

Castlegreen Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108878
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	377839
Inspection dates	8–9 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Michele Crichton

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	17
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Graham
Headteacher	Ian Reed
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2008
School address	Craigshaw Road Hylton Castle Sunderland SR5 3NF
Telephone number	0191 5535335
Fax number	0191 5535338
Email address	castlegreen@schools.sunderland.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Ten teachers were observed and 10 lessons were visited. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, staff and with external partners. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including those relating to self-evaluation, pupils' progress, safeguarding and post-16 provision. They also took into account the views of 10 parents and carers who returned questionnaires to the inspection team and additionally those returned by pupils and staff.

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

- How effectively attendance issues for different groups of learners are addressed by all staff.
- How secure and informative assessment procedures are within the school, given the different times pupils may join during the year.
- The effectiveness of teaching and learning across the whole school given the different times pupils may join in the year.
- The robustness of safeguarding practices and procedures in relation to pupils' needs and accessing off-site provision.

Information about the school

Castlegreen Community School provides for pupils with social, emotional, behavioural and complex difficulties. All the pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A high proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals and 11 pupils are in the care of the local authority. Pupils of different age groups join or leave the school during the course of the year. There are significantly more boys than girls. The school has achieved Healthy School status and the Sportsmark award.

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

Castlegreen is a good school. Parents and carers are predominantly positive about the school with a typical comment being, 'Castlegreen school deals with very challenging behaviour from its pupils, and staff meet these challenges admirably.'

Outstanding partnerships, coupled with the very high quality care, guidance and support provided for all pupils, enables them to make good, and for some outstanding, progress, both personally and academically. Overall, the school's self-evaluation of its effectiveness is rigorous and the findings are acted upon to good effect. The success of the school in helping pupils overcome areas of weakness, for example, to improve their writing, extend their skills through accessing external providers, and to acquire strategies to manage their own behaviour, indicates a good capacity to improve further.

As a consequence of pupils' significant social and emotional needs, and their difficulties in behaving well, their attainment is often very low on entry to the school. Pupils arrive typically with large gaps in their learning, a history of poor attendance, disengagement and low self-esteem. Whilst attainment remains low overall, when pupils leave the school, improvements are significant. This is through consistently good behaviour management and focused learning programmes throughout the school. This ensures good progress for many and outstanding progress for those who have spent a longer period of time in the school.

Pupils behave well overall. They respond well to the wide range of courses and opportunities made available to them, which are practical and/or vocational as best suits their needs and abilities. This, coupled with a strong emphasis on academic subjects, ensures that pupils leave Year 11 with qualifications and skills which prepare them well for the next phase of education or work. This represents good achievement across the school from pupils' very low starting points. This good learning and positive outcomes are also reflected in post-16 provision.

Pupils relate that they feel outstandingly safe in school. Attendance is above average for the majority of pupils, although overall attendance figures are affected detrimentally by the frequent absences of a small number of pupils. For example, this can be due to mental health issues or pupils entering late in the school year. The quality of teaching and of assessment is good overall. The vast majority of staff ensure lessons are interesting and relevant to pupils. However, there are some minor

examples across the school's provision where this is less evident. As a consequence, learning slows in some lessons and pupils' behaviour is less good.

The curriculum is well adapted for all pupils and is carefully balanced to support academic, personal and vocational needs. It is enhanced by a wide and varied number of activities during the day and after school and through links with other providers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment by ensuring that in all lessons teaching and learning are good or better so that pupils achieve as well as possible.
- Ensure that all pupils attend school regularly by introducing a phased return for specific pupils to re-establish good attendance patterns.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils arrive at Castlegreen at various times during the school year and into various year groups. As they settle into an environment with consistent staff and expectations, they begin to enjoy school; their confidence as learners is rebuilt and so too is their belief in their own ability to succeed. This is demonstrated in the strongly improving trend in achievement as they stay and progress through the school. The wide range of academic and vocational courses offered ensures that pupils leave with appropriate qualifications and accreditations. This rapid rate of progress ensures that pupils often successfully catch up on missed learning. For example, some pupils achieve GCSE passes at C-G in English, art, science or mathematics, or entry levels 1-3 in numeracy, English, environmental studies and catering. All pupils are well supported and, as a consequence, all groups make similar good progress. However, the progress of those pupils who have spent longer at the school and who engage fully in their learning is outstanding

Pupils in all year groups say that they feel very safe in school. This is because behaviour is managed consistently well by experienced staff, who they trust, to whom they can readily talk and in whom they can confide. The majority of students attend school regularly. However, for a few, their poor attendance has a negative impact on their achievements.

Pupils make a good contribution to the local and wider community. An example is their fund-raising for local and global charities, including the loading of boxes into vehicles to transport overseas. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. For example, opportunities for residential visits and partnerships with other schools and colleges extend pupils' experiences and knowledge. In discussions with pupils they readily relate the progress they know they have made in Castlegreen, for example, in terms of developments in their learning, self-esteem or attitudes. This growing confidence and reflection is evident, for example, in members of the school council who speak frankly about their life prior to entering the school. One pupil commented, 'Staff respect us and really care. That hasn't happened to me at schools before. Here they listen to you.' Another added, 'Now I like learning.' Further

evidence of their growing maturity is their ability to propose a strategy to increase attendance for their peers, beyond the vast range the school already has in place. This idea has been included in the area for improvement for the school.

