

# Nelson Castercliff Community Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119281
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	313238
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lynne Read

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

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<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	259
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Kim Hubbert
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Ian Chester
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Marsden Hall Road North Nelson Lancashire BB9 8JJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01282 617627
<b>Fax number</b>	01282 693526

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger than average school serves an area of social and economic deprivation on the outskirts of Nelson. A high proportion of pupils take up free school meals. Most pupils are of White British heritage and around one tenth have European, Asian or Caribbean heritages. A minority of pupils are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. Due to the transient nature of the local population, a high number of pupils leave the school or are admitted throughout the year. Extended provision at the school includes a breakfast club.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Castercliff Community Primary is a satisfactory school and pupils' personal development is good. It provides satisfactory value for money. Parents have confidence in the school. They feel well informed about their children's progress and several praised the good standard of care. One parent wrote 'my child enjoys school life and the lunchtime and after-school clubs are marvellous.'

Achievement at the school is now satisfactory but standards are below average and need to rise. Many improvements have taken place recently in teaching and management. These include better checking of pupils' progress and the creation of challenging goals for learning. From an unusually low starting point, the Year 2 pupils in 2007 met their targets and made satisfactory progress. The Year 6 pupils made up for gaps in their previous learning but, in the short timescale, this work did not make a significant impact on standards in the 2007 test results. Pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress across school, but this needs to improve further. A higher proportion of pupils need to meet the expected level in all core subjects and the more able could do better in mathematics and science.

Personal development, including behaviour, is good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and feel safe and secure in school. They make a good contribution to the school community, for example, elected councillors ensure that pupils' views are known and they make a difference to decision making. Such experience of responsibility and good attitudes prepares them satisfactorily for life in the wider world.

Teaching is satisfactory overall and some is good. Interesting and practical tasks ensure pupils are well motivated and enjoy their learning. In most lessons teachers provide a good level of challenge but this is not consistent, especially in science and sometimes mathematics. The curriculum is satisfactory and pupils are enthusiastic about the interesting range of out-of-school clubs. A strong emphasis on personal, social and health education enables pupils to make informed choices about their lifestyles and they learn to deal with social and moral issues. Profitable links with outside agencies and local schools contribute a great deal to pupils' learning and well-being. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

Effective leadership from senior leaders, subject leaders and governors has enabled the school to identify the weaknesses that have kept standards too low in the past. Very good advantage is being taken of the local authority's support. Strategies to improve provision and increase pupils' progress have been introduced and have improved the rate of pupils' progress. However, checks on their effectiveness are not yet rigorous enough to ensure they are implemented consistently in all subjects and classes. Having seen initial successes, managers and teachers are eager to move on and there is a sound capacity for the school to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good. Children's development of skills and understanding at entry to school is well below that typical for the age group with significant difficulties in personal and communication skills. Children make good progress in all areas of

learning. By the end of the Reception year, a few meet the level expected for their age but most are below.

A good programme of introducing children to the school enables them to settle quickly. Children have the benefit of good teaching and an inviting learning environment, for example, they especially enjoy their 'North Pole' play area. They learn well in the adult-directed groups and are encouraged to explore their world and become independent through an interesting range of free choice activities. Physical development is covered well through sessions on the yard or in the hall but children do not have full access to an outdoor learning area.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve achievement further in order to raise standards.
- Ensure that the more able pupils have the challenge they need in all lessons.
- Strengthen monitoring procedures to ensure that improvements are embedded and practice is consistent across all subjects and classes.

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' achievement is satisfactory. The recent improvements to teaching and learning mean that pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress and their standards are improving, but some pupils are still catching up on previous underachievement so standards are below average overall. Teachers, managers and governors are fully committed to raising standards further.

When pupils enter Year 1, their skills and understanding are lower than expected. A scrutiny of work, lesson observations and reliable school records show that pupils are making satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, pupils are still catching up so that standards overall remain below average at the end of Key Stage 1.

Currently, in Years 3 to 6, pupils work hard to reach challenging learning goals and are catching up. Records and work show pupils are making at least satisfactory progress with some now making good gains in their learning. Standards are improving although they could still be better with more pupils reaching the expected level in all subjects, and the higher level in science and mathematics.

Pupils who join the school part way through the key stage receive effective support to help them make up for lost time or gaps in their previous learning. Boys and girls do equally well. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities have good support in lessons so they have full access to the curriculum and progress well towards their targets. Those who are learning English as an additional language progress as well as their peers.

The below average 2007 test results for Year 6 pupils were affected by two significant factors. The group included a high number of pupils with learning difficulties. Around one third arrived at the school part way through the key stage, many of whom had a lack of continuity in their prior learning. The most significant factor however, was the under achievement of pupils in the past. Although the school had taken measures to address the problem, there was insufficient time to make up for all the shortfalls in learning.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good, including that for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Most pupils form positive relationships with adults, and each other, which underpin learning. They say they feel safe and that incidents of bullying are very rare. They enjoy lessons as well as the range of additional activities on offer. Attendance is improved and is now broadly average.

