



# Castle Cary Community Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 123640  
**LEA** Somerset  
**Inspection number** 281523  
**Inspection dates** 18 October 2005 to 19 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Michael Burghart RISP

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Park Street
<b>School category</b>	Community		Castle Cary
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Somerset BA7 7EH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01963 350520
<b>Number on roll</b>	184	<b>Fax number</b>	01963 351663
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Peter Stringer
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 September 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Phil Thomas

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 18 October 2005 - 19 October 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 281523
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Virtually all pupils are White British. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities and the proportion of children eligible for free school meals is about average. Children start school with average levels of attainment but this varies year on year, with some year groups below average on entry. The school is recognised as a Healthy School and has received several Achievement Awards from the Department for Education and Skills for improvements made to pupils' standards. Following a period of staff change and some long-term illness there is now stability in staffing.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

This is an average-sized primary school. Virtually all pupils are White British. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities and the proportion of children eligible for free school meals is about average. Children start school with average levels of attainment but this varies year on year, with some year groups below average on entry. The school is recognised as a Healthy School and has received several Achievement Awards from the Department for Education and Skills for improvements made to pupils' standards. Following a period of staff change and some long-term illness there is now stability in staffing.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

In order to be even better the school should:

- continue to raise standards, especially at the end of Year 2, and in writing throughout the school
- further improve provision for Reception, especially in terms of outdoor space
- improve the quality of information for parents in reports to show how pupils are doing compared with national expectations.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good progress and reach standards that are usually above average overall by the time they leave. Until 2004, progress was better between Years 3 and 6 than in Years 1 and 2. But, as a result of changes to staffing, curriculum planning and assessment of pupils' work, this trend has been overcome. Standards have been improved from below average to average at the end of Year 2. There are signs of pupils making improved progress throughout the school, especially for those with learning difficulties, and for more able pupils. The school did not meet the very challenging targets set by the local education authority (LEA) for English and mathematics in 2005. This was due to there being higher percentages of pupils in the Year 6 group who had started school below average, and more pupils with learning difficulties than usual in the age group. Nevertheless, these pupils made good progress. Early indications are that Year 6 pupils will reach higher standards in 2006 and that targets will be met. However, the school is aware of the need to continue to improve standards of writing, which are currently below average across the school.

Standards in science are well above average and a strength of the school. A very high proportion of Year 6 pupils reached above-average standards in 2005.

Children in Reception make sound progress, with most achieving what is expected of them in the Foundation Stage curriculum.

The last report was very critical of standards and progress in information and communication technology (ICT). Improvements to resources, planning and teaching mean that pupils now perform at least as well as is expected of them, with a minority of pupils achieving better than national expectations.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

The personal development of pupils is outstanding. Pupils really like coming to school and attendance and punctuality are good. They respond enthusiastically in lessons and work very well together. For example, when carrying out an investigation in science, Year 6 pupils worked conscientiously in pairs, discussing the results sensibly with each other.

Pupils are polite and very friendly and clearly understand the reasons for school rules. Behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is particularly good, with clear strengths in moral and social development. Pupils are gaining a good awareness of the diversity of cultures in Britain today. They have a keen awareness of their responsibilities for each other in school, and in the wider community. Their ideas are taken into account through the work of the school council and pupils have been responsible for initiatives such as placing the dolphin litter bins on the playground. Pupils are developing a very good understanding of a safe and healthy lifestyle. Their participation in the 'healthy tuck shop' and 'huff puff' sessions are good illustrations of this. Pupils are gaining the necessary numeracy, literacy and computer skills that they are likely to need in the future for their economic well-being.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching is good and because of this, pupils' learning is good. Improvements to standards over the last year confirm the school's view that teaching is effective. The school is good at getting the best out of staff and using their strengths to support colleagues, and this successfully helps pupils to make good progress. All teachers contribute to the good overall teaching profile. Judgements about teaching and learning were made on evidence from pupils' work, school monitoring records and observations. Examples of outstanding teaching were identified in Years 2, 4 and 6.

