



Cestria Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114012
Local Authority Durham
Inspection number 289777
Inspection dates 19–20 September 2006
Reporting inspector Carole Cressey

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Chare
School category	Community		Chester le Street, County Durham
Age range of pupils	4–11		DH3 3PZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 3882483
Number on roll (school)	402	Fax number	0191 3890933
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Carole Walklate
		Headteacher	Mrs Lorraine Gowland
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 19–20 September 2006	Inspection number 289777
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school is located in Chester le Street on the outskirts of Durham. Most children come from White British backgrounds and a very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds and have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than average, as is the percentage who have 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: 1

Cestria School judges its effectiveness to be outstanding. Its evaluation is spot on and shows an accurate insight into the quality and impact of its provision. It is an outstanding school and to quote one pupil, 'It has no downsides'.

Displayed on the board outside the school is the school motto which clearly states, 'Every child is a star, it's our job to make them shine'. The pupils do shine in this school because they are surrounded by caring, professional staff who provide an exceptionally stimulating and exciting learning environment which keeps them bright and polished.

The school's success is due to the unremitting determination of the headteacher, staff and governors to provide the very best for the pupils in their care. The school believes that if pupils are provided with a boundless range of rich and exciting learning experiences both in and out of school and taught the basic skills to be confident readers, writers and mathematicians, then they will have the tools necessary to be high flying, successful individuals who will reach their potential.

Children enter the Reception classes with standards which are broadly in line with those expected for children this age. They leave the school in Year 6 with academic and personal and social standards consistently and significantly above average. The school is now working rigorously on its next challenge, which is to help even more pupils, especially boys, to reach the higher levels. This is an achievable target because the quality of teaching is consistently very high across the school. All staff know the pupils exceptionally well. Assessment and recording systems provide them with a detailed picture of what needs to be done to accelerate learning and ensure that pupils reach the highest standards they can. Parents are very supportive of their children's education. They value how well teachers know their children and appreciate the information they receive about their learning and progress.

Governors and staff have used the school's finances extremely imaginatively. They have transformed an old Victorian school into a splendid modern learning environment fit for education in the 21st century. Learning in this school, including the Foundation Stage, is exciting and great fun. Whether pupils are in lessons or enjoying recreational time, they are engaged in exceptionally well resourced experiences which continually challenge them. Teachers meticulously plan the school day, individual lessons and out of school activities to develop pupils' love of learning, an understanding of how they can stay healthy, keep themselves and others safe and become responsible members of their school and local community. The school sees these skills as being paramount to pupils becoming successful young citizens.

The school has the full support of its parents. It gives excellent value for money and is exceptionally well placed to continue to be very successful.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no significant areas for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The pupils achieve exceptionally well and attain standards which are significantly higher than average. Very effective and consistently high quality teaching ensures that all pupils, no matter what their backgrounds or abilities, achieve well. Children join the school in Reception with levels of attainment which are typical for their age. They make good progress in Reception and by the time they move into Year 1 the majority are reaching the learning goals expected for their ages. This good start is continued in Key Stage 1 and, by the age of seven, pupils are attaining standards which are consistently above average. Learning continues to accelerate in Key Stage 2 and national test results paint a picture of standards at the end of Year 6 being significantly above average for the last five years. The latest test results exceed the school's own ambitious targets. The attainment of boys is rising and moving closer to that of the girls. This is because the school has adopted different teaching styles and resources which capture the interests of boys. Pupils with English as an additional language, those from vulnerable groups and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress and achieve the expected standards for their ages.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils are very regular attenders who enjoy coming to school, behave very well and show considerable enthusiasm in their lessons. They are exceptionally polite, friendly and behave well because they realise this makes living in a community so much easier. Pupils relish the opportunities to care for each other. This can be seen in the work of the 'playground buddies' who are vigilant in ensuring that everyone is happy, safe and has someone to play with. Pupils are very proud of the contribution they make to the school through the work of the school council, and really believe they 'make a difference' to their school. This is borne out by the fact that they actually have a say in the appointments of new staff to the school. Now, that really is making a difference! The pupils understand the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity and know how to keep safe. Parents say their children tell them what constitutes a healthy lunch box and they are having a positive influence on the food their parents prepare for them.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The consistent high quality teaching ensures that pupils achieve well and reach high standards. Relationships are excellent and pupils respond positively to teachers' high expectations of their behaviour and work. Lessons are peppered with good humour

