solving skills and to encourage initiative. A broad range of enrichment activities is offered to pupils. Sporting activities are varied and highly popular. All pupils are offered the benefits of a residential outdoor pursuits experience.

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. The quality of care for vulnerable pupils is very high. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are also supported very well. Their needs are assessed carefully and programmes set up to ensure that they can achieve well in school. Progress towards the targets set for these pupils is carefully monitored to check pupils are on track. The school has been successful in raising attendance so that it is now at the national average for primary schools.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>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>2</b> |

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is well-respected. Under his direction the school is a safe and calm place where pupils are nurtured and cared for well. There has been a successful emphasis over recent years on improving pupils' learning and progress. This aim is shared by all staff and the governing body. The strong drive to raise standards is increasingly successful and, although attainment is still low at the end of Year 6, rates of progress have improved strongly. Teaching is monitored thoroughly and good support is given to enable effective practice to be shared. This has resulted in a good improvement in the overall quality of teaching. Planning for improvement based on realistic and accurate self-evaluation is clear and helpful, and all leaders and managers contribute actively to this. An active and committed governing body knows the school well and has a clear understanding of what it needs to do to improve further.

The school works closely with parents and carers and listens to their views. Systems for reporting on pupils' progress are effective. The school is also well supported by a number of external partnerships. These include the active partnership with a local high school, which enhances curricular provision, and with a range of external agencies that support the quality of care, guidance and support offered to pupils.

There is no room for discrimination of any type at Castercliff and the school works hard to ensure that all pupils have a fair and equal opportunity to succeed. For example, the school has successfully supported more-able pupils so that the proportion of this group achieving the highest levels has increased. Strategies to promote community cohesion are very effective on a local scale but there are fewer opportunities for pupils to actively engage with those from other areas of the United Kingdom or in other countries. The arrangements to ensure safeguarding are satisfactory. This includes an appropriate focus

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on the suitability of staff and the appointments of new staff. Arrangements to check the effectiveness of fire drill procedures are not regular enough.

*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:<br>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>3</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>3</b> |

## Early Years Foundation Stage

From their low starting points children make good progress towards the early learning goals in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make particularly good progress in developing personal qualities and learn how to share and to take responsibility for small tasks. Children play well on their own and are able to choose what to do. Relationships with adults are good and this supports good learning. Children behave well and this helps to keep them safe. They learn how to remain healthy and how to keep fit.

Adults are well deployed and support children well. They keep accurate and thorough observations on children's play and use this information to plan for the next steps of learning. The environment is interesting and stimulating so that learning becomes enjoyable. There is an appropriate mix of child-initiated and adult-led activities. Links with parents and carers are good and there are frequent opportunities for them to share their child's achievement at home and in school.

The setting is led and managed well. Systems and procedures are in place and, as in the main school; there is a strong focus on improving achievement. The development of language skills has been a particular focus. The use of questioning by adults to promote learning has helped to develop children's skills in this area of learning. Formal meetings are held regularly and plans for improvements are constantly under review. Staff are appropriately qualified and trained to support children's learning and welfare.

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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:   |          |
| 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

About 40% of parents and carers responded, which is a higher return rate than usual for primary schools. A large majority of the responses were entirely positive. All of those who responded felt the school kept their child safe and that the school helped their child to have a healthy life style. A very small minority of respondents expressed concerns about the school keeping parents and carers informed about their child's progress; the progress their child was making in school; the school's response to unacceptable behaviour and taking account of their concerns and suggestions.

Inspectors considered these issues carefully during the course of the inspection. They looked carefully at the school's systems for reporting to parents and carers. They considered pupils' progress both in lessons and as illustrated in the school's tracking records. Pupils' behaviour and how the school responds to unacceptable behaviour were examined through discussions, observations and examinations of records. The way in which the school responds to parental suggestions and concerns was examined through records of school actions and through discussion with staff and the governing body; the inspectors' conclusions about these issues were that the school has effective systems in place to communicate with parents and carers and to respond to their concerns and suggestions. Inspectors felt that unacceptable behaviour was dealt with effectively. Inspectors concluded that pupils' progress is good.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Nelson Castercliff 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 121 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 272 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |   | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | % | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 78             | 64 | 41    | 34 | 1        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 78             | 64 | 43    | 36 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress  | 61             | 50 | 51    | 42 | 8        | 7 | 0                 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 64             | 53 | 46    | 38 | 9        | 7 | 0                 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 70             | 58 | 47    | 39 | 3        | 2 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 59             | 49 | 51    | 42 | 8        | 7 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 57             | 47 | 61    | 50 | 0        | 0 | 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) | 56             | 46 | 55    | 45 | 2        | 2 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 62             | 51 | 53    | 44 | 6        | 5 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 58             | 48 | 54    | 45 | 7        | 6 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 56             | 46 | 56    | 46 | 5        | 4 | 1                 | 1 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 71             | 59 | 46    | 38 | 2        | 2 | 0                 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 76             | 63 | 42    | 35 | 2        | 2 | 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](http://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"><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.**



17 February 2011

Dear Pupils,

**Inspection of Nelson Castercliff Community Primary School, Nelson, BB9 8JJ**

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome during our recent visit to your school. We were particularly grateful to those of you who agreed to meet us during your lunch time; your comments were very helpful. Thank you also to those of you who completed the questionnaire.

Castercliff is a satisfactory school. It has many good features and the staff are working well to make it even better. We were very impressed by your behaviour which is kind and considerate. You treat newcomers with great respect and make them very welcome. We were particularly impressed by your understanding of how important it is to remain healthy and fit. Your parents and carers had many positive things to say about the school.

You make good progress and your teachers work very hard to provide you with good lessons. Most of your lessons are good. However, we thought that there are some things which help you to learn more. We felt that all lessons should move on quickly so that there was no chance of anyone losing interest. Also we felt you should have plenty of opportunities to make sure you understand the work you have been asked to do. We think you should have more opportunities to write longer pieces of work so that your writing skills can improve further. We also think it is very important that fire drills are carried out more often to make sure that they work well enough.

We know how proud you are of your school. Please help your teachers by always behaving as well as you did during our visit, by trying your very best and by helping each other. Once again, thank you for your kindness and help.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Rowland

Lead inspector

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