



# Castlefield School

## Inspection Report

---

**Unique Reference Number** 110522  
**Local Authority** Buckinghamshire  
**Inspection number** 288701  
**Inspection dates** 25–26 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Daniel Kilborn

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	The Middle Way
<b>School category</b>	Foundation		High Wycombe
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		HP12 3LE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01494 436018
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	360	<b>Fax number</b>	01494 448557
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr E Collins
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs K Nichol (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 March 2001		

---

<b>Age group</b> 3–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 25–26 January 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 288701
--------------------------	---	------------------------------------

---

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This large primary school serves an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. Most pupils are from minority ethnic groups predominantly of Pakistani heritage. A much higher proportion than is usual have English as an additional language although only a small minority are at the early stages of English language acquisition. Attainment on entry is well below average. The proportion of pupils who have free school meals is above average, as is the proportion of pupils who have been identified as having learning difficulties and those with a statement of educational need. The previous headteacher retired in December 2006 and the deputy headteacher is currently acting head.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education in challenging circumstances. The school has the support of the large majority of parents. As one commented, 'the school has a very open and friendly approach'.

When most children enter the Foundation Stage their attainment is well below average. They make good progress across all the areas of learning, although most are unlikely to reach expected levels for pupils entering Year 1. Whilst standards are well below average in Years 1 to 6, there has been a steady rise since the previous inspection. Standards dipped in the 2006 national tests when the group contained a higher than usual number of pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties. A range of evidence from the inspection and school data indicate that the gradual improvement trend is back on track. However, more needs to be done to raise standards and improve pupils' achievements in English, science and mathematics in particular. The steady progress most pupils make in literacy and numeracy prepares them adequately for their future economic well being.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Self-evaluation is accurate and has identified the right course of action. The school uses a good range of data about their pupils' performance to develop learning, although this is not yet impacting sufficiently on standards and pupils' achievements. The good teamwork and commitment of all staff and evidence of recent improvements in teaching mean that the school has the capacity to improve further.

Teaching is satisfactory. Analysis of school and national assessment data is now more rigorous and teachers have a greater awareness of how they can best meet the needs of all pupils. More, however, should be done to ensure greater consistency in implementing agreed initiatives. This should involve an extended role for key subject co-ordinators. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory, with good support for vulnerable pupils, although achievement has not risen significantly since the previous inspection. The curriculum is satisfactory and includes adequate coverage of all subjects. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that add enjoyment and enrichment to learning. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use and apply their basic skills in investigative work. This places some limitations on their progress.

Pupils' personal development and well being are good. They make good progress in acquiring the skills of collaboration and teamwork and involve themselves well in lessons. Pupils enjoy school. This is reflected in increased attendance levels. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is supported effectively by assembly themes and class 'circle' times. Most pupils behave well and say that they feel safe in school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and have an appropriate awareness of the dangers of substance abuse. They make a good contribution to the school and local community and accept responsibility enthusiastically.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve pupils' achievements in English, science and mathematics.
- Raise the quality of teaching so that more of it is good or better.
- Extend the role of co-ordinators to include more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage, although most do not reach the goals expected when they enter Year 1. Standards are exceptionally low in English, mathematics and science. Despite a dip in 2006, national test results at the end of Years 2 and 6 have risen slowly over the past four years. Given the very low starting point, overall achievement is satisfactory. This is substantiated by the school's good tracking data. However, in mathematics, a minority of pupils underachieve. In mathematics and science, pupils are not adept at applying what they know in investigative and independent learning. Evidence from the inspection shows that the recent emphasis on developing writing is having a positive impact on raising standards. Improvements in teaching, involving more rigorous and accurate tracking and target setting have resulted in at least satisfactory progress in lessons and work that is now better matched to pupils' needs. Few pupils who are at the early stages of learning English acquire the fluency in literacy they need to do well in national tests. The school is addressing this with increasing success by providing additional opportunities to develop speaking and listening across all subjects and by further staff training.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and attendance has improved. They have a clear understanding of how their actions affect others. Pupils have good attitudes to work and are keen to contribute to class and whole school events. They willingly take on responsibilities and are proud to be councillors and playtime monitors. However, more opportunities should be provided for pupils to plan aspects of their own learning. Relationships are good and pupils say that on the few occasions when bullying occurs it is dealt with appropriately. The behaviour of most pupils is good and they are polite and courteous to adults and each other. Pupils are very aware of how to keep safe and understand what makes a healthy lifestyle. There are effective links with local organisations and numerous fundraising events give pupils a good understanding of how they might contribute to their community. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills prepare them adequately for their future economic well-being.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