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	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together as a cohesive team to ensure that pupils are active learners who make good progress. Lessons are interesting and engaging and well-matched to pupils' needs. Well-trained staff manage behaviour securely. This was evident in an art lesson when the pace of learning was maintained even though some pupils' behaviour lapsed. The speedy but calm and coordinated approach by all staff defuses these situations and effective strategies reintroduce a pupil quickly back into the classroom. However, whilst behaviour management is consistent across the school, not all teachers always ensure that there are engaging learning activities that fully match pupils' interests and needs. When this happens learning slows or pupils disengage.

The curriculum is well organised, interesting and relevant to the pupils it serves. For example, it is successful at developing basic skills and also developing pupils' knowledge of healthy lifestyles. A wide range of vocational courses are offered off site, including those in food and hygiene, joinery, construction and child development for all pupils. These contribute well to pupils' knowledge and skills and their future economic well-being.

As a result of outstanding care, guidance and support, pupils feel there is always someone who will listen and help. Accumulative knowledge from assessments, listening to pupils and working with a range of partners results in an individualised programme of learning and support. This ensures pupils receive the targeted help they need and has a positive impact on their achievements.

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

All staff are focused on securing good learning and strong personal, vocational and academic development for all pupils. This ambition is demonstrated by the embedded and shared vision that staff have for the school. There is effective delegation of roles and responsibilities throughout the school to help to drive improvement further. Assessment and tracking systems are extensive within the school. Positively, this enables staff to know pupils' needs exceptionally well and aids them to set highly individualised and challenging targets, both academically and personally.

Safeguarding procedures are robust and meet requirements. A wealth of staff training is up to date with regular monitoring taking place. Rigorous procedures are in place to ensure that pupils who access off-site provision are safe. The school's governing body is currently satisfactory but improving readily. These developments have been made, for example, through the school leaders' introduction of half-termly 'governor challenge meetings', which is developing their capacity to evaluate the school's effectiveness. Additional training and links with other school's governing bodies are other developments.

Leaders and managers ensure that equality of opportunity and the tackling of discrimination in school are good. This is achieved, for example, by ensuring both boys and girls access a range of provision from childcare to technology. All pupils are tracked and programmes put in place to ensure they make the best progress they can.

The school works well with parents and carers. This is evident in the many cards and letters praising and thanking staff for working with their children. Outstanding partnerships with a wide variety of agencies contribute significantly to pupils' well-being and the good progress they make. Community cohesion is good. The school shows a strong commitment to promoting cohesion both within and beyond the school. It has undertaken an audit of its work, can clearly identify its impact and has effective plans to develop further engagement. The school ensures good outcomes for pupils, many of whom have extreme and significant needs. It does this on a reducing budget and provides good value for money.

These are the grades for the 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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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

Sixth form

The sixth-form provision is well led and managed by staff who are focused on ensuring the best possible outcomes for students. To ensure students' continuing independence, to capitalise on their positive learning attitudes and to maintain the momentum of success, staff access and link effectively and extensively with, for example, City of Sunderland College, Team Wearside, Connexions and other learning providers. Through this bespoke provision, students demonstrate good and sometimes outstanding achievements. There are high expectations of what students will achieve and this is reflected in the appropriately set targets for each individual. For example, they achieve BTEC diplomas in a range of subjects, such as vocational skills, electrical engineering, catering and construction. There are also instances where students' learning continues further and they progress onto foundation courses in art and design, for example.

However, occasionally senior leaders lack more formal monitoring and documentation of their own evaluation of the sixth-form provision. The positive and secure relationships that exist throughout the school are evident in the sixth form. Students are respectful of staff. Staff work effectively to address a wide range of students' needs.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth Form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

A lower proportion than normally found of parents and carers replied to the inspection questionnaire. The vast majority of those respondents were pleased overall with the school's provision and with the outcomes for their children. Leadership and management were also viewed positively. A very small minority had concerns about elements of provision, pupils' outcomes and leadership within the school. These were brought to the attention of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Castlegreen Community 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 10 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 67 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	5	50	4	40	1	10	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	5	50	3	30	1	10	1	10
The school informs me about my child's progress	6	60	4	40	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	5	50	4	40	1	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	6	60	3	30	1	10	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	5	50	4	40	1	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	60	4	40	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)	4	40	6	60	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	60	3	30	1	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	70	2	20	1	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	60	4	40	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	6	60	4	40	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	7	70	2	20	1	10	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



10 November 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Castlegreen Community School, Sunderland, SR5 3NF

Thank you all for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school recently. We must also thank you for your honesty and frankness in all the discussions we had with you. You made it clear to us that you are happier in Castlegreen School than in any other you have attended. You know you are making good progress in your learning. You are increasingly controlling your own behaviour, which is good overall, and from our conversations we could tell you feel very safe in school.

We agree that Castlegreen is a good school. There is a considerable strength in the wide range of positive partnerships the school has with many other people that enable you to achieve so well. All the staff who work with you also look after and care for you outstandingly well. There are also some things that need to be developed. The quality of teaching is good overall in your school and the vast majority of your lessons are interesting and relevant. However, there are a few lessons when this does not happen. Also, there are some pupils who do not attend school as regularly as they should. This limits the progress and achievements they can make at the school.

We know that you will do all you can to help your school become even better and we want you to attend every day.

We wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Michele Crichton
Lead inspector

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