

# Catchgate Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114023
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	289781
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lynne Read

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	244
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Maureen Nair
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Young
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 September 2001
<b>School address</b>	Blackett Street Annfield Plain Stanley County Durham DH9 8LX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01207 234252
<b>Fax number</b>	01207 237918

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average-sized primary school serves an area of low employment in Stanley, County Durham. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is much higher than average. When children enter the Nursery, their development is well below that usually seen. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around the same as in most schools. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds and a few have African or Asian heritage. The school has experienced some disruption to staffing at the senior management level. At the time of the inspection, an acting headteacher and deputy headteacher were in post. The school houses a Children's Centre which provides day care facilities as well as before and after school clubs.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Catchgate Primary is a good school and provides good value for money. This judgement matches the evaluation made by the management, staff and governors. Parents have very positive views of the school. One wrote, 'The teaching staff are very approachable and helpful and care about the pupils' welfare.' Parents' and pupils' views are sought regularly; they are valued and acted upon. Actions taken as a result of consultations include a project to eliminate bullying and new playground equipment.

From a low point on entry to the Nursery, children progress well in the Foundation Stage, especially in developing personal, language and number skills. Throughout school, pupils continue to achieve well and standards are broadly average by Year 6. They are better in English and mathematics than in science because pupils' skills of investigation and experimentation are not sufficiently developed. Teaching is good. There is good expertise among teachers and teaching assistants so they are able to overcome factors that could otherwise get in the way of learning. As a result, pupils are very well supported emotionally and academically. Many of those with learning difficulties attain average standards by Year 6.

The good curriculum is enriched by an interesting range of additional activities; such as, visits, visitors and out-of-school clubs. It ensures that personal, academic, creative and physical skills are developed in a balanced way. The Healthy School Award recognises the good work done in teaching about healthy living. Pupils have varied opportunities to experience responsibility and carry out a range of jobs diligently. This prepares them well for their future lives, whilst also contributing to the strong sense of community and pride in school.

Good partnerships with the Children's Centre, other schools and outside agencies provide many benefits to pupils' learning. Progress in English and mathematics is checked constantly. Challenging expectations for future learning are set and additional sessions are provided for pupils who are not meeting their targets. As a result, learning is boosted and this underpins the good achievement. There is no similar system in place for science. Good personal development is promoted through positive strategies of encouragement and praise for effort or good deeds. Pupils say they enjoy school. Staff and welfare officers have worked hard to improve attendance. The rate of absence is still too high, however, largely because a few families do not cooperate fully with the school.

Improvement since the previous inspection is good, especially in standards and achievement and planning for improvement. Much of this work has been completed recently, under the good leadership of the acting headteacher. There is no complacency in this school. Attention to safety issues, including checking on the suitability of staff and helpers, is very good. There is good capacity to improve even further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement in science.
- Extend the systems of assessment, tracking progress and the setting of challenging expectations to include science.
- Work with a small minority of families to improve attendance.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Standards are broadly average but better in English and mathematics than in science. When the children join the school aged three, their development is at a low level for their age and a significant number have difficulty with communication, number skills and in socialising with others. Although attainment is below average overall when pupils enter Year 1, they have made good progress and become confident learners.

Pupils currently make good progress in Years 1 and 2. The results of the teacher assessments in 2006 were below average, but they were affected by the very high percentage of pupils who had learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). Over half of these did well to attain the average Level 2, largely because they had individual teaching programmes to address specific needs. The school's accurate assessment records show that the current Year 2 pupils are attaining closer to the average than last year's group.

Pupils make good progress in the juniors. Their progress in English and mathematics equals that in the top 10% of schools nationally. In science, progress is satisfactory because investigation and experimental skills are not as well developed as knowledge and understanding in the subject. Pupils with LDD have extra support and attain higher standards than usually seen for this group. The school has worked hard to find resources and topics to interest boys; as a result, they are now catching up to the girls and making good progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being, including pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, are good and strengths of the school. Pupils enjoy their work and their behaviour is good. Pupils with significant emotional difficulties have expert help to cope with the conventions of school life. Relationships are very good and pupils respond positively to the care shown by their teachers. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know that incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly. They benefit from the school's emphasis on healthy eating and are well informed about the consequences of lifestyle choices.

Attendance is slightly below average, despite the school's concerted efforts to improve it. The problem is caused by a lack of cooperation on the part of a small minority of families and is no reflection of pupils' attitudes to learning, which are good. Very effective links with the education welfare service and a valued reward system have resulted in an improvement recently but there is still more to do.