All teachers and support staff are committed to improving standards and achievement. They are self-critical and keen to improve their own teaching. Relationships are good and there are high expectations of pupils' behaviour and a real work ethic. As a result pupils enjoy lessons and are keen to be involved. Teachers know the levels at which their pupils are working and lesson plans take satisfactory account of their needs and abilities. They track and assess the pupils' progress regularly and use the information to boost the learning of any who are falling behind. This is helping to iron out inconsistencies in pupils' progress. The senior managers know the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and recognise the need to increase the proportion of good teaching. There is now an increasing focus on the development of speaking and listening and a move to adopting a style of learning that gives pupils more opportunities to use and apply what they know to investigative and independent work. More needs to be done to establish this learning style as a consistent feature of the teaching across the school. The good additional support for pupils with learning difficulties enables them to make steady progress.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is balanced and covers all subjects. Due to recent improvements there are good links between subjects. Art has a high profile in the school and some excellent examples of work were seen. The school is beginning to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of all its learners more completely although this is at an early stage. For example, work for younger pupils is planned around themes. This benefits pupils who are still acquiring academic fluency in English as they have increased opportunities to talk and write about subjects in depth. Similarly, the school has recently introduced a programme to improve pupils' use of language in mathematics. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. The school provides a good range of additional activities including regular visits and visitors. These, along with lunchtime and after school clubs, introduce pupils to new experiences and are much enjoyed.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

There are good procedures to ensure that pupils are well cared for and safe. The school works effectively with an increasing range of outside agencies to help those experiencing difficulties. For example, vulnerable pupils take part in sessions to improve their self-esteem or benefit from working with learning mentors. Pupils' progress is tracked well which helps the school accurately identify those who need extra help. Support is provided in class and through additional programmes of work which are monitored well. Targets are shared well with pupils and parents; however, the new

target setting system is yet to have a significant impact on the progress that pupils make.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school is in a period of transition following the recent retirement of the previous headteacher and is currently led by the deputy headteacher. She enjoys good support from the acting deputy and senior members of staff. Together they are committed to improving standards, achievement and to raising expectations for all pupils. The school development plan provides a clear focus for how this might be achieved. There is a strong team spirit and subject leaders are beginning to take a more influential part in school development. However, they have few opportunities to monitor teaching and learning. This means they have no reliable way of ensuring that new initiatives in their subjects are consistently applied. Good use of a range of data has enabled the school to accurately determine how well pupils are progressing, although this is not yet impacting sufficiently on standards and pupils' achievements. Teachers new to the school and those new to the profession are well supported. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection as a result of more rigorous systems but the school are aware that some inconsistencies remain. Governors, led by a knowledgeable chairperson, hold the school to account for its performance and have been closely involved in supporting the recent and extensive building developments. They are well aware of the school priorities and ensure spending is linked to the school development plan.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Inspection judgements

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

### 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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

I am writing on behalf of all the inspectors to thank you for the friendly and helpful way you welcomed us to your school. We enjoyed our visit and were pleased to see how well you all get on together. It is clear you enjoy coming to Castlefield and are proud of it. We think that your school gives you a satisfactory education and provides opportunities for you to improve in all areas of your work. Your headteacher and all the staff are working very hard to make your school even better.

You behave well and work hard in your lessons. You tell us there is always someone to help you if you are worried about anything. We know that your teachers and visitors to school teach you about keeping safe, healthy eating and the importance of taking regular exercise.

You are very good at art and we saw some lovely work. We agree with the harder targets the school has set for you in English, mathematics and science as we think you could achieve even more in these subjects. We are sure you will do your best to improve further. We also think you should have more chances to work on mathematics and science problems and to help plan your own investigations. We feel that some of your lessons could be even more challenging and have asked the teachers who are in charge of English, mathematics and science to check that this is happening.

Good luck for the future

Mr D Kilborn

Lead Inspector