

# Cassop Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114075
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	289801
<b>Inspection date</b>	3 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Earley

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	102
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cllr George Marsden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr James McManners
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2002
<b>School address</b>	Cassop Durham County Durham DH6 4RA
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 3770293
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 3770293

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	3 July 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	289801

---

© 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 one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school serving former mining communities near Durham. There are high levels of social and economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils are of White British origin. A small number of pupils learn English as an additional language. There is an above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. When children start school in the Foundation Stage (Reception) their skills are generally below those typical for their ages. The school has received national awards for its work on sustainability.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that gives excellent value for money. Visionary leadership and shared high aspirations lead to excellent achievement.

From below expected starting points, children in the Foundation Stage make excellent progress and by the end of Reception, standards are better than expected for their age. In 2006 the overall results in the Year 2 assessments were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Results in the 2006 national tests for 11-year-olds were average overall in English, mathematics and science because there was a very large proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in this group. Progress throughout the school is excellent as a result of the outstanding teaching and personal development and the extremely rich curriculum.

Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is excellent. Pupils enjoy coming to school, are very confident and have high self-esteem. Pupils work very well independently and are, in the school's own words, 'self propelled learners'. They have an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and their contribution to the local and wider community is outstanding. Behaviour is excellent and pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after. Preparation for the next stage of their education is excellent.

Teaching and learning are excellent. This is a significant factor in the high achievement. Lessons are exciting and interesting so that pupils want to learn. Teachers present pupils with challenging work based on real situations so that their learning has a purpose and relevance. Assessment is used very effectively to ensure that tasks are well suited to different abilities. Complementing the excellent teaching is the outstanding curriculum. It is exceptionally rich and challenging. For example, the school's wind turbine, its nature reserve, recycling work, national leadership in developing the arts, sports partnership and very close links with schools across the world help to make learning irresistible. This enhances the very close focus on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).

Care, guidance and support are excellent. This is a very caring school with a very close family atmosphere where all pupils and their families are very well known. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who learn English as an additional language is excellent and procedures for safeguarding children are secure. A parent commented that, 'There is a wonderful "can do" attitude and a commitment to inclusiveness'. Assessment and progress tracking are used very effectively to ensure that work is well suited to different abilities and learning styles.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher provides exemplary leadership and is very well supported by staff and governors, all of whom share his determination to leave no stone unturned to extend and deepen pupils' learning experiences and raise standards. In this, the school is very well supported by parents, voluntary workers and outside agencies. Governors are very supportive and play an important role in helping to shape the direction of the school.

### What the school should do to improve further

- There are no significant areas for improvement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Achievement is excellent. Most pupils, whatever their ability or background, make excellent progress. This is because teaching and personal development are excellent and the curriculum is exceptionally rich and stimulating.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with standards which are below those typical for their ages. They make rapid progress so that by the time they enter Year 1 standards are above expectations for their ages. The school's results in the 2006 assessments at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics were significantly above average, as they have been for the last four years. School data and inspection evidence show that, in the current Year 2, achievement and progress are excellent and most pupils are expected to reach above average standards.

The results of the national tests in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 in 2006 were average overall. This was a dip from the previous year when they were significantly above average. These standards represent excellent achievement and progress from well below expected standards when this group of pupils started at the school. There was also a very high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in this group and there have been changes in its composition since the end of Year 2. School data and inspection evidence show that pupils in the current Year 6 make excellent progress from below expected standards on entry to the school and with a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They are expected to reach above average standards.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is excellent. Relationships and behaviour are excellent and this helps to increase confidence and self-esteem and provide a very firm foundation for learning. From the very start, pupils are enthusiastic learners and enjoy coming to school. They say that they feel safe and happy. Attendance is average and improving. Pupils' involvement in the local and wider community is outstanding. They have an exceptional understanding of environmental and sustainability issues, which they put into practice in and around school, and for which the school receives national recognition. They showed their poise and confidence when they interviewed English and foreign members of parliament about environmental issues. Pupils proudly show visitors how the school provides its own energy requirements. They play a full part in village life and have very close links with schools in many parts of the world.

