

Castleside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114043
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	311462
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Joe Clark

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	116
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jannette Archer
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Charlton
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2005
School address	Moorland Crescent Castleside Consett County Durham DH8 9RG
Telephone number	01207 508237
Fax number	01207 508297

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school with some mixed-age classes, including in the Foundation Stage. The majority of pupils are White British and come from areas where socio-economic conditions are broadly average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is above average. More pupils join and leave the school during Key Stage 2 than is generally the case.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school with several good features. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school where their attitudes and behaviour are good and where their relationships with each other and with adults are trusting and supportive. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of healthy living and keeping safe. Preparation for the next stage of their education is satisfactory; social skills are good and basic skills satisfactory. The pastoral care of pupils is good. Personal development and well-being are well supported. Guidance for pupils on how to improve their academic standards is good.

Pupils join Key Stage 1 with standards that are broadly average. By the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average and achievement satisfactory. In the 2007 national tests at the end of Year 6 standards were significantly below average, especially in English, and achievement was inadequate. One in three of the pupils who took the tests had joined the school towards the end of Key Stage 2. The achievement of the pupils who had been in the school from the beginning of Year 3 was satisfactory. Currently, pupils' progress is satisfactory but accelerating and standards are broadly average, including in English.

Progress is accelerating because teaching and learning, whilst at least satisfactory overall and sometimes good, is improving. Teachers generally plan activities that interest and motivate pupils to want to learn. Marking is good and occasionally outstanding. Teaching assistants generally offer good support but have too little training and involvement in lesson planning to enable them to be fully effective in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or lower attaining pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory. Enrichment opportunities and extra-curricula provision are good.

There is better progress and improved teaching and learning because of the determination of the headteacher, supported by an enthusiastic and willing staff, to raise standards and improve achievement. Some subject coordinators are new to their roles and lack sufficient training to enable them to manage their subjects effectively. Governance is satisfactory. The leadership team is depleted due to the unavoidable long-term absence of the deputy headteacher. Consequently, despite the improvements seen so far, the capacity for further improvement is satisfactory rather than good. Links with parents are good. Parents are well informed, consulted at regular intervals and have great faith in the school. One comment received was typical of several: 'Castleside gives my children a very good education in terms of academic achievement and emotional and social development. My children are happy at school but enjoy the challenge which is offered'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children join Reception with skills that are typical for their age overall but weaker in speaking and listening skills and creative development. They make satisfactory progress and leave with standards in line with national expectations for their age. Their physical development is hampered by the lack of a stimulating outdoor play area but this was being tackled as the inspection took place. Children enjoy learning and engage in the activities provided for them enthusiastically. Teachers and assistants ensure learning takes place in a caring and supportive environment but have been unable to

get sufficient training in managing mixed-age classes to help all children make at least good progress. Children play and work together in harmony, sharing resources and learning to be tolerant of one another. In the outside area they mix easily and play happily within the confines set out for them. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is a satisfactory balance between children choosing what they want to do and engaging in adult-initiated activities. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and learn effectively alongside other children. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers and assistants in mixed age classes in the Foundation Stage have access to training, in order to promote better planning, teaching and learning
- Develop the role of subject leaders so they can have a greater impact on children's learning.
- Develop the role of teaching assistants in helping pupils learn more effectively, especially with pupils who find learning difficult.