Pupils play an important part in decision making through their elected school council. They act as buddies and mediators on the playground and are actively involved in staff selection. They are keen to take responsibility for jobs around school and run an enterprising 'healthy fruit shop'. These factors, together with improved standards, means that pupils are well placed to secure a positive economic future for themselves. Thought provoking assemblies and the 'international school' status help to ensure pupils' good spiritual and cultural development. Pupils have a strong moral sense and are generous in their support for charities.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The skilled teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures that children have an exciting range of experiences to fire their curiosity and imagination. Throughout school, teachers and well informed teaching assistants have a good range of expertise to support pupils who find learning difficult. In all classes, praise and encouragement inspire pupils to work hard and develop positive attitudes to learning. On occasions, however, teachers keep the pupils listening for too long and some of the worksheets used in lessons require only a limited response.

Teachers assess progress constantly and use the information to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Where pupils' progress is not meeting expectations, special catch-up programmes are introduced. For example, the 'talk-write' sessions have made a significant impact on progress in writing. Teachers use a range of strategies and include a good amount of practical work so lessons appeal to pupils of different dispositions. They have been very successful in developing resources and activities to inspire boys who are responding positively.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and enriched by a range of visits and visitors. The planning of the Foundation Stage curriculum provides a stimulating learning environment, indoors and out. This enables staff to provide activities planned around a theme, so that children consolidate what they have learned.

All groups of pupils, including those with LDD, enjoy their lessons and find them relevant and interesting. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are promoted well. Opportunities to carry out independent investigations in science, however, are limited and there is not enough scope for pupils to carry out their own investigations. Older pupils have the loan of hand-held computers, which supports their learning well; for example, it allows them to access the Internet at home as well as in school.

Opportunities for learning outside the classroom help to broaden pupils' horizons. The annual residential visit gives pupils the chance to achieve success outside the classroom in activities such as walking and map reading. Instrumental lessons, swimming, cycling, and French provide added experiences, as do the extra curricular clubs, which are well attended.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall and the pastoral care of pupils is excellent. The staff know the pupils and their families extremely well and take great care to ensure that they are supported through a range of links with outside services. The school places a strong emphasis on promoting the emotional well-being of pupils and the 'listening matters' project provides good opportunities for pupils to explore, and make sense of, their experiences. Good child protection and health and safety procedures are in place and the school goes to very good lengths to promote pupils' safety. Workshops and assemblies address the minor instances of

bullying so pupils are aware of how to seek help if they need it. Good transition arrangements are in place and pupils say they are confident about the move to secondary school.

New systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress over time and setting expectations for learning have been introduced in English and mathematics. The information is used effectively to ensure good support or challenge in lessons and this has helped to raise achievement. There are no such systems in place for science.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher, effectively supported by the acting deputy headteacher, provides good, inspirational leadership. He is instrumental in maintaining the very caring ethos and the drive for high standards. Following an evaluation of provision and performance, he introduced many improvements in order to bring the school into line with good primary practice. The fact that standards and achievement have continued to rise during this time of rapid change pays testimony to the strong teamwork and the dedication of staff.

Senior managers have introduced an annual cycle of checking and evaluating provision so that the school knows its strengths and where there is a need for improvement. Subject managers support their colleagues well in giving practical help and advice and in providing resources. There are plans to extend opportunities for them to check teaching and learning in classes so their expertise can be shared more effectively.

Governors understand the strengths of the school well and have the pupils' interests at heart. Through their involvement in subject management, they have a secure overview of standards, achievement and provision. Governance is good and all statutory requirements are met.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### 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>	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	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<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	2

### The quality of provision

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

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

Catchgate Primary School

Blackett Street

Annfield Plain

Stanley

County Durham

DH9 8LX

22 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for the warm welcome and for helping my colleagues and myself when we came to visit your school. I would like to tell you what we found out.

Catchgate Primary is a very happy school and an exciting place to be. You behave well and are a credit to your families and school. Your headteacher and his staff work very hard to make sure you are safe. You like your teachers, enjoy your lessons and try hard. Please thank your parents for sending us lots of replies to the questionnaire. They are very pleased with the school and have hardly any criticisms to make. They especially like the good communications between home and school and the way that your teachers care for you.

You make a good start to your education in the Nursery and Reception classes and learn a lot. Your progress in English and mathematics is better than in most schools – well done! However, we think that you could do better in science. We know you like that subject and it would be good if you could develop your skills further. Your teachers agree and so will be planning some more practical work. Most of you come to school regularly and arrive on time. Just a few, however, do not and so are unable to take advantage of the interesting things going on. You told us how much you like school so perhaps your council members could think of more ways of encouraging everyone to attend regularly.

Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had and for letting us know your views so clearly.

Please accept my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Lynne Read

(Lead inspector)