



Castleton CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112807
Local Authority DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number 289417
Inspection date 9 February 2007
Reporting inspector David Speakman

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Back Street
School category	Voluntary controlled		Castleton, Hope Valley
Age range of pupils	4-11		Derbyshire S33 8WE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01433 620630
Number on roll (school)	43	Fax number	01433 620630
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr A Boyd
		Headteacher	Mrs A Montgomery
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school and most of the pupils come from within the village. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds and virtually all speak English as their first language. A smaller than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities and an average proportion have a statement of special educational need. The number of pupils entitled to a free school meal is well below average. Attainment on entry to the school is typical for children of this age, but they show good personal and social skills. The new headteacher joined the school in January 2007.

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 a good school in which pupils achieve well. It provides good value for money. The school modestly judges its effectiveness to be satisfactory because it is focusing too much on the latest published data for 2006, rather than assessing the school's performance over time, which provides a better picture. By the end of Year 6, standards are usually above average, and sometime well above average in mathematics and science. Although at least satisfactory, and sometimes above average, attainment in English has been lower than in mathematics and science for some time. This is because a lower proportion of pupils achieve the higher level in the end of key stage tests. There has been a trend of rising standards since 2003, but these dipped to average in 2006. There are good reasons for this and attainment is set to rise in 2007, with Year 6 pupils on track to achieve above average standards again.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils at all ages show excellent attitudes to learning and their behaviour is exemplary. There is an extremely strong ethos of care in the school and this is seen in the way pupils get on with and care for each other. This ensures that all pupils feel safe in school and show high levels of enjoyment in being there. Links with other schools in the area and with the village community have an extremely high profile in the work of the school and in promoting pupils' well-being. Pupils show a good awareness of healthy lifestyles and willingly take part in opportunities to eat healthily and to stay physically fit. Pupils' contribution to school life and to the local community is excellent. One of the villagers commented that, 'The school is not part of the community; it is at the heart of the community.' The preparation for the next stage of their education is good.

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good and enables pupils to achieve well. The quality of education and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. The curriculum is satisfactory but planning for pupils in classes with a wide age range is not yet detailed enough to ensure smooth progression from one level to the next in subjects other than English and mathematics. The school shows excellent levels of care for pupils' personal welfare but guidance for their academic achievement is satisfactory. The setting of targets for the next stages of learning and the marking of pupils' work do not sufficiently inform pupils how to improve or what the next steps in learning are.

