

Caton Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119322
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	358533
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
Reporting inspector	David Byrne

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ruth Gibbons
Headteacher	Ms S Cadwallender
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Observations were made of teaching and learning in six lessons, taught by three teachers. Meetings were held with representatives of the local authority, the governing body, staff and pupils. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation provided by the school, including records of pupils' progress and the school improvement plan and policies for securing safeguarding and child protection. Questionnaires returned by 26 parents and carers were evaluated.

- Whether teaching is sufficiently challenging to meet the needs of all pupils, and in particular the more able.
- The quality of assessment and its impact on teachers' planning, and the involvement of pupils in evaluating their progress and understanding what they need to do to improve.
- Whether improvements and adaptations being implemented in the curriculum are raising achievement and generating interest and excitement.
- The impact of leadership and management at all levels on raising achievement and promoting the highest possible outcomes.

Information about the school

This is a small school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds. The percentage with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average with an above average percentage with a statement of special educational needs. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Since the last inspection there have been significant staff changes. The current headteacher took up post in September 2009 and a long serving member of staff has left to be replaced by a newly qualified teacher.

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 is improving rapidly under the strong and visionary leadership of the headteacher and determined governing body. Many bold and positive changes are accelerating progress. Staff and the governing body share the same philosophy; this is to make learning interesting and to give pupils the good academic skills and positive personal qualities required to fit into modern society. The large majority of parents and carers applaud the changes that are underway. The following comment is typical of the views of most, 'All children are treated the same and the staff and headteacher inspire and breed confidence in the boys and girls.'

Attainment in Key Stage 2 is average. Given children's starting points to the Early Years Foundation Stage, which are typical for their age, pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory. The rate of progress is accelerating and attainment is rising because of improvements to the quality of teaching and to the curriculum. Better use is now being made of assessment and more creative lessons are encouraging more independent learning. Pupils' views increasingly shape what they learn. The benefits of linking subjects together are valued but still not fully exploited. Writing activities do not always have sharp enough targets to raise attainment and in mathematics, expectations are not consistently challenging enough. Pupils understand their achievement in lessons but they are not always clear about how to move their learning forward over time.

Pupils are well behaved, polite and sociable. They are keen to take responsibility for learning and respond positively to the raised expectations for them to contribute to decision making. Good care and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enable them to make good progress. Partnerships with other organisations are satisfactory, but the profile of the school in the community is reported to be a low. Also, the benefit of working with other schools is underdeveloped, which reduces opportunities for staff to share good practice and to endorse the accuracy of their assessments.

A skilled and tenacious headteacher, supported by a good governing body has a clear ambition for the school. Effective management systems are well established. For example, all staff are involved in evaluating the school to create a clear picture of its strengths, weaknesses and areas to improve. Strong teamwork, high staff morale and a determination to move forward give the school a good capacity to improve.

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 achievement from satisfactory to at least good by:

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- improving the quality of planning in order to give pupils more opportunities to write, coupled with higher expectations for success
- ensuring that mathematics activities are suitably challenging and set within a wider range of contexts.
- Improve the impact of teaching on learning by:
 - ensuring that all learning tasks challenge the pupils' existing ideas and knowledge
 - working with pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of how they can evaluate their work and set targets that will take them to a higher level.
- Make better use of partnerships to benefit pupils by:
 - raising the profile of the school in the local community
 - developing professional relationships with other schools to widen the experience of staff and secure good practice.

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

Most pupils enjoy school. The comment that, 'Lessons are fun and I love all that we do', typifies their views. Pupils' obvious enjoyment of their work contributes well to their above average attendance. They are conscientious, work hard and demonstrate a desire to do well. Pupils respond positively to expectations for them to take more ownership for their own learning. During a lesson in Key Stage 2, pupils were engrossed in composing their own fables and by so doing demonstrated a good understanding of the features of writing. Pupils like the practical approaches being promoted but say that they are not able to develop fully their investigative skills in science.

