

Castleton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107962
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	287975
Inspection date	12 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Amraz Ali

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	253
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joan Sanderson
Headteacher	Mrs Judith Norfolk
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2001
School address	Green Lane Leeds West Yorkshire LS12 1JZ
Telephone number	0113 2637756
Fax number	0113 2891458

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Castleton Primary School is an average sized school situated close to the city centre. Most pupils are from a White British background, although approximately 10% speak English as an additional language. Mobility is high and the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Castleton Primary is a good school with some outstanding features. It has a secure awareness of its main strengths and weaknesses, but overestimates its effectiveness in some areas. A very positive ethos results in the pupils' excellent behaviour and outstanding personal development and well-being.

The school effectively lives up to its motto of 'unlocking potential' through high quality support for vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is because the school has been particularly successful in creating a culture where all pupils are valued and are treated as individuals. Parents are extremely appreciative of the school, highlighting the 'family feel'. This is because good relationships are fostered by adults, who take their lead from the headteacher; they know pupils well, and this helps pupils to thoroughly enjoy their time at Castleton.

Pupils enter school with standards well below those typically expected for their age. They get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage because teaching and learning is of good quality, and the lively and practical curriculum focuses on developing pupils' skills in speaking and listening. This results in good progress through the Foundation Stage. Although pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress, a significant number who are capable of it do not reach nationally expected standards by the end of Year 2. Progress is good in Years 3 to 6 due to good teaching, and standards are average. Pupils make the best progress in mathematics and science. Pupils' achievement is good overall.

The outstanding curriculum has basic skills at its centre. Strong partnerships with other schools enhance provision, particularly in sport. The school enriches the curriculum through a very impressive range of educational visits and by inviting visitors into the school. This is enhanced by a wide range of interesting after-school activities and results in pupils enjoying and valuing their work.

Leadership and management are good and the school has made good progress since the last inspection. Levels of attendance have improved significantly and there have been positive developments in the quality of physical education and information and communication technology (ICT). The direction and energy of the headteacher and her leadership team have led to some valuable improvements over the last year in the development of pupils' speaking and listening. Recent improvements in the use of assessment and in setting targets are now in place and beginning to improve progress. However, inconsistencies in the use of targets and feedback do not always ensure that pupils know what to do to improve their work. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more pupils securely reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by age seven.
- Improve the consistency of feedback to pupils and the use of targets so that all know exactly what they need to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage with standards well below those expected nationally; by the time pupils leave in Year 6, standards are average and this represents good progress during their time at the school. The school does very well to get pupils ready for learning by targeting support and nurturing pupils. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of good quality teaching and care and a high adult to pupil ratio. Progress is secure through Years 1 and 2 and recent developments in speaking and listening are beginning to have an impact on standards; however, not enough pupils who are potentially able to do so are securely reaching the expected levels by the end of Year 2. Pupils make good progress between Year 3 and Year 6; this is particularly strong in mathematics where a significant number reach the higher Level 5. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those pupils who have English as an additional language similarly make good progress during their time at the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Excellent relationships and very high expectations of pupils' behaviour have helped to create a 'can-do' culture which ensures that all pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning. They say: 'It's a happy place where everyone gets on well together.' Older pupils relish the opportunity to take responsibility to support the younger pupils in their role as playground pals. Pupils know how to keep safe and are aware of the benefits of healthy eating and exercise. The good range of sporting activities contributes very well to this and the school has the ActiveMark Gold award. Pupils are proud of their school and willingly take on responsibilities as school councillors, where they have real opportunity to run fundraising events and plan improvements such as the newly introduced healthy tuck shop. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Almost half of pupils enjoy regular attendance at the breakfast club, which has helped to ensure that attendance has increased over recent years to broadly average. Bullying is rare and pupils have absolute confidence that if it does occur it will be dealt with swiftly. Pupils leave the school as mature and confident individuals with personal and academic skills that will be valuable in later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. Very good relationships and clear expectations allow pupils to succeed in their learning. Good teaching typically includes a sharp focus on basic skills and clear learning intentions. The good use of interactive whiteboards to make teaching interesting ensures that pupils remain engaged and motivated. Good questioning by confident teachers ensures that any misunderstandings are quickly dealt with. Pupils say that their teachers always have time for them and are always willing to give them extra help. The skills of teaching assistants are often used well to support pupils who need extra help. Assessment and marking are used to set targets but are not yet having a consistent impact, and as a consequence some pupils are not aware of the next steps they need to make to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The outstanding curriculum is very effectively enriched and adapted to provide maximum enjoyment for all pupils without distracting the school from the high priority given to developing the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. Particularly strong features include visits, including residential trips, and the contribution of visitors to the school. The regular annual visit to the grave of a local war hero has been particularly effective in celebrating the community aspect of the school. The school uses planned themes to link ideas and areas of learning which pupils say they really enjoy, such as pupils' work during Black History Month when they used history to develop their report writing skills. The ICT curriculum is well resourced and led and as a consequence pupils enjoy this and make good progress. The Foundation Stage curriculum is a strength and provides a wide range of focused and independent activities which successfully develop basic skills to give children a firm foundation on which to continue their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils are well cared for in a happy and friendly environment. Relationships are good and pupils feel safe and secure and say that 'teachers listen and help sort out your problems'. Child protection and other checks to safeguard pupils' health, safety and well-being are in place. The school responds at an early stage to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by providing extra support or involving other agencies when appropriate. As a result, these pupils are fully included in all activities and make good progress. There are particular strengths in work of the learning mentor and the work done to nurture vulnerable pupils: this is one of the ways that the school does indeed 'unlock potential'. Assessment is used well, for example to identify the needs of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to set them targets and monitor their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and the new leadership team has been particularly successful at securing continuity of expectation and creating a positive ethos and attitude to learning, which results in pupils enjoying their work and learning. Very effective partnerships with other schools and the community have helped to enhance the curriculum and the involvement of parents and carers in the education of their children. The work of leaders at all levels is developing and as a consequence they have a good awareness of how effective school is and what the priorities are for improvement. Resources are used well and the school has good capacity to improve. Governors fulfil their statutory obligations and demonstrate their high level of commitment to the school's work through visits and attendance at regular meetings.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
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	3
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	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

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?	1
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

Thank you very much for being so welcoming and friendly when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed talking to you and your teachers about how well you are doing and that helped me to form a clear view of your school.

I think that Castleton Primary is a good school. I was impressed by how many of you go to breakfast club. You enjoy coming to school and have many things to look forward to such as visits, visitors and clubs. In lessons, you listen carefully to what your teachers have to tell you and say you are never bored because learning is exciting and fun. This helps you to make good progress in your learning. You are polite, behave really well and are kind and considerate to each other. Special jobs for the older pupils are an enjoyable way of helping everyone in school and you like the way the staff take care of you to make sure you are safe and happy. You know a lot about being healthy and staying safe and work hard to help others.

I have asked your teachers to help make sure that some of you do even better in your work by the time you have reached the end of Year 2. When you have completed a piece of work I would like all your teachers to give you feedback, so that you know what to do to make it even better.

Keep working hard and doing the best you can!