Leadership and management are good. Even though the headteacher has only recently taken up post, she has worked at a rapid pace to identify satisfactorily what needs improving, building on established strengths in the school. She has quickly gained the confidence of the parents, staff and the governors. Rising standards were observed during the inspection and a new management team reflects a strong culture of team work. School self-evaluation is satisfactory. There are currently insufficient arrangements to formally monitor the school's work and this is an area the headteacher has noted for improvement. Improvements are evident since the previous inspection. The current headteacher shows a high level of commitment to achieving the best for all pupils, the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English at the end of Year 6 so that they match those in mathematics and science by making sure that those capable of reaching the higher levels do so.
- Improve the quality of targets set for pupils' attainment and the marking of their work to inform them more clearly how well they are doing and what the next steps for learning are.
- Devise and implement plans for staff and governors to monitor and evaluate provision, particularly curriculum planning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From an average starting point, pupils achieve well and attainment at the end of each key stage is above average. Those with pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve well. Over time, standards at Year 2, in reading, writing and in mathematics have been above average. Standards fell to average in the 2006 assessments. However, this was an extremely small year group and the pupils made good progress from their starting point. Standards seen during the inspection show that attainment at Year 2 is once again above average. A similar pattern emerges at Key Stage 2, with a trend of improving attainment and overall standards being well above average in 2005. While attainment at Year 6 was average in 2006, the group still met the targets set for them. There are valid reasons for this dip, including some disruption to their education in the past. School assessment data and inspection evidence shows that the current Year 6 pupils are well on course to achieve above average standards at the end of the year. Based on this information, governors have increased the targets for the end of the year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They have excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils are extremely keen and enthusiastic and readily engage in learning activities, wanting to do their best. Very strong social awareness is seen in the outstanding level of social harmony and unity and excellent moral development is reflected in pupils' outstanding behaviour. Pupils' cultural development is good and further work would increase their multicultural awareness. Pupils really enjoy being in school and attendance is well above average year after year. Pupils feel they contribute very well to school life, through the school council for example. The school makes an excellent contribution to village life and villagers place a high value on the school's place in their community. Pupils have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles and are kept safe. Good attainment and good ability to work collaboratively mean pupils are prepared well for the next stages of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good. Explanations are clear, often through the effective use of computers as both teaching and learning resources. Activities are interesting and are set into meaningful contexts so that pupils recognise there is a purpose to what they are doing. Teachers are very encouraging in lessons and well targeted questions make sure all pupils are included. This encourages pupils to do well because they feel they are valued. The marking of pupils' work does not always sufficiently inform them how they might improve. Teaching assistants are skilled and make a significant contribution to lessons, whether teaching groups of Reception children or supporting those with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets requirements. Planning for literacy and numeracy is effective; an extra class is created and pupils are taught in groups with a two-year age range, using the local authority's mixed-age planning format. Whole-school curriculum planning for other subjects, particularly at Key Stage 2, is adequate, but not sufficiently detailed to ensure the progressive development of skills as pupils move through the key stage. Good management of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1 class means that curriculum requirements for both groups are provided for appropriately. However, a lack of outdoor facilities limits the provision for outdoor learning and children's physical development, particularly in the Foundation Stage. Curriculum enrichment is good. All pupils learn French at appropriate levels, and there is good provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship. There is a good range of visits and visitors and the school is able to provide a good range of extra-curricular activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides excellent levels of pastoral support for its pupils and this reflects the school's very strong ethos of care, which underpins its work. Adults set an excellent role model of care and support, which pupils reflect in their interaction with each other. Pupils are very well supervised at all times and all child protection and health and safety procedures are fully in place. Guidance for pupils' academic achievement is satisfactory. The school has made a good start in setting targets at the beginning of the year for the next steps in learning but the targets are too broad and general to be meaningful to the pupils. They do not clearly inform pupils of the next steps in learning because they are not broken down into sufficiently small steps.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The new headteacher has made a rapid start to school improvement and there are already signs of her impact on the work of the school, such as rising standards and making sure pupils are actively involved in their learning. She has quickly established a strong team approach to leading and managing the school, setting up good professional relationships with the staff and governors. Together they have already agreed a clear view of priorities for improving provision, including implementing the process of more effective monitoring, and ensuring pupils continue to achieve well. Governors are very involved in the school and organise their work efficiently, creating working parties to deal with issues as they arise. Governors have an excellent knowledge of the school through visits. They are challenging but also highly supportive and see themselves as working in close partnership with the school.

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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	3
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	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	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?	3
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.

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	3
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

12 February 2007

Dear Pupils

Castleton C of E Primary School, Back Street, Castleton, Hope Valley, Derbyshire, S33 8WE

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I was really impressed by what I saw throughout the day. I can appreciate why you enjoy school so much. Behaviour both in and out of school is excellent and your teachers and people in the village are proud of you.

Your teachers try very hard to help you achieve well. The lessons I saw when I visited you were good and you all seemed very interested and keen to do well. Adults show excellent levels of care for you and in turn you look after and care for each other really well. Your new headteacher has made a good start to running the school and works well with other adults and the governors to identify what they think can be improved. I have asked them to consider ways in which they can:

- Help you do as well in English as you do in mathematics and science.
- Improve the setting of targets for you to aim for and mark work well so that you have a better idea of how you can improve.
- Keep a more careful watch on the work you do in different subjects.

I wish you all well in the future.

David Speakman

Lead Inspector