Pupils have a very good understanding of the importance of eating healthily and get plenty of exercise. They have many opportunities for accepting responsibility and the school council and energy committee play an important role in the life of the school. The school gives its pupils an excellent preparation for the next stage of their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are excellent. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use questions very effectively to challenge pupils' thinking. Lessons are typically stimulating, challenging and enjoyable with many opportunities for practical activities. For example, in the Reception class children used a sand pit and outdoor area in their literacy work following a story on space travel. A prominent feature in lessons is the dialogue between pupils and teachers. This helps to increase their confidence in learning. Assessment is used well to match tasks and learning objectives to pupils' differing needs in mixed-age classes. This is used particularly effectively in ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who learn English as an additional language progress at the same rate as other pupils. Pupils play an important role in reviewing their own progress and teachers' marking provides very useful guidance on what is done well and what to improve.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The curriculum is excellent. There is a very strong focus on teaching literacy, numeracy and ICT. Skills are considerably extended by their application to real situations involving environmental and sustainability work, links with other subjects and links with schools in Europe, Turkey, China and Africa. For example, pupils presented a theatrical lecture at the Royal Geographical Society on global warming. The school has received the Artsmark Gold Award and is a leader in national initiatives in the development of the arts. An excellent range of after-school clubs, visitors and visits out of school, including residential visits, helps to extend learning. The school makes excellent use of its building, imaginatively laid out grounds and its links with outside agencies to extend the curriculum. Pupils' personal, social and health education is very well promoted so that pupils have a very good understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are excellent. There is a very calm and positive learning environment in which each pupil feels valued because relationships are excellent. These are important features in pupils' progress and their personal development. There is a very strong family atmosphere and all pupils and their families are well known. Parents are kept well informed of their children's work and progress and are pleased with the care shown by the school. This very caring school provides a high level of support for all pupils together with a determination to enrich pupils' lives and widen their horizons. This is enhanced by excellent links with outside agencies. All the required procedures for safeguarding, including child protection, are in place. There are very effective assessment and tracking systems to ensure that pupils are given very good guidance on what they need to do in order to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. His vision and flair in providing a challenging and imaginative learning environment are shared by staff and governors, leading to high achievement and excellent personal development. Staff work extremely well together as a team. They provide an exceptionally rich and stimulating curriculum which enriches the life of each pupil and share a commitment which leads to a relentless drive to raise standards and improve provision. The school evaluates its performance very rigorously in order to make improvements and this is closely linked to a thorough and well prioritised development plan. Teaching and learning are regularly monitored in order to make improvements. Governance is excellent. Governors know the school extremely well and play a very significant and important role in helping to shape its direction. Subject leaders have a very good understanding of their subjects and their contributions are significant in the drive to raise standards. Parents are very supportive of the school and are very appreciative of its work. A parent maintained that the headteacher's 'strong charismatic vision for the school' is an obvious strength from which the staff and children thrive. There were no major issues from the previous inspection although achievement and provision have improved since then.

A very strong commitment to improvement, thorough evaluation of performance and excellent leadership at all levels give the school excellent capacity to improve.

**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).**



## 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>
--	-----------------------

### 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>	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

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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<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>	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

4 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cassop Primary School, Cassop, County Durham, DH6 4RA

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. Your school is outstanding. I was very impressed by your politeness and courtesy and by your understanding of how to eat sensibly and get plenty of exercise in order to stay healthy. I think that you have an exceptional understanding of issues such as global warming and sustainability and I think that the work you do in and around school to safeguard energy and improve the environment is outstanding. I was also very impressed by how confidently you talk to visitors and by what I learned about your theatrical lecture at the Royal Geographic Society in London and in Newcastle.

These are some of the things your school does well:

- Your lessons are excellent. You work very hard, have lots of fun and make really good progress.
- All the adults in school care for you very well and keep a good check on how well you are doing.
- You all look after each other very well and the school council and energy committee do a really wonderful job.
- The way the school provides you with so many different things to do is exceptional: such things as, links with schools across the world, visits, visitors, dance, drama, art, looking after the environment and saving energy. The list seems endless!

Thank you once again for making me so welcome. I hope you have a good crop of vegetables and that the lambs are doing well.

Yours sincerely

David Earley

Lead Inspector