

Castlefields Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123432
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	292662
Inspection dates	9 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Graham Sims

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	203
6 th form	
Day care	
Funded nursery education	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bob Bibby
Headteacher	Miss Rachel Stokes
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2001
Date of previous day care inspection	
Date of previous funded nursery education inspection	
School address	Castlefields Bridgnorth Shropshire WV16 5DQ
Telephone number	01746 764072
Fax number	01746 768091

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, personal development and well-being, teaching and learning, and care, guidance and support. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation (SEF), national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, observation of the school at work, interviews with staff, governors and pupils, and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own grades, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and they have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Castlefields Primary School is an average-sized school which draws its pupils from the town of Bridgnorth and a number of outlying villages. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals and those with learning difficulties or disabilities are below average. The overall level of attainment when children join the school is above average. The school has its own Nursery which children attend in the mornings. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught in mixed-age classes. A new headteacher took up her post in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Castlefields Primary School is a good school where good quality teaching throughout the school enables pupils of all abilities to achieve well. Teachers build well on the above-average skills shown by many children when they enter the school so that, by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, standards are well above the national average and verging on those achieved by the top 10% of schools in the country. Performance in English, mathematics and science is equally strong, although the writing skills of some pupils lag a little behind other aspects of their work. These high standards come about because of the school's thorough approach to teaching and reinforcing all aspects of the curriculum, well-planned lessons, regular checking of pupils' progress and a well-ordered learning environment.

Good care, guidance and support contribute significantly to the pupils' good personal development and well-being. Excellent foundations for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are laid in the Nursery and Reception classes, where children develop a really good awareness of what it means to live together as a community, whilst at the same time making responsible individual choices. Pupils clearly enjoy school. They participate enthusiastically in their lessons, and really appreciate the many trips, visitors and additional activities which are integral parts of a good curriculum. The forest school, recently established in a corner of the school grounds, provides an excellent, well-used and much-enjoyed outdoor environment for pupils' learning, which compensates in part for the lack of a dedicated outdoor learning area for children in the Reception class.

Pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to lead healthy lifestyles and are pleased that the school now provides a healthier range of food choices at lunchtime. Despite the concerns of some parents over the openness of the school's site, the pupils have a good awareness of safe practices and really benefit from access to the large expanse of playing fields at breaktimes, where many hone their sporting skills, dream of future glory and keep fit at the same time. Relationships amongst the pupils and between pupils and staff are very good, as is pupils' behaviour throughout the school. Pupils have confidence in their teachers, whom they perceive to be friendly and helpful, and enjoy an environment which is almost entirely free from bullying or other forms of harassment. Parents particularly appreciate the friendly atmosphere of the school and the willingness and approachability of the staff. One parent, for example, wrote, 'We are delighted with the quality of teaching and how friendly and welcoming the school has been. It's a happy and friendly environment for everyone.'

Although there is scope for them to take on greater responsibility, pupils make a good contribution to the school community. For example, older pupils readily carry out helpful tasks around the school and help to look after younger pupils at breaktimes. Through activities such as their assistance with recycling schemes and their raising of funds for charity, they also make a positive contribution to the wider community. By the time pupils leave school, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education and have acquired important skills for the later world of work. They have good literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. They are articulate, polite, responsible and mature for their

age and have positive attitudes to work. The pupils really do embody the school's motto, 'Working together to achieve our best'.

This positive picture comes about because the school is led and managed well. Governors have a good overview of the school and are proactive in leading new initiatives, such as the development of the role of subject coordinators and exploring ways to improve provision for children in the Foundation Stage. The clear direction provided by the new headteacher has led to improvements in the quality of teaching. Staff work together well and are keen to be involved in new initiatives. The school's leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be improved and have shown good capacity for further improvement through the action they have taken to improve such things as the quality of pupils' writing and provision for ICT.

So, what could the school do to enable these high-achieving pupils to be even better prepared for the future? Whilst staff provide thorough teaching, they do not always provide enough scope for pupils to develop real independence as learners or as contributors to the community. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to carry out extensive research, to complete more substantial open-ended assignments or to exercise their initiative when determining how to tackle an investigation or new project. Although one is about to be formed, there is currently no school council to provide a voice for pupils' views. Some of the tasks and worksheets pupils are given to complete, particularly those aimed at preparing them for tests, are mundane and lack challenge. Too much of the pupils' written work is returned with little comment from the teacher as to how it might be improved, and not enough time is provided for pupils to review their work in order to learn from their mistakes and make improvements. The school already has a very good base from which to develop pupils' creativity and independence and a greater level of challenge could turn pupils' achievement from good to outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and develop their independence both as learners and contributors to the school community.
- Ensure that all pupils are given even greater challenge through the learning activities provided for them and through the marking of their work.

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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
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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

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.

10 May 2007



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Castlefields Primary School, Bridgnorth, Shropshire WV16 5DQ

I enjoyed my visit to your school and would like to thank you for your welcome and for talking to me. Many of you told me that you think Castlefields is a good school – I agree with you. These are the main findings of my visit.

- You are all making good progress in your work, and many of you reach high standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Your good relationships with the staff, your consideration for others and your good behaviour create a happy, friendly atmosphere within the school.
- You receive good teaching and support from the staff, who keep you working hard and help you to learn new things each week.
- The school provides a good range of activities and visits to places of interest, and provides some good opportunities to learn outdoors in the forest school.
- The staff take good care of you and keep a careful track on how well you are progressing in your work.
- The governors, headteacher and staff work well together and are keen to make the school even better than it is.

In order to help you achieve even higher standards, I have asked the staff to:

- give you more opportunities to develop your independence and use your initiative, both in your learning and in the ways you contribute to the school
- provide more challenge in some of the activities they give to you and in the way they mark your work so that you always know how to improve.

You can help make Castlefields into an outstanding school by responding with maturity and enthusiasm to the new opportunities your teachers provide for you and by continuing to try your hardest in all your work. I wish each one of you every success and happiness in your future education.

Yours sincerely

Mr Graham Sims
Lead inspector