Strengths in teaching, which underpin improvements to what pupils achieve, feature:

good planning, which seeks to provide different degrees of challenge for differing abilities

good use of teaching assistants, who make a strong contribution to pupils' learning and are part of the very good staff team

excellent class management

good use of questioning, which encourages pupils to think

very good relationships

good, and improving, use of new resources for ICT.

Areas for further improvement are in:

- further developing opportunities for Reception children to improve their literacy and numeracy skills
- making work even more challenging for potentially higher attainers.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school is developing effective links between subjects, making work more interesting for pupils, and giving them good opportunities to practise skills such as reading and writing in other subjects. The curriculum for children in Reception is satisfactory but some aspects, particularly in terms of outdoor space, need improving.

There is an excellent programme for pupils' personal development, including sex and drugs education. This clearly demonstrates how pupils can stay healthy and safe. Another strength is the very good provision for pupils with learning difficulties, enabling them to achieve well. The school makes work relevant for pupils by incorporating visits and visitors into the topics planned. There is a good range of clubs at lunchtimes and after school, much appreciated by pupils. Strong links with the church and local community further enhance pupils' learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school takes very good care of its pupils and its attention to welfare and safety are very good. Pupils say they feel safe at school and know that they can confide in adults. Pupils are listened to. There are suggestion and thought boxes in classrooms which are very effective ways for pupils to share their ideas and concerns confidentially. There are good procedures in place for child protection, racial harassment and bullying, and staff are fully conversant with these. The school monitors pupils' personal and academic progress well. Pupils are involved in setting targets in English, mathematics and science, and they know what they should do in order to make progress. However, pupils' annual reports give little indication as to the standards pupils have reached in relation to National Curriculum expectations. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are monitored and supported very well. The school works closely with parents and outside agencies in order to provide the best support it can.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school is well led and managed. Parents have confidence in the school. "An excellent school, very well run," was a typical comment. The head works effectively with the governors and senior management team to make sure the school has clear direction and is providing a good quality of education. There is a good capacity to improve. This is well rooted in good monitoring, analysis and evaluation, and means the school has an accurate view of strengths and areas for development. The success

of this is evident in the rise in standards in 2005 which was the result of better assessment of pupils' work, improved curriculum planning, and more effective teaching. There is a good understanding that standards, although they are now improved to satisfactory, could be better in Key Stage 1, and in writing throughout the school.

The management of the school, which includes the contribution of all staff and governors, is good. It has been improved from satisfactory because of strong teamwork, staff morale, and a shared commitment to raising standards. Some staff are new to their roles but by using a common model for subject management, improvements are being achieved, especially in developing how literacy and ICT are used in other subjects. Special educational needs and ICT are examples of good management.

Governors support the school well. They successfully monitor the effect of decisions taken and are prepared to challenge and search for explanations. Building and staffing issues are well managed, as are finances, and this ensures good value for money.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

Thank you for your warm welcome! You certainly seem very happy at school. We were very pleased with your excellent behaviour and eagerness. It was good to hear how you enjoy your work and all the extra activities you can get involved in. It is good to know that you feel safe at school and that everyone is so friendly.

Yours is a good school. Here are some of the strengths we found:

- you make good progress and usually reach good standards by the time you leave
- teachers and their assistants are good at teaching. They take very good care of you and are working hard to show you how you can improve
- those of you who find learning hard are given very good extra help
- the school helps you to grow up into sensible, healthy people
- your headteacher is a good leader. The staff and governors make a good team
- the school and its grounds are attractive and are well used to help you learn.

A few things could be even better:

- you could achieve even more by the end of Year 2
- throughout the school you could improve your writing
- Reception children need a better outdoor play space
- there is not enough information in your reports to show your parents how you are doing compared with pupils in other schools.

We are glad that you like your school and are sure you will continue to work hard. We wish you all the best for the future.