

Castleford Park Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108234
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	309629
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Paul Lowery HMI

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	327
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr William Clift JP
Headteacher	Mrs K Levey
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2005
School address	Medley Street Castleford West Yorkshire WF10 4BB
Telephone number	01977 722995
Fax number	01977 603392

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector seconded to Ofsted and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Castleford Park is a larger than average junior school. The school has a stable population, it draws pupils from an area with a broadly average socio-economic profile and which is part of the Castleford regeneration programme. It has a broadly average number of pupils entitled to free school meals and a low proportion from both minority ethnic groups and families who traditionally access higher education. The number of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, although the proportion with statements is broadly average. Standards on entry are broadly average. The school has sports mark and healthy schools status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Castleford Park provides a satisfactory standard of education. It has established strong partnerships and has good links with the local community, which are used to good effect to enhance pupils' education.

The school gives high priority to the pastoral care of its pupils and to their personal, social and emotional development. A parent commented that the school had 'really boosted her child's confidence'. Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe and be healthy. Attendance rates have risen since the last inspection and are now broadly average. Pupils say that they enjoy school and that the system of rewards has helped to reduce the incidents of disruptive behaviour. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Pupils play an active role in school life; the new school council has an increasingly strong voice. The school's strong local links lead to pupils taking part in community activities including musical concerts and fundraising.

The school is not as effective in guiding pupils' academic development and in Years 3 and 4 pupils are unclear about their targets. Overall, it is not made clear about what they need to do to improve their work. New tracking systems have been introduced to monitor pupils' progress; however, there is considerable variation in how the information is used in classrooms. It has not had enough impact on raising teachers' expectations and improving overall standards.

Standards are broadly average. There are some signs that they are on the rise. Pupils' overall progress is satisfactory and strongest in mathematics. Overall, standards rose in 2007. On occasions, teachers place insufficient emphasis on matching work to the needs of pupils of different abilities, particularly the most able. As a result pupils' progress, while satisfactory can be inconsistent, there is some underachievement - especially by the more able pupils - and standards are not as high as they could be.

Teaching is satisfactory with some examples of good practice. Pupils' progress is stronger where lessons have pace, are well planned, with a variety of activities that motivate and enthuse pupils. Progress is slower in lessons where teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low and where work is insufficiently challenging. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good. Teachers' marking is positive, but does not systematically indicate how well the pupils are doing or what they need to do to improve. The satisfactory curriculum is enriched through good community links and extended with a popular range of after-school clubs, activities and trips. However, the school recognises that there is insufficient use of project work that challenges and excites both the less and the more able learners.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides strong leadership. She has called on expertise in other local schools in her drive to raise standards and recent work is starting to take effect. The school carefully reviews its work, and senior staff are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, reviews do not sufficiently inform planning. School targets are inadequate; they lack challenge, which slows overall the progress in raising standards and securing pupils' high achievement. New middle leaders are starting to coordinate key aspects of school improvement and strengthen subject leadership. Overall, there is satisfactory capacity for further improvement. Good partnerships with neighbouring schools and organisations have been developed, creating effective training opportunities for staff and effective transfer programmes for pupils. Governors provide good support, but correctly identify that longer-term strategic planning needs strengthening.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards, in particular for the most able pupils.
- Ensure whole school and individual pupil targets are sufficiently challenging.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that the work matches more closely pupils' needs and marking helps pupils to understand how to improve their work.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The standards at the end of Year 6 in 2007 were broadly average and were higher than in 2006. Standards in mathematics and English were higher than in science; for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities standards were below that of their peers. Evidence from the school's assessment of pupils' performance indicates standards in Year 6 have risen slightly, especially in English. The leadership of the school rightly identifies that improvements to standards are a key development priority.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in their time at the school, although progress is weaker in science and English. In lessons pupils make satisfactory progress but it varies depending on the quality of their learning and the teaching. In some lessons teachers pay insufficient attention to the most able and, as a result, some of these pupils do not make the progress they should. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who receive additional targeted support, principally from teaching assistants, are making at least satisfactory progress in meeting their targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils are open, friendly and confident. There are good relationships between pupils and adults, and pupils report they enjoy school. Attendance has risen over the last two years and is now broadly average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is satisfactory, although the development of multicultural awareness is less secure. Pupils understand how to keep safe and demonstrate a good knowledge of how to live a healthy lifestyle. Behaviour is satisfactory, although minor disruption impacts on a few lessons when pupils lose interest in their learning. Exclusions are rare. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and they welcome the opportunities to contribute to decision-making through an effective school council, and through raising money for playground equipment by running a healthy tuck-shop. There are particularly strong good community links, including contributing to musical concerts and local charity work, including for the Prince of Wales Hospice.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good elements but also some inconsistencies. Positive relationships between staff and pupils are a clear strength. In the most effective lessons there is good pace, clear expectations, stimulating work and pupils are engaged in their learning.

