

Carsington and Hopton C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112878
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	311036
Inspection dates	3–4 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Rajinder Harrison

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	45
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr W Brogden
Headteacher	Mr P Bateman
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Carsington Matlock Derbyshire DE4 4DE
Telephone number	01629 540206
Fax number	01629 540206

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small primary school in the village of Carsington takes pupils from a wide rural area. Almost all pupils are of White British background. No pupils are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Most children start school with knowledge and skills that are at the expected levels. The current headteacher was appointed in January 2007. The school has an increasing number of pupils who join the school after Year 2.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where aspects of pupils' personal development are outstanding. Parents speak very highly of the school. Their children grow and thrive in a very caring, welcoming atmosphere and feel valued. They form excellent relationships, help each other and take on many responsibilities. 'We are like one big family' is a typical comment from many pupils. They love learning and participate enthusiastically in everything the school does. Pupils achieve well. Standards are above average at the end of Year 6. They are prepared well for the future.

Teaching and learning are good and support pupils' good progress. Children start school with knowledge and skills that are at the levels expected for their age. For a few, their literacy and social skills are less secure. Teachers assess pupils' individual needs very carefully to provide the help they need to achieve well. At the end of the Reception Year, all children achieve the expected levels and many exceed them. In Years 1 and 2, pupils progress well and reach standards that are above average. Progress is also good in Years 3 to 6. Overall standards in Year 6 are above average and exceptionally high in English. The school's focus on improving pupils' writing has made a significant impact on raising standards. Achievement in mathematics is not as good, because pupils are not confident in thinking about what they already know and how to use this knowledge in new situations. Good support for pupils who have learning difficulties helps them achieve well but the space for small group work is poor and this detracts from better learning. The curriculum is good but lack of space is a hindrance, particularly in the range of physical education activities pupils undertake. Very good out of class activities help pupils to understand the importance of keeping fit and healthy and learn about their own culture. Fewer opportunities are organised to help them to appreciate the diverse cultures represented in modern Britain. Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils understand the targets they have to improve their work and enjoy being challenged in lessons.

Good leadership and management have driven the school's improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher supports staff well and good teamwork helps the school achieve success. The capacity to make further improvements is good. By analysing pupils' progress closely, the school is now setting challenging targets. The teaching of mathematics has been reviewed and the introduction of more practical approaches is helping pupils make better progress. Financial management is good with effective allocation of resources to address priorities such as staff training so that the school achieves good value for money. Governors support the school well, checking its performance to ensure that the quality of care and education is good. They are taking effective steps to improve the school's accommodation. The school is accurate in its self-assessment. It is a happy place where everyone's contribution matters.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good, as are its leadership and management. From an average starting point, children progress well and achieve the expected levels in all the areas of learning and many exceed these.

Staff work effectively as a team to plan a good balance of adult guided activities and those that children choose by themselves. This helps children develop their confidence and independence well. They benefit enormously by working alongside Year 1 and 2 pupils and learning from them, and hence their personal development is very good. The accommodation

is restricted and although available space is used to maximum effect, children sometimes find it hard to listen and concentrate when so many have to work in close proximity. The stimulating and well resourced outdoor area is used well to support children's independent play and social skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- To help raise standards in mathematics, enable pupils to develop their thinking skills so that they apply what they already know to new learning confidently.
- Provide pupils with a curriculum that offers a wider range of physical education activities and more opportunities to learn about the cultures represented in modern Britain.
- Improve the school's accommodation so pupils can learn more effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and attain above average standards by the time they leave in Year 6. Because of the very small numbers in each year group, standards inevitably fluctuate from year to year depending on pupils' ability.

Good provision and teaching result in pupils attaining standards that are above average in all core subjects by Year 2. This good progress is maintained in later Years 3 to 6. Those who join the school after Year 2 and who are lower attaining sometimes make slower progress because, despite the school's very good arrangements to support them, they sometimes struggle to catch up. In Year 6, the very high standards pupils achieve in English support their good progress in other subjects. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities also achieve well because they receive good support. The school is providing good opportunities such as projects pupils can pursue independently to help the more able achieve even more.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' good attendance and excellent attitudes to learning show they enjoy school. 'I love school because we have so much fun here' is a typical comment. Pupils express their feelings in class discussions and to staff very confidently. They know how to stay safe and who to go to if they feel threatened. Through excellent swimming provision and other sports on offer, pupils exercise regularly. Lunchtimes are extremely positive, social occasions and pupils choose healthy options that include excellent school meals. Pupils are exceptionally kind and respectful towards others and their behaviour is exemplary.

