

Castle Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105150
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	377186
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Nigel Cromey-Hawke

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marion Kershaw
Headteacher	Sarah Curley
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons, observing nine teachers and all classes. They also held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including development planning, pupils' work, safeguarding arrangements, self-evaluation records, policies and performance data. Questionnaires from 71 parents and carers, 89 pupils and 19 staff were scrutinised.

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

- What the school is doing to raise attainment and achievement across the school and to improve pupils' attendance.
- How challenging teaching is, especially for the more able pupils.
- How well informed, cohesive and focused staff are in driving forward improvement, given the changes in personnel and the ways of working over the last two years.

Information about the school

Most pupils in this smaller than average-sized primary school are of White British heritage. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average, and the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average. There are four pupils in local authority care. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school at times other than is usual is well above average. The school has Healthy School status and the Leading Parent Partnership award. The school operates its own breakfast club. There has been significant change in staffing over the last two years.

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

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It has some good features and makes a significant difference to the personal development of many of its pupils. The very large majority of parents and carers are highly supportive of its work.

Following considerable staffing changes the school is moving forward under the leadership of the headteacher, staff and the governing body. New ways of working have been introduced that are accelerating most pupils' progress. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with basic skills that are well below those typical for their age. They have a good start to their learning because of the good teaching, curriculum and leadership and management in that key stage. Pupils' progress throughout the rest of the school is satisfactory, but improving securely and quickly. Pupils' attainment on leaving the school in Year 6 is low but rising, although weaknesses remain in some classes in writing and in the proportion of the higher levels gained. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who enter part-way through a year and those in local authority care also make satisfactory progress.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and this limits pupils' achievement. Good lessons provide suitable challenge and interest. In weaker lessons, there is insufficient challenge, not enough is done to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and too much direction by the teacher limits pupils' opportunities to work independently. The satisfactory curriculum has strengths in the arts and sport. Behaviour is good, as is pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles. Attendance, although low, is improving quickly, due to the good care, guidance and support provided by the school.

The school has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement and knows that many of its recent developments have yet to be embedded and become fully effective across the school. Aspects of whole-school planning for improvement lack detail, making implementation and evaluation of impact less easy. As a result, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory, but improving strongly as its higher expectations and improved practices take effect.

Up to 40% of 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?

- Improve attainment and achievement by ensuring that the quality of learning and progress is good or better in all lessons, by:
 - providing sufficient challenge in lessons, especially for the more able pupils
 - promoting more effective learning by allowing pupils to demonstrate their understanding without adult support
 - further developing pupils' writing skills so that they can better communicate their learning
 - developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, so that they are able to learn more effectively from adults and each other in lessons.

- Further improve attendance by focusing upon strategies that are proving most effective.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - bringing a sharper focus to development planning so that subject leaders and managers have a clearer understanding of what exactly needs to be improved, and the evaluation of actions taken can be more effective,
 - embedding the new ways of working across all areas of the school and evaluate their impact, to better support the drive for improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In lessons, most pupils acquire knowledge, develop understanding and learn and practise their skills satisfactorily. They are keen to succeed, mostly apply themselves well in lessons, work at a good pace and enjoy themselves when provided with appropriate tasks and guidance. Pupils' attainment on leaving in Year 6 has in the past been consistently low, although better in English than in mathematics. Progress overall from very low starting points has often been no better than satisfactory, and there has been evidence of underachievement in mathematics. This was due to a lack of continuity in staffing and the legacy of past weaker teaching. Since the last inspection the school has worked very hard to stabilise staffing, with noticeable effect, and a programme of support and challenge has been introduced to raise expectations and strengthen the quality of teaching and learning. The school's recent monitoring report and current inspection evidence show that there has been a rapid improvement and that, while attainment on leaving Year 6 remains low, achievement is improving strongly. A wide range of support programmes is now helping pupils to make up on lost ground, especially in mathematics. Some areas of weakness remain in writing in some year groups, which limit some pupils' ability to demonstrate their learning effectively. The proportion of pupils gaining higher levels for their age also remains below average.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those in local authority care and those who join the school part-way through a year also make at least

satisfactory progress, with some in the small intervention groups making accelerated progress. Given pupils’ starting points, this represents satisfactory achievement.

