

# Castlefields Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107531
<b>Local Authority</b>	Calderdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	336902
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Suzi Clipson-Boyles

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	177
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Allan Bolland
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Gemma Elliott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Field Top Road Rastrick Brighouse HD6 3XB
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors saw six teachers and visited 10 lessons. They held meetings with governors, school and pre-school staff, groups of children, parents and a representative from the local authority. They observed the school's work through children's books, assessment information and a range of documents such as policies, progress reports and school improvement plans. The inspectors also received and analysed 68 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress of more able children throughout the school
- the effectiveness of improvement planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- how the school identifies where it needs to make changes in order to bring about improvements.

## Information about the school

Castlefields is an average-sized infant school situated in an area of varied housing on the outskirts of the town. It comprises two classes for each year group from Reception to Year 2. It also provides sessional day care for two to three-year-olds, pre-school for three-year-olds, and before- and after-school care for two to five-year-olds. The percentage of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below that found nationally. An average proportion of children are entitled to free school meals. Since the last inspection, the school has undergone considerable uncertainty following the departure of several senior staff. The new headteacher was appointed two weeks prior to the inspection, having been in post temporarily as acting headteacher during the previous year. A temporary deputy headteacher is currently in place pending a new appointment in September 2010. The school has received several quality awards, including the Healthy Schools Award and the Artsmark

**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

Castlefields Infant School provides a satisfactory education for its children. During their time there, they make satisfactory progress and reach levels of attainment in English and mathematics that are broadly average by the end of Year 2. However, some children who are capable of reaching higher levels are not currently doing so. Some aspects of the school's work are good, in particular, the warm and welcoming atmosphere that it provides. Parents greatly appreciate the school's work and some commented on how approachable and helpful the teachers are. Children are very happy and love coming to the school. Their behaviour is good and they are very keen to learn. The well-organised environment reflects the hard work and professionalism of the staff. Colourful and well-presented displays around school and in classrooms celebrate everyone's work. Staff look after the children well, ensuring that they feel valued and cared for. As a result, children say they feel very safe. Lessons are carefully planned and teaching assistants are effectively deployed to support learning. Different ability groups within classes do not always make sufficient progress because the learning is not suitably adapted. When teachers talk to the whole class for too long, some children lose interest because what they are being taught is not at the right level for them. For more able children, the work set is often too easy so they are not reaching the higher levels, although they are capable of doing so. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children make satisfactory progress and enjoy the learning activities provided. Inconsistencies in assessment sometimes mean that planning does not target some children's learning needs accurately enough. Insufficient use is being made of the outdoor area, so children are not receiving their full entitlement to this important aspect of early learning.

The headteacher has a determined vision to move the school forward. The staff value her leadership and support. She has put many effective systems in place to improve areas of weakness, although the lack of a structured leadership and management team, due to uncertainties about staffing, has meant that too much has fallen on her shoulders alone. Nevertheless, some changes are already leading to improvements, for example, in writing and attendance, demonstrating that capacity to improve is satisfactory. The identification of priorities for improvement through self-evaluation is accurate and staff are increasingly involved in this process. Likewise, the views of children and parents are taken into account. Governors are very supportive of the school. However, they do not have an accurate understanding of their roles and responsibilities nor do they undertake any systematic evaluation of the school's performance. Consequently, they are not proactive or effective in driving improvement.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

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- Strengthen leadership and management with immediate effect by:
  - evaluating the effectiveness of the governing body in order to rectify current weaknesses, and strengthen roles and responsibilities
  - extending responsibilities for leading, evaluating and improving aspects of the school's work more widely across the staff team.
- Raise attainment to above average in English and mathematics by:
  - ensuring that more able pupils throughout the school are appropriately taught and challenged
  - strengthening teacher skills and knowledge about how to increase rates of progress for children of different abilities in all year groups.
- Improve the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - measuring and monitoring children's progress more accurately in order to identify their needs
  - developing better use of the outdoor area so that children receive their full entitlement by the start of the Summer Term 2010.
- About 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.

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

Children's achievement is satisfactory and their enjoyment is good. Children start in Reception from the expected range of starting points typical for their age. Some children are further behind in communication, language and literacy than expected for their age. All groups of learners, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress during their three years in school. Progress is better in some classes than others, and is strongest in Year 2. By the end of Key Stage 1 they reach levels in English and mathematics that are average. However, too few children are attaining the higher levels, even though these are within their capabilities. Recent improvements show that attainment in writing has improved. This was particularly evident in the focused phonics sessions seen during the inspection. Current levels in Year 2 are higher than previously, including the more able children who are working at the higher levels. Children help one another when working in groups and are particularly mature when talking in pairs about their work. The presentation of work in books is mostly good. Behaviour is good throughout the school. Children have a good understanding of health issues and thoroughly enjoy their delicious but healthy school lunches! They enjoy learning about other cultures and develop the maturity to discuss and think about spiritual matters. They love taking on special responsibilities and this prepares them adequately for the next stage in their education. Attendance has improved considerably during the last year and is now average. There are no persistent absentees.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

