

Castilion Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101444
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	286061
Inspection date	3 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	289
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs S Baggaley
Headteacher	Mr A Childs
Date of previous school inspection	30 September 2002
School address	Copperfield Road Thamesmead London SE28 8QA
Telephone number	020 8311 5177
Fax number	020 8311 5177

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Castilion is an average sized school. Pupils' social backgrounds are wide ranging but overall, there is significant deprivation. Many pupils have learning difficulties. The number of pupils who join and leave the school throughout the year is higher than in most schools. Close to half of all pupils come from White British backgrounds. The next largest group include pupils from Black African heritages. Many other cultural backgrounds are also represented and the school has a high proportion of pupils who are learning English in addition to another language. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Castilion is a good school with outstanding features in pupils' personal development and in the overall quality of provision in the Foundation Stage. Pupils enjoy school, work hard and achieve well. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress because as leaders say, 'There is something for everyone, differences are appreciated and children are helped to achieve as individuals'.

Pupils from all cultural backgrounds do well. In particular, pupils from Black African heritages do much better at this school than is often found in other schools. Pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language make good progress as they benefit from a good curriculum and receive effective support. Those pupils who join and leave the school, at intermittent times in the school year, are well supported and also achieve well.

Good leadership, especially by the headteacher and senior staff, contributes much to this successful school and to the good care provided for the pupils. Good teaching and learning, an interesting curriculum and good guidance ensure that pupils benefit from an 'all round' education. They value each other and racial harmony is a great strength of the school. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. They have an excellent knowledge of the importance of eating healthily and how to be safe. Pupils' work on developing enterprise and business skills is outstanding.

In the last year the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage has improved from good to outstanding. Children get off to a flying start in their education. They quickly learn to speak with confidence, read well and write very well. Up until 2006, children left the Foundation Stage with broadly average skills. In the last year, there has been a very successful thrust for improvement. As a result, standards have improved and many children are now ready to start Year 1 with higher than average standards.

By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils reach higher than average standards. Pupils do especially well in English. This year, standards in science have improved considerably. Fewer pupils reach the higher level in mathematics than in other subjects. Leaders know that pupils still need to do more real life problem solving activities. When writing down calculations, pupils do not record enough jottings or show how they solved the problem in a clear and sequential way. Links between mathematics and other subjects are underdeveloped but are improving.

Throughout the school, relationships are outstanding and there is a very friendly and purposeful working atmosphere. Parents have confidence in the school and one commented, 'I cannot praise the school enough for the level of hard work and effort that they have put into my child's education'.

What the school should do to improve further

- In mathematics, develop links between other subjects and increase opportunities for pupils to do real life problem solving activities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall, standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and 6. Achievement is good. Pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language achieve well

because staff give effective support and provide carefully planned work that meets their needs. Higher ability pupils do well in English and due to the greater focus on practical investigation work; they are now doing much better in science. For example, all pupils are expected to gain the average level and, close to half of the year group are likely to gain the higher level (Level 5). Higher ability pupils could be doing better in mathematics and the school has started to address this well.

When children join the school, in the Foundation Stage, their knowledge and skills are mostly as expected overall, although they are often lower than expected in their language and communication. Children now make outstanding progress in the Foundation Stage and in the last year, the outstanding teaching and strong leadership have resulted in children reaching higher than average levels in all areas of learning. In particular, their language and personal skills are especially good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' basic skills and excellent confidence prepare them very well for their future lives. They thoroughly enjoy school, as indicated by their higher than average attendance, positive attitudes and good participation in clubs. Children get off to an outstanding start in the Foundation Stage where they quickly learn how to cooperate, share and take turns. As pupils move through the school they learn to express their views and develop a good sense of responsibility. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, as evident in the racial harmony and in the fact that there have been no exclusions in the last five years. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They know about how to select healthy food and are keen to bring in balanced packed lunches. They eat fruit kebabs and drink smoothies because adults help them to make these at school. Pupils participate in many sporting activities and know extremely well how to be safe in the world around them. They make a positive contribution to the community, especially through the choir and fund raising.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching and learning helps pupils to achieve well. Pupils say, 'We learn different things and have fun'. Teaching and learning are outstanding in the Foundation Stage, especially the focus on letter, sound and handwriting work, which has impacted very positively on standards. Additionally, there is a very good balance of inside and outside learning activities. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects being taught and lessons are well planned to ensure that all abilities are suitably challenged. Relationships are excellent and this helps pupils to work hard. Most teachers try to ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to learn in different ways. There is room for pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) more in daily lessons to extend their learning. Discussion activities and good questioning help pupils to think and answer with greater clarity. This is important because many pupils find reasoning difficult. However, pupils do not note their methods clearly when recording how they solved problems in mathematics. It is important that pupils learn how to do so that they can develop logical steps of thinking and demonstrate and explain to others how they solved the problem.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

