



Castlecombe Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101606
LEA Bromley LEA
Inspection number 276551
Inspection dates 26 June 2006 to 27 June 2006
Reporting inspector Wendy Simmons AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Castlecombe Road
School category	Community		Mottingham
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		London SE9 4AT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8857 1504
Number on roll	225	Fax number	020 8857 9172
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Hannah Edmonds
Date of previous inspection	3 April 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Jenny Shepherd

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This popular school, of average size, educates mainly White British pupils. A few pupils have Asian backgrounds. The school is situated in an area where there is more deprivation than usual. It is actively involved in the 'Bromley Children Project' working with families through multi agency support in the community. A high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties. The school is involved in many innovative educational initiatives such as the 'Learning Journeys' which helps pupils who have been identified as underachieving due to low self esteem. It has gained 'Investors in People' and 'Healthy Schools' awards and 'The Football Association Charter Mark'. The school has recently faced significant staffing difficulties due to maternity leave and major illness.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Castlecombe is a good and happy school where there is an outstanding emphasis on helping pupils to gain confidence and develop their social skills. A good and exciting curriculum helps pupils to enjoy learning. Provision for gifted and able learners and those supported by the 'Learning Journeys' project is especially strong. The inspection judgments match the school's evaluation of its own performance. The school gives good value for money.

The school works very closely with the 'Bromley Children Project' to provide outstanding support for pupils and parents to help them to value education. However, some parents do not ensure that their children attend school as often as they should.

When many of the children start school their skills and knowledge are lower than expected at that age. Under the very strong leadership of the headteacher, the school works successfully to ensure that pupils make good progress and behave well. Pupils say: 'We like learning, work hard and feel well cared for.' Teaching and learning are good. As a result pupils reach average standards by the end of Year 6. Basic skills are well taught, but in Years 1 and 2, the most able pupils' writing is not developed to very best effect. This is because pupils are not given enough guidance and time to extend and improve what they write.

The school has a good capacity to improve. Since the last inspection, provision in the Foundation Stage has improved from unsatisfactory to good. The school is successfully improving standards and the curriculum in standards and the curriculum in mathematics, although pupils do not write down how they solve complex problems clearly enough to improve their thinking.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help pupils in Years 1 and 2 extend and develop their writing.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to record and explain how they solve mathematical problems.
- Continue to work closely with parents to improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics, science. Pupils make good progress.

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage, especially since the opening of the new Nursery last year. Standards, on entry to Year 1 are rising and are currently close to average. However, most pupils in the school did not have sufficient Foundation Stage experience in the past and this had a negative impact on standards by the end of the Foundation Stage. Strong links with volunteers, parents and the Bromley Children

Project help the youngest children to gain strong early learning skills, especially in reading and mathematics.

Pupils have made satisfactory rather than good progress in Years 1 and 2, because they have experienced significant staff changes. Pupils make good overall progress between Years 3 to 6. Some pupils, including many from Asian backgrounds, do very well because they are well supported at home and are highly motivated.

Learning is fun and a combination of good teaching, an exciting curriculum and highly effective support for the different ability groups help pupils to do well. Pupils gain important skills for their future lives. The school has set challenging targets for improvement and is making good progress towards them.

Pupils make particularly good progress in English in Years 3 to 6, because skills are developed well, especially through discussion work. The school is working to improve writing but, in Years 1 and 2, there are missed opportunities for pupils to write using longer and more descriptive sentences.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. The links with other schools and organisations are outstanding, particularly for higher ability pupils, and these help them to be very well prepared for their next stages in learning. The school works particularly well in helping pupils to enjoy learning, behave well and gain important social skills. As a result, pupils are polite, co-operative and listen carefully. Pupils gain considerable confidence and self esteem due to encouragement given to them by adults. Spiritual and cultural education is good. For example, high standards in pupils' music and singing enable them to be moved by the beauty of it and appreciate its many forms. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility and contribute well to school life and the wider community, by performing at concerts and through links with schools around the world, for example. School Council members take their role seriously and are actively involved in improving the playground environment.