Older pupils automatically assume responsibilities such as looking after younger ones. The school council influences school improvement by, for example, deciding what the class rules should be and how the premises could be improved, even to the extent of lobbying the community. Visitors, visits and inspirational and thought provoking assemblies help pupils gain an excellent understanding of their own culture and of different faiths. Through learning French and Italian, they are informed about European cultures and learning Makaton is helping them appreciate the needs of those with hearing impairment. By raising money for charity and supporting numerous village events, pupils support the wider community extremely well. They demonstrate excellent workplace skills by working cooperatively and by achieving well in their basic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are lively and well planned. Through skilful questioning, teachers make sure pupils of all abilities and ages participate fully. They provide excellent opportunities for pupils to discuss and share ideas. Pupils respond enthusiastically and work well independently. Teachers plan work that is matched well to pupils' needs, but in occasional lessons, the more able are not challenged enough. Pupils particularly enjoy projects, such as the 'Big Writing', that capture their interest and encourage them to expand their ideas. Teachers encourage pupils to think about what they already know when faced with new learning so that they approach new problems confidently, but such skills are less well developed in mathematics. Support staff are used effectively to help individual pupils but occasionally the area for small group work is too noisy and congested and this distracts pupils' concentration. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly to identify those who need additional help. Setting individual targets is proving very effective in encouraging pupils to reach their targets and thus achieve well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is structured well for pupils to build successfully on previous work. Good links between subjects help pupils to make better sense of their learning. For example in science, pupils consider why the poor diet of ancient sailors resulted in so many dying at sea. With mathematics being a school priority, more time is allocated for pupils to think about how they might solve problems. Pupils are encouraged to use computers to develop their independent research skills. While the provision for swimming is excellent, inadequate space restricts provision for physical education, for example, dance and gymnastics. Teachers use effective additional programmes to help pupils who have learning difficulties achieve well. A good programme for personal, social and health education supports pupils' personal development. Many visitors and visits bring learning alive and provide pupils with a good insight into the world of work and leisure. However, the school offers too few opportunities to help pupils to learn about Britain's diverse cultures. Enrichment activities are very good, for example for pupils to learn to play the piano or violin.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are cared for well. They know staff will listen and help them if they are worried or upset. Where appropriate, the school consults with external agencies to help guide its work. Child protection, health and safety and the required safeguarding arrangements are all secure. Support for pupils when they first start school is very good and excellent links with the secondary school help pupils to make the transfer confidently.

Pupils' progress is assessed thoroughly to set accurate targets and identify quickly those who need specific help. Pupils are not as involved as they might be in deciding these targets and in assessing their own progress. While some marking gives pupils very good guidance as to how they can improve their work, the practice is not consistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and has accurately identified the key priorities required to raise standards. He is supported well by staff and governors to secure the necessary improvements. Teachers now have high quality assessment information to support their planning and good access to the training they need to improve their teaching. Subject leaders have taken the right action, for example to improve provision in mathematics and this has already started to have a positive impact on pupils' progress. The headteacher has examined the school's procedures and policies closely and is urgently reviewing those that will bring about effective school improvement quickly. For example, all staff are now involved in monitoring teaching to check that everyone follows the school's guidance on planning and marking.

Governors visit the school regularly and are very well informed. They are beginning to monitor the school's performance more rigorously. They see the school as an integral part of the local community and work hard to secure its very good standing in the area. They recognise that the accommodation needs urgent improvement and are doing all they can to make this happen.

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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?	2
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?	1
The effectiveness of 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
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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the 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

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

5 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Carsington and Hopton C of E Primary School, Carsington, Derbyshire. DE4 4DE

I am writing to tell you what I found out when I came to your school recently to look at the work you do and to talk to your teachers. It was lovely meeting you. Thank you for making me feel part of your school family and for being so friendly and polite. I enjoyed my lunch with you and finding out about all the exciting things you do, such as visiting Hopton Hall and looking after your little garden. I particularly liked the way you look after each other and the beautiful singing I heard as I worked.

Yours is a good school. I particularly liked these things.

- You work hard and make good progress. Your work in English is excellent.
- You are taught well and you clearly enjoy learning.
- Your teachers plan interesting work for you with many visitors and trips that help you learn more. You have very good clubs and activities you can join.
- Your behaviour is excellent. You know about staying safe and healthy and who to go to if you are worried or unhappy.
- You make excellent friends with everyone and are a real credit to the school.
- The headteacher and all the staff work hard to make sure everyone does their best to help you learn and enjoy life as sensible young people.

These are things I have asked the school to do to become even better.

- Help you do even better in mathematics by showing you how to think about your work and use what you already know to solve new problems.
- Provide more PE activities such as dance and gymnastics for you and organise more opportunities for you to learn about the different cultures of people who live in this country.
- Improve the school's buildings so that you have more space to work in.

There are things you could do to help too. For example, you could try to think more when you are doing your mathematics so you do even better work.

It is brilliant that you love your school and I hope that you continue to do well.

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison

Lead inspector