Progress, satisfactory in recent years, is improving. Attainment in Key Stage 1 has typically been above average, whilst in Key Stage 2, it has been more variable but broadly average. Attainment in reading is a relative strength but in writing and in mathematics, whilst attainment is average, it could be better. Attainment has been held back by a weakness in pupils' ability to apply their mathematical knowledge to a wide range of contexts and too few opportunities for pupils to write. Expectations are increasing. Attainment is on an upward trend with pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities making good progress overall. The achievement of boys and girls is not statistically different.

Pupils' effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes to good behaviour, positive relationships and the friendly ethos evident. The school celebrates the diversity of the community through its partnership with a multi-ethnic primary school. This contributes to pupils' good understanding of modern society. Their contribution to the school community is more limited. Their voice is heard through the school council but this is an area identified by the school for further development. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to act safely and how to respond to road safety issues. They understand the main threats to their health but are not secure in the reasons for making decisions about healthy living. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their next stage of education.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
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?

Pupils benefit from a dedicated teaching and support team that has raised their performance considerably under the strong and supportive leadership of the headteacher. Staff know that pupils' attainment in some areas can be better and have established a range of action plans to bring this about. Effective initiatives have been implemented to meet the individual needs of pupils and to build their confidence and ability to make decisions for themselves. Well-briefed teaching assistants provide good support to those pupils who find aspects of English and mathematics difficult and to help pupils who are falling behind. The needs of the more able are recognised, but at times tasks that are chosen by pupils lack sufficient challenge or specific targets to push them on. Teachers often use stimulating role play techniques to fire pupils' imaginations, for example, pupils in Key Stage 2 were inspired to build their own Amazon role-play area and this led to some good quality writing associated with it. Good use of information and communication technology often enhances learning and engages pupils. Many, for example, are competent in devising their own multi-media presentations. An increased focus on assessment informs teachers' knowledge of pupils' academic achievement. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own performance by referring to lesson expectations, but their understanding of how to improve in the longer term is superficial.

The curriculum meets requirements. It is in the process of being overhauled to make it exciting, more relevant to pupils and to exploit links between subjects. There is still some

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way to go to refine these changes but there is evidence of a marked impact on the enjoyment of pupils and the enthusiasm of staff. Imaginatively planned topics, such as a study of Brazil, involve pupils in using their own initiative to seek information, develop essential research skills and to acquire new facts. A wide range of educational visits, for example, to the Science Museum in Manchester, broaden pupils' experiences as well as adding a sense of excitement to learning. Visitors, such as a member of the governing body talking about memories of childhood, and also Royal Society for the Protection of Birds education officers, enhance learning. Pupils eagerly attend an excellent range of extra-curricular clubs and activities and talk enthusiastically about the gardening club and cooking.

Each pupil and their family are known well. Staff are caring and employ a variety of effective strategies to support pupils with emotional and behavioural challenges. This enables pupils to overcome what for some are significant barriers to learning and access all elements of school life and contributes to the good level of inclusion in the school. The school has effective systems to induct pupils to school at the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Care is also taken to apply good strategies to ease the transition of pupils when they move on to secondary education.

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 has high expectations of staff and pupils. The clear vision and ambition provided has re-energised the school after a period of uncertainty. Staff are confident in the new approaches being adopted and work as a team to secure their positive impact on learning. Robust evidence and good quality data inform a highly appropriate development plan for school improvement. Target-setting is realistic and challenging and contributes to pupils' accelerating progress. The governing body, although new in its membership, has a good capacity to meet the school's needs. Its members work closely with staff to identify any weaknesses and to bring about necessary improvements. The inclusion of all, regardless of ability or special educational needs and/or disabilities, reflects the school's good commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and to fighting discrimination. For example, good strategies are in place to raise the aspirations of all pupils. Staff welcome parents and carers into school, promote discussion and provide them with adequate information on their children's progress. Initiatives are underway to promote their greater involvement in learning at home, for example, in designing an Easter Basket. There are strengths in the partnerships between the school and outside agencies in education and health and welfare. Links with other schools to promote staff development and improvement are relatively underdeveloped. The disruptions to staffing in the past have

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diminished the standing of the school in the local community and the governing body has this as a priority for improvement. There is good provision for safeguarding and it takes care to minimise all reasonable risks. The governing body ensure that procedures for the safety of pupils are secure with good systems for managing child protection. Effective strategies promote community cohesion within the locality, the wider United Kingdom and globally. Close relationships with parents and carers promotes cohesion within the immediate community. Links with a multicultural school in Manchester widen pupils' understanding of diversity in modern society. Given the school's currently satisfactory outcomes and effectiveness, it provides satisfactory value for money.