In one particularly strong lesson pupils were challenged to research and consider how colour and light on the island of St Lucia could be used to influence their T-shirt design project. Where teaching is less effective tasks are mundane, work is not challenging and opportunities are missed for pupils to question, apply their skills and work independently. There are times when the most able pupils finish their work early, wait too long, become fidgety, lose concentration and as a result the progress they make slows. Older pupils know their targets, but some are unclear how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provides pupils with a broad and balanced range of experiences which meet statutory requirements. In particular there is evidence of good coverage of history, art, and personal, social and health education. The 'SEAL' programme assists pupils to manage relationships and improve behaviour. There is good enrichment to the curriculum through a regular programme of visits, such as that to Eden Camp (which linked with work in history), residential stays, and the use of local resources including Castleford heritage projects. Satisfactory progress is being made to develop modern foreign languages, with French now taught in Years 3, 4 and 5. Good provision is made for extra-curricular activities and participation rates, especially in sporting activities, are high. Opportunities to develop cross-curricular topics, to excite and challenge pupils of all abilities, are insufficiently developed. As a result the curriculum does not ensure that all pupils are sufficiently motivated and challenged to achieve the highest standards.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is well established. Pupils at risk are effectively identified and individual support is provided, ensuring they make satisfactory progress. Good links are established with external agencies to support those with specific needs, including the hearing impaired. All required safeguarding systems are in place for child protection, and appropriate attention given to risk assessments and health and safety. Effective systems are in place to help pupils to settle in at the start of Year 3, and to prepare them to move on successfully to secondary school. The quality of academic guidance is not as strong. Younger pupils are unclear of their targets and systems are not sufficiently robust to ensure that older pupils are challenged and know how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has rightly identified the main area for development in the school: the raising of achievement and standards through improved teaching and learning. She has clearly communicated this to staff and as a result of recent action standards have started to rise. The school has employed a wide range of strategies in its drive for improvement and developed strong partnerships with neighbouring schools and community links to support this work. For example, teachers have been working with staff from other local schools to develop their skills in monitoring the quality of teaching. Good systems have been established for self-evaluation. However, the outcomes from these reviews do not systematically inform future development planning and have not secured consistently good teaching. Whole school targets are insufficiently

challenging. Newly appointed middle managers are starting to improve the quality of subject based leadership. Governance is satisfactory; a new committee structure has strengthened governors' work in holding the school to account. Although governors have a clear picture of the year ahead, they have no systems for longer term strategic and financial planning, linked to school improvement and challenging targets for pupils' performance.

Senior leaders successfully reorganised middle management responsibilities and as a result ensured a calm orderly environment in the school. Recently, steps to raise standards have shown positive results and consequently there is satisfactory capacity to make further improvements.

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Annex A

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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Inspection of Castleford Park Junior School, Castleford, WF10 4BB

Thank you for making us very welcome when we visited your school to see how well you are learning. We enjoyed visiting your classes, looking at your work and seeing how keen you were to take part in sporting activities. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education for the following reasons:

- most of you enjoy going to school, feel safe and like the support you get from adults
- you know the importance of eating the right things and taking part in sporting activities
- you enjoy practical lessons and ones where teachers encourage you to work hard and do well
- your headteacher supports you to work with pupils from other schools and get involved in a wide range of activities in Castleford.

To improve your school we have asked the governors, headteacher and staff to:

- help you to achieve more in lessons and reach higher standards
- ensure teachers challenge you to do as well as possible
- support teachers to make their lessons even better and give you clear advice on how to improve your work.

You can help Mrs Levey and her staff achieve this through good attendance at school, working hard in all lessons and continuing to get on well with one another.