Staff work closely with parents to improve attendance levels, but too many parents remove their children for holidays in term time and this does not allow their children to make the best of the education provided. Added to this, the poor health of some pupils results in attendance rates that are lower than average overall. Pupils are beginning to understand and adopt safe and healthy lifestyles because of the impact of the school's very good work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and, as a result, pupils achieve well during their time in school. Lessons are well planned and relationships in class are very good. Teachers

are especially skilled at managing pupils so that they behave well. Interactive whiteboards are used well to present ideas visually and capture pupils' interest. Teachers clearly explain what pupils are going to learn and they check that they understand their tasks. Teachers follow this up well in discussions at the end of lessons. This helps pupils to understand how well they are doing, and guides teachers in planning future work to meet individual needs. Teachers mostly use time well, but sometimes pupils are not given the opportunities or enough time to write at length. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported in lessons by teaching assistants and make good progress.

All teachers mark pupils' work regularly. The best marking identifies clearly why a piece of work is good, and guides pupils well on how it could be improved, but this is not consistent, especially for helping younger pupils in their writing and for all pupils in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum with several outstanding features. Overall, it meets the needs of most pupils well. Leaders are correctly working to develop further writing and mathematical activities. The school is developing many outstanding opportunities to encourage gifted and talented pupils to extend their learning, and to take the initiative in special projects. These include children's literature competitions, preparing an internet diary about Mottingham and K' Nex construction design work. Very good clubs and visits enrich pupils' learning and help them to achieve well. Homework clubs for Year 6 are popular and help pupils to achieve well. The curriculum is very well planned to help children to learn social skills, to adopt healthy and safe lifestyles and ensures that children with learning difficulties are well supported to make good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils and does especially well at developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem through the 'Learning Journeys' and learning mentors schemes. Pupils say that these schemes are 'really fun and good,' because they 'help us to get quick at learning'. Teachers know their pupils well and are able to identify where extra help is needed. Progress for all pupils is tracked closely and most know their targets for improvement, particularly in Years 5 and 6.

Vulnerable pupils and those who are facing family or emotional problems are especially well supported through the 'Bromley Children Project'. The Nursery ensures that children quickly become familiar with school routines and settle well. Child protection and health and safety procedures are well established and rigorous. Pupils say 'adults help you to feel safe and happy' and 'teachers are kind' and that they listen to their worries. Suitable action is taken to overcome bullying. Most parents are happy with the care provided for their children. The school monitors attendance rigorously and has put good systems in place to it.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and this leads to pupils achieving well. The headteacher gives very strong leadership and is very well supported by a strong staff team, which has the care and achievement of pupils at the heart of all of its work.

Most parents are happy with the school and say that leadership is good but a few express concern about the high turnover of staff. Parents are actively involved in helping the school to improve. For example, they raised concerns about bullying and, as a result, the behaviour policy was enhanced and the school council was consulted about how to improve playtimes.

The school's self evaluation is good. Managers keep a watchful eye on how well pupils are doing and quickly take action to make improvements where they are needed.

Governance is good. Governors are very keen and committed to helping the school to improve and are well led by a strong and knowledgeable chair. Governors know the school's strengths and areas for improvement and ask challenging questions about pupils' progress. Moreover, they have taken a lead in helping the families to adopt healthier lifestyles.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

You may remember that two inspectors came to your school recently to find out how well you are doing. Thank you for being so friendly and telling us about your school. We are writing to let you know what we found out.

We think that you benefit from being in a good school. We know that you like your school and enjoy learning. Well done for behaving well and please keep this up! You receive good teaching, work hard and make good progress. We especially like how the school helps you to learn how to work with others and gain confidence. Your teachers plan many interesting activities for you, so that you can enjoy learning and take on exciting challenges. The 'Learning Journeys' activities are particularly good. The school works with many other people to help you to value education and do well.

We have asked your headteacher to continue working to make the school even better and we would like you all to help her. This is what we have asked her to do.* Help pupils in Years 1 and 2 to improve their writing.* Help you all to write down exactly how you solve mathematical problems.* Continue to work closely with your parents so that you come to school as often as you can. Enjoy your last few weeks at school before the holidays.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons

Lead Inspector