Almost all pupils understand and accept the school rules and behave well. Pupils with emotional difficulties are helped to cope with the conventions of school life so the need for exclusion is infrequent. Pupils' awareness of the importance of exercise and diet is shown in the way they use the good opportunities provided for physical activity and healthy eating. Many older pupils take on responsibilities such as prefects or lunchtime play leaders; there are fewer such opportunities for younger pupils. Positive attitudes, a readiness to try hard and the ability to work collaboratively are qualities which prepare them soundly for the next stage of their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good and outstanding practice. Teachers of the older pupils constantly check on prior learning. This effectively ensures that any gaps in skills or understanding are addressed and that there is a secure platform for new work. Many lessons include a good amount of practical and oral activities which supports the development of pupils' communication skills and helps to maintain interest as well as a brisk pace to learning.

Many worthwhile improvements have been made in teaching but not all are consistently embedded. Teachers now have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. In most classes, the work is carefully planned to challenge pupils of all abilities and help them meet their targets. However, sometimes the more able pupils are not stretched. This is mostly so in science and, occasionally, in mathematics. Special teaching programmes are successful in helping pupils to meet expectations in English and mathematics. Less attention is given to providing an extra boost for pupils capable of reaching the highest levels in national tests.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

A broad, balanced and increasingly creative curriculum meets the needs of pupils. It is organised around topics to provide frequent opportunities for pupils to develop and practise literacy and computer skills when studying other subjects. However, this is working better in some classes than others and the older juniors have too few opportunities to write at length.

Planning has been revised to inject excitement into learning and pupils enjoy working with a range of 'creative partners' including writers, musicians and artists. A recent project on 'making stories', for example, improved writing skills measurably. A wide range of additional activities, visits and visitors enhances pupils' learning and broadens their horizons. The good programme for personal education ensures that pupils have a secure awareness of healthy lifestyles and informs them of the potential dangers they may face.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good and there is a strong commitment to providing for pupils' welfare. Pupils' journals are used well to maintain links with parents and keep them informed of progress. Procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety are well established. Pupils feel that the school is a secure environment and say that adults are always ready to listen and help. The school goes to good lengths to find resources and expertise to meet pupils' individual needs, be they of a physical, learning or emotional nature.

New 'focus sheets' provide good information for pupils about how they can improve their work and the advice includes clear learning goals. In some lessons, these are visible and teachers constantly refer to them; this is very effective in promoting good progress. However, some pupils are not sure about their goals or they are not always reminded about them during lessons.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is instrumental in ensuring that the school provides a caring, nurturing environment and that pupils have equal access to everything on offer. Issues from the past have been fully recognised and acted upon. Key changes to the staffing and management structure are proving to be effective. Leaders have driven through a range of important developments and, as a result, progress is improving and pupils are performing better. The improvements are not yet coming through in terms of the school's national test results.

New systems for assessing, monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school have been introduced. Pupils' progress is now checked each term so that swift action can be taken where expectations are not being met. A programme for monitoring teaching and provision is in place, but checks are not rigorous enough to ensure that new initiatives are being routinely implemented so that progress is as good as it can be.

Governors are a very supportive group and the chairperson is very active in school. Allocated responsibilities, such as that of governor for literacy, enable governors to keep a close eye on the school's performance and they clearly know where further action is needed.

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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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	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
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	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?	3

<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>	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**

7 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Nelson Castercliff Community Primary School, Lancashire, BB9 8JJ

Thank you very much for the warm welcome and for helping my colleagues and myself when we came to visit your school. I would like to tell you what we found.

Castercliff Primary School is a very friendly place and provides you with a satisfactory education. We really appreciated your smiles and the way you held doors open for us. You follow school routines and rules well and enjoy your learning. Your families, teachers and governors can be proud of you.

Please thank your parents for sending us lots of replies to the questionnaire. They think that the school is doing a good job, especially in keeping you happy and safe and helping you to learn about lots of things.

The Reception children are making good progress and having fun. From Year 1 upwards, progress in lessons is getting better. Most of you are reaching the challenging targets that your teachers set for this term - well done. We think that you can improve your learning even further as time goes on and reach higher standards. Some of you use your focus sheets really well and they are helping you to succeed. Teachers will be looking in classes to check that you are doing well and making the best use of the advice they provide. We know that some of the Key Stage 2 pupils enjoy extra challenges so your teachers will make sure that these are always included in your lessons. You can help by continuing to try hard in school and with your homework.

Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had, for letting us know your views so clearly and allowing us to share in your school day.

Please accept my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lynne Read

Lead inspector