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

Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with standards that are broadly average. They make satisfactory progress and achieve broadly average standards in national tests at the end of Year 2. During Key Stage 2 they make satisfactory progress. Pupils' achievement in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2007 was affected by pupil mobility. Overall it was inadequate but for pupils who had progressed through the school from Year 3 it was satisfactory. Standards were well below average because a significant minority of pupils had learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Based on evidence from lesson observations, the work in pupils' books and the school's robust tracking data standards in Year 6 pupils are now at expected levels and pupils are on track to achieve their challenging targets in this year's national tests. Standards are rising and pupils' progress, whilst satisfactory overall, is accelerating.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Behaviour is good and attitudes to learning, especially girls' attitudes, are very positive. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Relationships are strong and pupils play and work together in harmony. Residential visits, including trips abroad, help develop tolerance and understanding of others. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance is good and there is no unauthorised absence. Pupils say there is very little bullying, if any, and they know who to turn to if they have any concerns. Initiatives such as the Worry Box, Buddy Stops on the yard and the pairing of Year 6 pupils with Reception children, help provide reassurance. They have good opportunities to take on responsibilities and exercise leadership skills, for example, as Young Sports Leaders. There are good links with the local community, for example through harvest assemblies, Macmillan coffee mornings and through the annual Castleside Carnival. The school has a Healthy Schools Award and pupils are knowledgeable about healthy eating and taking exercise. Involvement in the Annual Safety Carousel aids awareness of the importance of keeping safe. Average basic skills and good social skills provide a satisfactory preparation for the next stage of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Recent improvements in systems for tracking pupils' progress have led to a more productive use of data in helping teachers plan their lessons. The school is aware that this needs further development to ensure that the work set takes account of the different individual levels of ability within the class. Relationships are positive and encouraging and motivate pupils to want to learn. Activities are generally well thought out and match pupils' needs well. Teaching assistants provide encouragement, especially to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but sometimes they are not sufficiently involved in lesson planning and lack the necessary training to be effective in helping lower attaining pupils learn. Marking is generally helpful. Some is good with clear guidelines for pupils explaining what they need to do to improve and move up a level. This is not yet consistent in all classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. There are good curriculum enrichment opportunities through trips and visits, for example to Nent Head mine and Bede's World. The school has several awards including Activemark and Artsmark and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport but also in other areas such as music and art. Pupils have insufficient access to computers outside of lesson times. Whilst there is good curriculum support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, planned curriculum support for more able, gifted or talented pupils is limited. Initiatives such as Big Write, It's in the Bag and the Better Reading Programme are providing good support for improving standards in English. There are good curriculum links with the local high school in physical education, French and design and technology to support pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

A high priority of the school is on caring, supporting and guiding pupils in their personal development and academic achievement. Pastoral care is very strong, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and with physical disabilities. Almost one-in-ten pupils attend the breakfast club each morning. Links with outside agencies are good and they provide effective support. Safeguarding procedures are secure and conform to recent legislation. All staff and governors have had First Aid training and risk assessments are carried out at appropriate intervals. Guidance to pupils on how to improve their academic work is good. The new tracking system is proving effective in setting challenging targets, identifying possible underachievement and providing extra support where needed. Links with parents are good and parents have responded enthusiastically to initiatives such as Family Learning numeracy sessions and the parents' evening organised by the literacy coordinator to give advice on how to help children read.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher demonstrates a clear commitment to raising standards and improving achievement. Better systems for tracking pupils' progress and more effective monitoring of teaching and learning have already led to improvement. This is helping the school evaluate its performance more accurately. The school is without a deputy at the moment but subject coordinators have shown a willingness to take on unremunerated extra responsibility and ensure the pace of improvement does not flag. Some are new to their responsibility and although systems for monitoring the work of subjects are developing they are not yet rigorous enough. Subject audits for example do not have a strong enough focus on what is being done to raise standards and achievement. The school met its Key Stage 2 targets in national tests in 2007 and pupils are on course to achieve their 2008 challenging targets in English, mathematics and science. Governors are developing good links with subject areas but have yet to see better than satisfactory achievement in national tests at the end of Year 6. Parents are pleased with the standards of education provided. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	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?	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	3
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

19 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Castleside Primary School, Durham, DH8 9RG

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school recently. I really enjoyed talking to you and hearing what you thought about your school. I thoroughly enjoyed your assembly and was impressed with the Infants' singing! This is what I thought about your school.

You receive a satisfactory education. Your personal development is good. You get on well together and it is good to see older pupils looking after the younger children in the Reception class. Your behaviour is good and you attend well. You enjoy school, especially the many trips and after-school activities the school arranges for you.

The school takes good care of you. You make satisfactory progress and the pace of progress is quickening and your learning is accelerating. The standards you are reaching in your subjects are average compared to pupils in other schools. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and getting better.

To make your school even better I have asked the school to ensure that:

- provision in the Foundation Stage is improved by providing more training for staff
- your subject coordinators become more experienced and skilful in helping you make progress
- the role of teaching assistants is developed so that they can give you more help with your learning.

Thank you once again for being so helpful and good luck for the future.

Very best wishes

Joe Clark

Lead inspector