

Castleside Primary School

Moorland Crescent, Castleside, Consett, County Durham, DH8 9RG

Inspection dates 14–15 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, together with a strong team of middle leaders and staff, has established a highly positive school ethos. Consequently, the quality of teaching and achievement is improving.
- Good teaching enables pupils from their different starting points to achieve well to reach at least the standards expected of them. This includes disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils.
- Teaching is good. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and use the information from frequent checks of pupils' progress to plan thought-provoking tasks.
- Sensitive, high-quality care contributes much to the happy and harmonious school atmosphere.
- Behaviour in classrooms and at social times is typically good and occasionally exemplary. This is a consequence of the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are happy, polite and friendly. Their relationships with each other are characterised by respect and tolerance. They are keen to learn and do well.
- Attendance is above average and has improved since the previous inspection.
- The rich curriculum offers good and occasionally first-rate opportunities for pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Children settle very quickly and get off to a good start in the Reception class. They make good progress and acquire the essential skills for the next stage of learning.
- The well led governing body knows how well the school is doing, and governors make certain that all pupils achieve well.
- Strong links with the local village community, including the church, add significantly to the breadth of pupils' experience.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure a pattern of rapid progress and high achievement in all classes.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for staff to learn from the inspiring practice in other schools.
- Now and then, opportunities are missed to expect more of pupils, make certain that activities nurture higher skills and ensure teacher's marking always provides pupils with clear steps for improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, including five paired observations, and carried out a work scrutiny with the headteacher and assistant headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to lessons and undertook learning walks around the school in order to check the quality of what is provided for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with pupils and had discussions with the headteacher, subject leaders, staff, governors and the local authority education development adviser.
- The inspector also examined a range of documents including those related to safeguarding, the school's view of how well it is doing, the monitoring of staff performance, the school's improvement plan and records relating to pupils' progress and behaviour.
- The inspector took account of 23 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and eight responses to the staff questionnaire

Inspection team

Clive Petts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Castleside is a much smaller than average sized primary school.
- Almost all of the pupils are of White British backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above that usually found.
- Currently, there are an average proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding.
- The provision in the early years Reception class is full-time.
- A much higher than average number of pupils joins or leaves the school at other than the usual time.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club each day.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make certain that all teaching is inspiring and thought-provoking to establish a consistent pattern of rapid progress and high achievement in all subjects by:
 - providing more first-hand opportunities for teachers to observe exceptional learning
 - sharing more widely the imaginative and stimulating practice that exists in the school
 - raising staff expectations even higher of what pupils of all ages, abilities and starting points can do and achieve
 - ensuring that all tasks are even more closely tailored to the abilities and interests of individual pupils
 - making sure that pupils are always provided with well defined steps so they can improve their work further.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The school is well led and managed, because the headteacher has established a clear vision coupled with a strong sense of purpose. This ensures the school performance is carefully checked and steadily improved. She is effectively supported by a skilled, enthusiastic and tightly knit team of staff.
- Effective leadership at subject level makes sure that any slips in performance are successfully addressed, such as improving pupils' mathematical understanding which was identified as an issue at the time of the previous inspection.
- Systems to check school performance are rigorous and thorough. Robust systems to check pupils' progress provide important information which is used successfully to continually strengthen the quality of learning. As a result, the school's judgement of its own performance is accurate.
- Teaching is well led and managed. Staff development programmes are closely matched to school priorities, including those for early years. Performance management ensures that there is no automatic pay progression. Nevertheless, opportunities are missed to share existing imaginative practice more widely and observe first-hand, exceptional learning in other schools.
- The curriculum is rich and varied and is effective in adding to pupils' skills, including their literacy and numeracy skills. A wide and diverse range of visits and visitors add vitality and interest, helping to bring learning to life, for example visiting the battle grounds of Northern France on a residential visit for older pupils and learning about Japanese food with a demonstration from a sushi chef. Yet, in a few instances opportunities are missed to inspire pupils' learning even more through the use of themes.
- The primary school sport funding is used well to increase rates of pupil participation, improve staff coaching skills, promote healthy lifestyles and foster higher skills in a range of sports, including, for example, participating in higher level gymnastics, including in competitions.
- Strong links with parents and the local community help to enhance pupils' personal development and well-being. For example, pupils regularly visit the local church and community for events and celebrations, such as the Christmas Carol service. This helps to reinforce British values.
- Safeguarding and child protection meet requirements. Procedures are firmly established and much effective practice is adopted in the day-to-day management and care of pupils.
- The local authority has an accurate view of school performance, because the outcomes for pupils are carefully checked and analysed and senior leaders are challenged and held to account.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body have a clear and accurate view of how well the school is performing and what needs to be improved. They systematically check the quality of teaching and learning and have displayed a determination to tackle staff underperformance. Performance management is effectively used to hold staff to account, including making certain the pupil premium and sport funding have the intended impact on raising standards, skills and closing gaps in performance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good and at times exemplary. This is the result of a highly positive school ethos which promotes confident attitudes to learning well. As a result, pupils of all ages are considerate, polite and courteous. They work hard and are very aware of the boundaries the school sets for their conduct.
- The happy, friendly atmosphere in the breakfast club sets a positive tone for the school day. The pupils' above average attendance reflects their enjoyment of school life, including participating in after-school activities. They are keen to learn and eager to do well.
- In classrooms, corridors and play grounds pupils behave responsibly and sensibly. In lessons they are attentive and stick to the task when demands require perseverance. In classrooms, behaviour is never less than good, even when occasionally activities do not capture and hold their interest or when tasks are pitched a little low.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The majority of parents who responded to Parent View agree. Pupils are well informed about bullying in its various forms. They report that very little bullying takes place, 'just a little mean behaviour'. Pupils are quick to point out that staff are always on

hand to listen to their concerns and resolve any inappropriate behaviour.