and there is a feeling that learning is a shared experience between teacher and pupils. Pupils regard their teachers as experts and they are keen to learn from them by listening attentively and concentrating well. Pupils are taught to have a go, even if the task or the question is extremely challenging. In one excellent lesson, a pupil offered the word ‘ambivalent’ to describe a feeling. A ripple of admiration from adults and pupils went around the room, especially when the nine-year-old pupil then went on to explain accurately what it meant. Such high flying is typical of lessons in this outstanding school. Different teaching styles and resources have been used successfully to accelerate the progress of boys. Teachers use information from day-to-day assessments and tests to pinpoint each pupil’s progress and carefully identify the next steps in learning. Well matched and challenging work brings relevance and enjoyment to learning and staff are always on hand to extend pupils’ knowledge and understanding. They do this through sharp questioning, supportive comments and excellent resources, including the excellent information and communication technology. Teaching assistants are highly skilled and work very effectively to raise standards for pupils of all abilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The excellent curriculum is vibrant, varied and adapted extremely well to suit the needs of pupils and their families. Learning is brought to life by an exhilarating curriculum which equips pupils exceptionally well for living in the 21st century. Innovative approaches have been taken to encourage the learning of particular groups. For example, a booster programme for Year 5 boys promoted literacy through sports sessions at the local cricket ground. More able pupils attended science sessions at a high school; others published their own book. The breakfast club, the organisation and timings of lessons, the excellent recreational facilities and the many after school clubs all contribute to the pupils’ highly successful learning. An excellent programme of social and health education permeates all lessons and activities. In a relatively small playground, the school provides many wonderful activities for pupils of all ages and interests to choose from. Within the course of a lunchtime, pupils can: experience wall climbing, football, hockey, creating and performing a musical drama; they can choose to just sit on picnic rugs enjoying a healthy snack or lunch; or they can chat with friends at ‘the friends meeting point’.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school’s outstanding level of care, guidance and support for all its children enables pupils to be highly successful learners. Parents particularly value the way the school realises that it is only when pupils are happy, safe and feel secure that they will be effective learners who can achieve to their full potential. This emphasis on feeling secure is seen in the way the youngest children settle happily into their new school. Child protection procedures and all other checks to safeguard children’s welfare, health and safety are in place. Highly skilled support staff, together with outside agencies, provide very high quality support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or physical

disabilities. Pupils' academic progress is meticulously tracked, and they know exactly what they need to do to improve their work and reach the highest standards they can.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher's outstanding leadership and management are pivotal to the school's success in raising the achievement and attainment of its pupils to very high levels. Improvements since the last inspection have been excellent. The headteacher is exceptionally well supported by an excellent deputy headteacher and leadership team. There is a tangible team spirit among the staff and all are valued and encouraged to develop and use their particular skills to promote pupils' learning and well-being. The headteacher and senior management team very rigorously monitor lessons and mentor all adults involved in teaching the pupils. This ensures consistently high quality teaching in all classes and subjects and is crucial in ensuring that all pupils achieve as well as they can. This highly motivated leadership team never rests on its laurels. As soon as one challenge has been addressed, another one is just round the corner ready to be tackled. An area identified in need of improvement immediately galvanises the leadership team into action. When initiatives are put in place, they provide training for staff and monitor and evaluate its success in improving standards.

Governors are very knowledgeable about their school and rigorous in their desire to continually improve the standards and provide the best education for the pupils. This can be seen in the way the governors have allocated finances to improve the fabric of the building, the playground and resources.

The parents' confidence in the leadership and management of the school is rightly placed.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	2
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Cestria Primary School

Church Chare

Chester le Street

County Durham

DH3 3PZ

19 September 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school a short while ago.

You are all very successful and enthusiastic learners who work really hard and behave well. I wonder if you know that your work is a whole lot better than it is in most schools. What a reputation to live up to!

I could see you enjoy helping to make important decisions about your school and was very interested to hear that you have even helped your headteacher and governors choose new teachers. That is such a responsibility but is probably one of the reasons you have such brilliant teachers in your school. They know an awful lot about you and are really good at helping you improve your work.

There were so many things about Cestria School that I liked but one which I think I will remember for a very long time is your fantastic playground. It reminds me of a 'Dr Who Tardis' because there are so many wonderful things going on in quite a small space. You will never be bored at lunchtimes will you? Could this be one of the reasons you behave so well?

Your mums and dads tell me that you are all becoming very good at eating only food which is healthy. That is so sensible.

One of you said that your school had no 'downsides'. I agree. I think you are very lucky to go to such an excellent school where your headteacher and teachers work so hard to make lessons fun and help you learn such a lot. I hope you will continue to enjoy school as much as you do now and that it will help you to become happy and successful adults.

Best Wishes

Carole Cressey