Pupils say they feel safe and value the recent developments. Behaviour has improved and is now good across the school, and often very good in the best lessons. The school places a high priority upon developing pupils’ understanding of healthy lifestyles, reflecting the award it has gained, and the quality of care within the school. Pupils are increasingly taking on responsibilities for the everyday running of the school as monitors and through the active school council, as well as acting as trained ‘Chill Buddies’ to help support others’ behaviour and well being.

Community involvement is strong. The attendance of the vast majority of pupils has improved dramatically over the last year but, over time, attendance figures are low. Punctuality is satisfactory. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, with genuine gains being made in each of these areas, except for pupils’ understanding of and contact with cultures other than their own. Pupils’ skills in the use of information and communication technology are good and, together with their well developed personal qualities and improving attendance, they are now prepared appropriately for the next stage in their learning.

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	4
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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning across the school are satisfactory. Much of the current teaching is good, reflecting the recent rapid improvements within the school. In the better lessons, good planning ensures that varied and often practical activities are provided that meet the needs of pupils well. The school has developed more accurate assessment and target-setting procedures since the last inspection and, in the good lessons, the results of these findings clearly inform teaching. In the weaker lessons, this rigour is not evident, however, and the legacy of past weaker teaching is still being overcome. Information from assessment data is not yet used well enough by all teachers to provide sufficient challenge for all pupils, especially the

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

more able. Some teachers spend too much time in explanations and pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to think and work independently. This results in more able pupils not moving on at a fast enough pace in their learning. In some lessons, pupils' speaking and listening skills are not given enough attention and they do not learn as effectively as they could from each other or from adults in the classroom.

The school has reviewed its curricular provision as part of its drive for improvement, and major changes have been introduced to boost literacy, oracy and numeracy. These changes are combining with the school's skills-based approach to provide more interest and relevance and are beginning to have an impact upon pupils' learning. Curriculum planning is a strength, further supported by frequent evaluation by pupils of the topics covered. The needs of the many pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable are being increasingly well met through a wide range of support programmes delivered by teaching assistants and other adults in small areas adjacent to the main classrooms. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that support pupils' personal development well. These are enthusiastically supported by both pupils and parents and carers.

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are good. All staff play a central role in communicating with families about pupils' welfare, reflecting the school's award in this area. The school also works very well with a wide range of agencies to support the often considerable needs of the young people in its care. Pupils coming into the school partway through the year are rapidly assessed, their needs identified and quickly assimilated into classes. The school provides a good programme of extended activities and the breakfast club ensures that a large number of pupils get a good start to their day.

The school is tackling attendance very robustly, including taking legal action. Previously high levels of persistent absence have been reduced to in line with similar schools. The learning mentor provides high-quality monitoring and support for those who are persistently absent and great efforts are made to ensure that pupils catch up on their learning following any absences. The success of the school's welfare provision is seen in the good progress many pupils make in their personal development from their starting points to when they leave the school.

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 a clear vision for the school and, together with the staff and governing body, is driving improvement forward with determination and skill. Staffing has been largely stabilised and there is clear evidence of a greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning. The leadership and management of teaching and learning are currently satisfactory but improving well, as higher expectations of both

staff and pupils take effect. However, many new ways of working are not yet fully established, practice varies and the impact of initiatives has not been fully evaluated. As a result, the drive for improvement is not yet consistently effective across the school. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate and there are comprehensive plans in place for bringing about further improvement. However, some of these plans lack a sharpness of focus, making it less clear exactly what needs to be done and the evaluation of impact less secure. Safeguarding practices are good, reflecting the level of care within the school and its good work with partnerships. There is especially good practice in staff training, site risk assessments and the monitoring of the welfare of pupils.