The quality of teaching varies from class to class but overall is satisfactory. There is no inadequate teaching in the school. Indeed, some good elements of teaching were seen during the inspection. Good use of information and communication technology in most lessons helps to engage children's interests, Opportunities to share ideas with a partner help children to organise their thinking. Resources are adapted for different ability groups, and teaching assistants are there to give extra help, but often the learning focus is the same for all abilities. This limits the progress of some children, particularly the more able. Likewise, when teachers spend too long talking to the whole class, some children become restless because the teaching does not relate directly to their level of understanding. The curriculum is satisfactory and meets the needs and interests of the children. Teachers enhance children's learning with interesting visits including a residential trip. Visitors into school are less frequent and the school does not have many partnerships that further improve outcomes. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities and the participation rates are high. The before-and after-school club provides safe care, although activities are not always as varied or

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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engaging as they might be. All staff put the children's welfare first and the school provides a caring and supportive environment in which children feel safe and valued. Vulnerable children are well supported. Links and transition arrangements between the registered provision and Reception are not as strong as they might be. Safeguarding is satisfactory, but governors have insufficient knowledge of health and safety issues in the school and about the registered provision.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Long-term uncertainties about staffing, and leadership in particular, have meant that the school has experienced a period of instability recently. Despite this, the staff have worked as a strong and cohesive team because ambition for the children is embedded throughout the school. The headteacher has taken a strong and determined lead in driving improvement. Her efforts have reversed the four-year downward trend in standards by implementing appropriate systems for school improvement. For example, pupils' progress is regularly assessed and monitored through a sophisticated tracking system so that additional support can be given where needed. All staff have focused successfully on improving writing and attendance and expectations are high. There is an accurate understanding of strengths and weaknesses and a clear trend of improvement. Staff have an increasing involvement in self-evaluation but too few have leadership roles so capacity for improvement is satisfactory rather than good. Governors are motivated to support the school and care very much about the children. However, they do not have an accurate understanding of their roles and responsibilities and do not monitor their own effectiveness. There have been some omissions in fulfilling their statutory duties. Safeguarding procedures are now in place, and are effective in ensuring that children are kept safe. The school promotes community cohesion well locally, but wider United Kingdom and global links are limited. It promotes equality of opportunity and works successfully to tackle discrimination. There have been no racist incidents for 12 months.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3

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<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress in pre-school and Reception but those that come in at the higher levels are not doing as well as they could. This is partly due to the fact that those in charge do not assess the children with sufficient accuracy on entry to Reception. Teachers plan the learning in all six areas required by the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, although planning for children's physical development is weaker. The indoor areas are well organised for independent learning with bright displays and good resources. The outdoor area is not used as fully as it might be. As a result, children are not provided with sufficient opportunities to develop skills in some areas of learning, for example, gross motor skills and learning about nature and how things grow. Despite these shortcomings, children are happy and enjoy their learning. They concentrate well on tasks, and especially love getting messy in 'the messy room'! They show good independent skills, for example by organising their own snacks when required. Relationships between adults and children are strong and supportive. This results in good behaviour within a calm and caring environment. Links with parents and carers are good and this was clear from the glowing comments that some made on the questionnaires. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. All requirements are met and safeguarding procedures are secure. Areas of weakness have been identified and a suitable action plan is in place.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

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



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## Views of parents and carers

Almost 40% of parents responded to Ofsted's questionnaire most of who were extremely positive about the school. They appreciate the warm and welcoming atmosphere and say that staff are always available and are very helpful. A similar number of negative comments were received, in particular about the lack of reporting on progress. Quite a few parents said that their children were not making sufficient progress. These comments were mainly from parents of potentially high-attaining children. The inspection team agrees that progress is not equally strong in all classes. More able children are underachieving in Reception and Year 1 but in Year 2 their progress has accelerated this year.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Castlefields Infant 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 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 177 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	70	20	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	71	20	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	39	38	54	5	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	39	38	54	4	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	47	35	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	50	32	46	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	54	32	46	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)	29	41	38	54	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	46	34	49	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	40	39	56	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	36	40	57	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	33	47	33	47	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	56	29	41	1	1	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 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Castlefields Infant School, Brighouse, HD6 3XB

The inspectors and I enjoyed visiting your school recently. Thank you very much for helping us so honestly with our questions. We were very pleased to see your good, sensible behaviour and the way you worked hard in lessons. We also looked at a lot of different information about your school. Please thank your parents for sending in their questionnaires. These were also very helpful to us.

Castlefields Infant School provides you with a satisfactory education and is a warm and welcoming place to learn. Your teachers are very helpful and kind. Your classrooms are tidy and well organised and we enjoyed seeing your lovely work on the beautiful displays. Your teachers and other grown-ups in the school work very hard to keep you safe and happy. Your teachers plan lessons that you enjoy especially using computers to make it more fun. You know a lot about how to be healthy. Some of you told us you find the work too easy. This means you are not making as much progress as you could. Mrs Elliot is doing a great job as your new headteacher. She has made some good changes in the school and these are making a difference. She has helped the teachers to improve your writing and attendance.

It is our job to help Castlefields improve even more. There are three special things that we have asked the school to work on before another inspector comes back again. These are:

- making sure that other teachers and the governors help Mrs Elliot with new developments and check that these are working for all children
- helping you to reach higher levels in literacy and numeracy in every class
- keeping a closer check on how children are learning in Little Leopards, Tiny Tigers and Reception and letting them learn outside more often.

I know that you will want to help by continuing to work your hardest. You have my very best wishes for your future efforts.

Yours sincerely

Dr Suzi Clipson-Boyles

Lead inspector

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