

Casterton Primary School

Thames Avenue, Burnley, Lancashire, BB10 2PZ

Inspection dates 6–7 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress overall from their starting points during their time at the school, leaving with standards slightly above average in reading and above average in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is good across all key stages. It is sometimes outstanding. Lessons are well planned to ensure that learning activities and resources suit the needs of all pupils in the class. Teaching assistants work well with class teachers to provide strong support for all groups of pupils.
- Pupils are well behaved, feel safe and have a positive attitude to the learning in class. They attend school well and are always punctual to lessons. There are strong relationships between adults and pupils.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong, clear leadership and are supported by effective middle leaders. The governing body is supportive of leaders and has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. As such, pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and the school's overall performance have improved since the last inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although there is a rising proportion of pupils achieving higher levels in writing, in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, attainment in writing is still below average overall.
- At times, the more-able pupils are not provided with sufficient challenge in their writing activities to reach their potential.
- Whilst there is strong marking and feedback seen in some classes, there is inconsistency in how useful feedback is for all pupils. Equally, there is not always sufficient time and opportunity for pupils to check and use feedback to improve their learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 18 lessons taught by nine teachers.
- Inspectors observed and spoke to pupils during lessons and at lunch and break times. They met formally with groups of pupils from Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2, from the school council and the school's Eco Group.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and managers. A meeting also took place with the Chair of the Governing Body, the vice-chair, and another governor. A meeting took place with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including arrangements for safeguarding, performance management, attendance figures, information about pupils' attainment and progress, and pupils' books.
- Inspectors were unable to analyse the online questionnaire gauging the views of parents (Parent View), because there were too few responses. However, inspectors analysed the surveys completed by parents over the past 12 months.

Inspection team

Fiona McNally, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila Mawer

Additional Inspector

Stephen Helm

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, supported through school action is well above average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus is above average. There are currently no pupils who have a statement for their special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for children in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from other minority ethnic backgrounds is above average and the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To raise pupils' attainment in writing by:
 - ensuring all pupils, especially the more able pupils, are suitably challenged and that the individual needs of pupils are met through interesting and meaningful writing activities
 - ensuring all pupils have more opportunities to improve and use their writing skills across different areas of the curriculum.
- To improve the consistency of marking and feedback to pupils to match the strongest practice seen in the school by:
 - ensuring all pupils are aware of their targets and know how to reach them
 - ensuring feedback is specific and useful and pupils are given time and opportunity to use feedback to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' overall achievement has improved from satisfactory to good since the last inspection. Children start school in the Reception class with skills which are generally below the levels typically expected of their age. Children come into the Reception Year with good levels of physical development but poorer development is seen in their language and emotional development, in particular. The children achieve well overall in this key stage.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics is broadly average and below average in writing. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics is above average and in writing it is slightly below average and, therefore, pupils' progress over time is good.
- There has been a rising trend over the past three years in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level for age in the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics. In addition, there is a trend more recently of a higher proportion of pupils doing better than this, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals are making progress in line with pupils not eligible for free school meals in the school, seen through their results in national tests and progress over time. The attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is good compared to the national average and the gap between these pupils and pupils in the school who are not eligible for free school meals is closer than the gap found nationally.
- The learning and progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are in line with their peers. This has been a particular focus for development, which has resulted in good progress for all groups, with the gaps in attainment between groups of pupils narrowing and being closer than the gaps seen nationally.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language perform at least as well as their peers, and in some areas better. The corresponding achievement of different groups of pupils shows the school's commitment to providing all pupils with equal opportunities. This is seen, for example, in the average attainment of pupils in the Year 1 test to check their knowledge of different letters and sounds of unfamiliar words; attainment was the same for pupils who speak English as an additional language as it was for pupils for whom English is their first language.
- Pupils have the opportunity to read a variety of texts and to read on a regular basis in school and at home. The library's resources assist pupils to make informed choices about which books to read, as do the staff. Pupils use reading journals to record their reading and comment on their reading, which they share with parents. The reading journals are identified by pupils as being helpful in encouraging them to read regularly.
- The application of skills in reading and mathematics is well promoted and there is a regular focus on reading and writing in lessons. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing skills across different areas of the curriculum. This is particularly the case for the more-able pupils, whose achievement of the higher levels in writing is below average. To make better progress in writing, pupils need more opportunities to write extensively and use more ambitious language.

The quality of teaching is good

- Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved from satisfactory to good. Parents who completed the school's latest survey agree that the children are well taught, and inspectors agree. Pupils confirm that the teachers always help them to do their best with their work and make learning fun and enjoyable.
- The regular checks made by the senior leaders on teaching and the work in the pupils' books show that teaching is good over time.