- Pupils are safety conscious when they play and learn together. They are taught to recognise risk and danger, such as when using new technology. They thrive on responsibility, such as when Year 6 pupils act as prefects in the dining room, making sure that younger children are helped, supported and supervised sensitively.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching and classroom support are good, with examples of inspiring and thought-provoking practice. Teachers expect pupils to work hard, set high expectations and provide a variety of opportunities for pupils to achieve the standards of which they are capable. Almost all parents agree that their children are taught well.
- Excellent staff role models ensure that relationships with pupils are outstanding. Adults are especially skilled at pinpointing the needs of each pupil. These include the disadvantaged and those potentially vulnerable pupils. Rich and varied opportunities are provided for all pupils to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding using an interesting range of themes to link subjects together.
- When progress is quickest and achievement higher:
 - activities are closely tailored to meet individual pupils abilities and needs effectively using all available pupils' progress information
 - excellent relationships create an encouraging climate in which pupils can learn and succeed
 - questioning is constantly used to check and test pupils' thinking, knowledge and understanding
 - problem solving tasks require pupils to analyse, consider and explain their ideas and solutions
 - helpful and accurate marking ensures misconceptions are eradicated with clear steps for improvement provided.
- When progress rates are a little more variable and in the very few cases when achievement requires improvement:
 - tasks are not always closely enough tailored to the individual abilities, needs and interests of pupils
 - methods employed sometimes lack that essential variety and spark to stretch pupils' thinking
 - not enough is demanded of pupils and opportunities are missed to extend their skills and understanding
 - marking does not always ensure that pupils know exactly how to improve after their mistakes have been corrected.
- When achievement is highest, stimulating approaches excite the imagination and thinking of pupils. For example, in a literacy lesson when using tropical rain forests as a theme, pupils were seen totally absorbed practising their text skimming and scanning skills. Yet, these inspiring methods are not always shared widely enough and opportunities are missed to demand even higher standards, such as when pupils write at length.
- The quality of marking is good. Pupils are well informed about how well they have achieved and any corrections they need to make. However, from time to time concise, clear steps to enable pupils to make even faster progress are not always given.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children are well prepared for work in Year 1. Numbers are small and variable in each year group. From their different starting points, a pattern of good progress in Years 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is resulting in a trend of higher standards. At the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards that are broadly typical for their age, although a little higher in reading than in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils continue to make good progress through Years 3 to 6. At the end of Year 6, in 2013 national tests, standards were above the national average in reading and writing and broadly in line in mathematics. Positive action to further improve teaching and learning is evident in the provisional Year 6 test results in 2014, despite pupils joining the school part-way through the key stage. Standards in writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar and mathematics for those pupils who began in Year 3 were maintained at above average and reading skills improved.
- Inspection evidence confirms that the current Year 6 are on course to achieve well and reach above average standards in all subjects, with an increased proportion of pupils on track to reach the higher levels.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as their

classmates. This is because their needs are accurately identified and their classroom help and support is effective. Pupils sometimes make rapid progress in their personal development, because staff provide good support and guidance.

- The most able pupils make good progress, because their thinking is challenged effectively. Action taken by the school to provide more opportunities for pupils to achieve highly, such as in their writing, is having a positive impact. More pupils consistently work above expectations for their age. Yet, now and then opportunities are missed to demand and expect even more.
- Typically, the school successfully narrows the gap in standards between non-disadvantaged and disadvantaged pupils, both within school and with similar schools nationally. Although at the end of Year 6 in 2013, pupils were two terms behind in their reading, both in school and that found nationally, standards in writing and mathematics were in line. The position in reading was the result of pupils arriving late in the key stage with underdeveloped skills. There are no disadvantaged pupils in the current Year 6 group.
- Pupils in the current Year 6 read widely, fluently and confidently. School initiatives include using the expertise of a talented adult volunteer to foster a love of a variety of literature, such as reading Churchill's wartime speeches. Younger pupils who sometimes lack fluency and skill making sense of words are helped and supported well.

The early years provision

is good

- Children join the Reception class with skills that are broadly typical for their age, although the small numbers who start each year do vary, and early reading and writing skills are sometimes below that expected. Children settle very quickly and happily into classroom routines in the warm and friendly atmosphere.
- Over time children make good progress and achieve well in the Reception class to reach at least the expected level for their age. As a result, children start Year 1 with the skills that they need to continue to make good progress.
- Children's progress in developing their skills in making sense of new words, often a weakness on arrival, is good. When children need extra support, teachers and other adults shape tasks and activities to help them improve. Disabled children and those who have special educational needs make good progress, because the extra support they need is effective. Those children who arrive with well developed skills for their age thrive in the stimulating environment. Consequently, they are really well prepared for the next stage of learning.
- Children are well cared and are kept safe. They display positive behaviour and develop good self-control. They quickly learn to share, take turns and work together with their classmates. Children develop good levels of confidence and independence rapidly which enables them to play a full and active part in school life, such as when demonstrating their achievement in assemblies.
- Activities, both inside and outdoors, provide good opportunities for children to explore, investigate and find things out for themselves. All areas of learning are developed well. Adults check children's thinking effectively, prompting their thinking even more and constantly adding to their knowledge and understanding about the world around them. Good opportunities are provided for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills, although when outdoors opportunities are sometimes missed to reinforce these skills.
- Good leadership and management ensures that frequent, skilful observations and accurate assessments help children to move on steadily and add to their knowledge and understanding.

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	114043
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	449154

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	118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judith Robson
Headteacher	Anne Elizabeth Charlton
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2011
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