In the Foundation Stage, children have a very good balance of activities that allow them to work independently and more formally in group activities. The school provides a good range of clubs and visits which help pupils to enjoy school and achieve well. English skills are very well promoted. Practical work has increased greatly and has contributed much to the improvement in standards and achievement in science. Links between subjects are developing well, although there is room for further improvement in mathematics. This has begun in earnest. For example, pupils took part in an exciting 'Enterprise Week', which contributed outstandingly well to pupils' personal development. During the week, pupils made many creative things to sell and this involved costing resources, planning publicity and working out profit margins. They had fun learning about what it means to speculate to accumulate!

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is a caring and safe place with good safety and child protection arrangements. Leaders and teachers have been developing assessment systems well in English and mathematics. The school is working to develop better systems to evaluate pupils' progress in other subjects. When marking pupils' work, teachers give helpful suggestions on how to improve in English and science but guidance is not as good in mathematics. Links with outside agencies and good support by assistants contribute much to the support given to pupils, especially those with learning difficulties. The school provides very good guidance on promoting healthy lifestyles and awareness of how to cope with bullying, if it should occur. In the words of one pupil, 'To be healthy you have not just to eat healthily, but you have to get along with people and feel ok inside yourself-emotionally'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership is good and the school is well managed. The headteacher is totally committed to the school and has built a strong team of senior staff around him. Leaders have the very best interests of pupils at the heart of their work. They know the school well, are focused on improving standards and know that it is essential to provide an 'all round' education. There is a good capacity for further improvement. Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching, although they are less focused on evaluating pupils' learning. Nonetheless, they have a clear vision for the school and have put together a suitable improvement plan. Leaders take note of pupils' and parents' views. Most parents agree that their views are listened too, and acted upon well, although a few disagree. Leaders are ambitious to make the school outstanding and are right to be proud of the improving achievement of pupils. A few places remain unfilled on the governing body. Nonetheless, governors give good support and know the school well. They have been very active in supporting good improvements.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Castilion Primary School, London, SE28 8QA

You may remember that I came to your school recently. Thank you for being so friendly. I am writing to let you know what I found out. Your school is a good school, which means that it does many things well and there are only a few things that need to be done to make it even better for you. I know that you enjoy school and like learning. The Nursery and Reception classes are working especially well to make sure that the youngest children are ready for Year 1. You behave extremely well and your personal development is very impressive. You are learning many very important things for your future lives. I was pleased to hear that you know about how to be safe in the world around you and you know about how to choose healthy foods. The making of fruit kebabs and smoothies sounds great fun! I am especially impressed by your work during 'Enterprise Week'. Please keep this up, as it is outstanding! Your work in English and science is often better than in most schools. Congratulations for this! Your headteacher and teachers want to make the school even better. We all agree that mathematics still needs some more improvement. You have already started improving mathematics during the 'Enterprise Week', but I am asking everyone to help to get mathematics even better on a daily basis so that:

- you can learn to link mathematics with other subjects and do more real life problem solving activities. You also need to make more jottings and notes to explain how you solve your mathematical problems.

Yours sincerely Wendy Simmons Lead inspector