- A particular strength seen in teaching, apart from for the more-able pupils in writing, is the way that work is planned for pupils with different ability levels in each class. Lessons are well managed by teachers to ensure that pupils can apply their skills practically and that learning is enjoyable and interesting.
- Teaching in mathematics is particularly strong in Key Stage 2, where the more-able pupils are challenged well through strong questioning and are pushed to apply their skills in a variety of contexts. For example, pupils often start lessons with mental mathematics activities and are challenged within their ability groups to solve problems using fractions, decimals and percentages.
- Teachers expect pupils to work diligently; they explain tasks clearly and pose questions that make pupils think hard. Excellent relationships between adults and pupils mean that pupils are keen and confident to answer questions fully and give reasons and explanations for their ideas and opinions.
- A further strength in teaching is the strong teamwork seen in most classrooms where the teachers and teaching assistants work very closely to check on pupils' progress and move them on successfully in their learning. Pupils regularly benefit from having several skilled practitioners in the classroom, all having high expectations of the pupils.
- Most teachers seize every opportunity to link new learning with what pupils have already learnt. For example, one group of pupils in the Year 6 class were very excited to use the skills they had learnt on angles in a mathematics lesson to guide a robot through a maze in a computer game. Pupils' concentration and enjoyment in lessons are often very evident.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, effective teaching focuses on children enjoying their learning and on children taking the lead in their own learning by choosing their own activities.
- Marking overall is helpful and constructive but there are some inconsistencies. Sometimes pupils are not given enough time and support to check and improve their work and use teachers' feedback to move their learning on. Some teachers offer pupils the chance at the start of lessons to check feedback and make improvements but this is not the case in all classes. This means that on occasion, pupils are insufficiently aware of their targets for improvement and how to achieve them.
- Teaching of writing does not match the needs of the more-able pupils and there is not enough opportunity for the more-able pupils to write extensively in various styles and in different areas of the curriculum.
- Whilst in the vast majority of lessons teachers expect pupils to make the best possible progress, on very few occasions there are times when pupils are not sufficiently challenged. When this occurs, a small number of pupils lose focus.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and describe what they do in lessons as fun and useful. Consequently, there is little disruptive behaviour in lessons and there are very strong relationships between adults and pupils.
- Pupils feel safe in all areas of the school and say that this is because there are always a lot of adults around. Pupils say there are rarely any incidents of poor behaviour and when it does occur it is dealt with quickly by staff. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the behaviour system in terms of the rewards they can earn and the consequences of poor behaviour.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying, for example, cyber-bullying and prejudiced-based bullying, and say that there are few incidents of such behaviour because adults work quickly to resolve any potential problems between pupils. In this way, pupils feel issues rarely escalate or persist. Parents and staff agree that behaviour is well managed. There are regular events for pupils in school to highlight the potential dangers of using the internet and how these can be avoided.
- The pupils are very proud of their school and enjoy going to school, saying, 'I love this school

because the teachers always do their best to help you and make learning fun.’ Evidence of pupils’ enjoyment of school is also seen through attendance above the national average and improving over time. Pupils are well mannered towards one another and towards adults and are always punctual to lessons.

- There have been no recent exclusions or issues of racism.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because attitudes to learning are not always exemplary when the occasional lesson lacks challenge and stimulus.

The leadership and management are good

- Key leaders, including governors, communicate high expectations to all staff and pupils. There is very strong teamwork between all leaders and the staff in the school. The broad leadership structure, including effective middle leaders, means that plans and policies are well-considered and that they support strong teaching and pupils’ improved attainment over time in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Robust performance management and regular and effective checks on the quality of teaching have contributed well to the improved quality of teaching since the last inspection. The use of performance management and training opportunities for teaching assistants means that there is a clear approach to supporting all pupils’ needs, which is understood by all adults. Leaders ensure that all staff are clear about the role they play in moving the school forward and that their pay progression depends on how well pupils achieve.
- The school is accurate in its view of its own performance, correctly identifying its strengths and areas for further development.
- The curriculum suits the needs and interest of pupils well and it effectively provides the opportunity for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. In this way, the curriculum promotes positive pupils’ attitudes to learning. In addition, the school shows it is mindful of the pupils and the families it serves by providing enriching and meaningful experiences in the classroom and through a variety of events and activities outside lessons, which serve to promote the pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Furthermore, the school’s leaders use the funding from the pupil premium to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils have extra support in the classroom and beyond, where necessary. The leaders have a clear plan of how the money is used and what the impact of this is on the pupils’ progress and attainment.
- Safeguarding meets the statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors challenge senior leaders and understand how the school judges itself and the reason for these judgments. They are well versed on the school’s strengths and areas for development, especially with regard to pupils’ achievement and the quality of teaching.
 - There is effective management of the school’s financial resources by the governors.
 - Governors know how pupil-premium funding is spent and can demonstrate how this funding is making a difference to the pupils supported through this funding, as can be seen in the attainment and progress of these pupils.
 - Governors are aware of the performance-management procedures in school and how the targets for both teachers and support staff are clearly linked with pupils’ achievement and the school’s key priorities.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	119219
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	401821

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	274
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Hindle
Headteacher	Maggie Crooks
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2010
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