The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory, with variability in the quality of teaching, but success in the reduction in the gaps in pupils' performance. Discrimination is rare and when encountered is dealt with well. Engagement with parents and carers has been a major focus of the school's work. It is now good, with increased frequency of reporting on pupils' progress. Coffee mornings and 'Stay and Play/Stay and Learn' programmes are examples of the effective way the school now involves parents and carers in their children's learning. The school provides a cohesive, warm and harmonious environment in which pupils can learn. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory overall, however. The school has some links with other schools of a different type and with children in Spain and Mexico, but recognises it has more to do in building pupils' understanding of the diversity of the world. The governing body is actively involved in supporting the daily life of the school, has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and is increasingly supporting and challenging the school's drive for improvement.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good induction arrangements ensure that children and their parents and carers receive a warm welcome in the school. Children settle happily into the safe and secure environment and learn and play together well. The majority of children enter the school with basic skills that are well below those typical for their age. Throughout their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage they make good progress across all areas of learning from their starting points, and especially in personal development.

Some children make especially good progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing because of the intensive support provided through activities around letters and the sounds they make. A recent focus upon boys’ learning has also been particularly successful. The quality of teaching is good and practices for assessing children’s learning have improved since the last inspection and are also now good. Extensive resources have been added and new ways of working introduced that are being successfully operated by the staff. Teachers and other adults use assessment information well to plan effectively for the next stages in children’s learning. There is a good balance between activities children choose for themselves and those directed by teachers. The outdoor learning area is used effectively to extend the range of children’s experiences. Safeguarding measures are good and welfare support, especially for children who may be potentially vulnerable, are excellent. Leadership and management are good. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has high expectations and is building a skilled team around her. Staff training is up-to-date and there are good plans in place for driving forward further improvement.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire are very happy with all aspects of the school’s work. They consider it provides a safe and caring environment for their child and that it is well led and managed. A very few parents and carers considered that the school does not take sufficient account of their views. Inspection evidence indicated that the school’s practice in this respect is good. Some parents and carers that inspectors talked to were very appreciative of the recent developments within the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Castle Hill 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 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 202 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	62	24	34	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	54	76	16	23	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	43	61	26	37	1	1	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	56	27	38	2	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	47	66	19	27	1	1	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	59	26	37	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	52	31	44	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)	40	56	26	37	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	59	24	34	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	56	26	37	1	1	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	52	28	39	2	3	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	44	62	22	31	3	4	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	61	25	35	1	1	2	3

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.



12 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Castle Hill Primary School, Bolton – BL2 2JT

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me and the team when we inspected your school recently. You were very friendly and polite, and enthusiastic about what you do.

Castle Hill is a satisfactory school. It has some good features and is improving rapidly under the leadership of the headteacher, governing body and staff. You have a good start to your learning in the Nursery and Reception classes and make good progress as a result of the good teaching, care and leadership and management in those classes. Your progress in the rest of the school is satisfactory, but improving quickly because of the changes in the way you are taught and the introduction of new ways of working. Those of you who find learning more difficult than others also make satisfactory, and in some cases, good progress. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but with much that is good. The range of subjects that you take is satisfactory but being improved to make your learning more interesting. The care, guidance and support you receive are good and have helped to improve your behaviour, which is now good. Well done! As a result, the vast majority of you say you enjoy school and find it a safe and welcoming place. You know what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle and many of you take part in the sporting opportunities provided by the school. We have asked the school to consider the following things that will help it improve further.

- Make sure all your lessons are at least good.
- Further improve your attendance, so that your learning is not disrupted.
- To ensure that the new ways of working that have been introduced recently are followed consistently by all staff and their impact is evaluated.

You can help by telling your teachers how best you learn and if you have any problems. I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Cromey-Hawke
Lead Inspector

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