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	3
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory although improvement is underway. Children are educated alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2. This benefits their development in many ways, particularly in language and in aspects of their personal and emotional development. Staff work together closely to support children and a wide array of activities is provided for learning both indoors and outdoors. Most children start Reception with levels of development that are typical for their age, with relative strengths in their spoken language and knowledge and understanding of the world. They make satisfactory progress overall because the teaching team knows each child very well. Data held by the school indicates that when children complete their time in Reception their attainment is slightly above average.

Provision, in terms of resources and the staff's skills, is good. Many positive changes are underway although they do not yet fully impact on outcomes for children. The accommodation is well organised and set up to meet children's needs. Investments in new resources benefit learning both inside and out and create a vibrant and exciting learning

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environment. Groups of children eagerly and confidently present their own plays to their classmates, linked to things that they feared. Much is done to widen the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Children use programmable toys to explore position and direction and others use computers to learn through educational games. The provision is energetically led and day-to-day management is good. Whilst children are given many opportunities to make choices as well as receive focused adult support, some of the activities they choose lack clear targets and purpose. This is exemplified by the limited guidance on offer to children when they are exploring writing during role play. Parents and carers are welcome at all times and much is done to engage them in their children's learning. Communication with them is good and initiatives such as the 'games sacks' promote a good partnership between parents and carers and school.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Just under half of parents and carers returned the questionnaires. The large majority were supportive of the school and expressed positive comments about the changes occurring. The following comment is typical of views expressed, 'There is a happy, friendly atmosphere with a noticeable input from the headteacher.' The access to what are termed as 'extras', such as school trips, outdoor play resources and baking lessons, were praised. A few comments were made about the decline in numbers over recent times. The inspection confirms that the school is improving although the impact on attainment is not yet visible. The decline in numbers was partly due to demographic changes in the community and partly due to uncertainties in the past caused by staffing difficulties. The school has now stabilised and has strong leadership and good overall management.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Caton 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 inspector received 26 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 43 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	46	12	46	1	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	11	42	14	54	0	0	1	4
My school informs me about my child's progress	12	46	10	38	3	12	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	46	8	31	2	8	1	4
The teaching is good at this school	11	42	11	42	2	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	38	13	50	3	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	27	17	65	1	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)	8	31	14	54	1	4	2	8
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	38	12	46	2	8	1	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	38	11	42	4	15	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	27	14	54	1	4	2	8
The school is led and managed effectively	9	35	13	50	0	0	2	8
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	54	8	31	3	12	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.



18 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Caton Community Primary School, Lancaster, LA2 9NH

Thank you for being so helpful to me during my recent visit to your school. Your school has changed a lot recently and, whilst it is satisfactory, it is improving and has many good features. You told me that you feel safe and that bullying is very rare. You enjoy school because teachers work hard to make learning interesting. You benefit from lots of clubs and visitors to and visits out of school. I was impressed by how those of you who sometimes find school difficult are supported so that you can benefit from all that goes on.

Your attainment is average overall and there is scope for improvement. I have asked that you have more opportunities to write and that in mathematics lessons you are challenged more and that you use your skills more widely in your learning. Many of you have a good understanding of how well you are doing in lessons but are not as sure about what you need to do to improve your work in the longer term. I have asked the school to seek ways of giving you better guidance about how to do this.

The headteacher is doing a very good job. Important changes have been made to the way you learn and you told me how much more you like lessons. Your progress is getting better as your teachers and yourselves settle into the new ways of learning. I was impressed by how you care for others and understand the lives of people different to yourselves. As your school continues to develop, its place in your community should grow and this is an area for improvement I have asked the school to consider, together with working more closely with other schools.

I wish you all the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

David Byrne

Lead inspector

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