

Caton Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119322
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313256
Inspection dates	11–12 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Denis Goodchild

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	
School	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Jane Taylor
Headteacher	Mrs Donna Sully
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2003
School address	Broadacre Caton Lancaster Lancashire LA2 9NH
Telephone number	01524 770104
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school. It is organised into three mixed year classes. Pupils are taught in year groups for English and mathematics throughout Key Stage 2. The school serves an area of broadly average social context. The school roll has fallen since the previous inspection. Pupils are mainly from a White British heritage with only a few from minority ethnic groups. All speak English as a first language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is average. Attainment on entry is typical of children of this age. The headteacher was appointed in September 2006. Prior to her appointment, the school had three part-time associate headteachers over a period of eighteen months. The headteacher has a part-time teaching commitment.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Caton is a satisfactory and improving school. There are good features which indicate that the school is moving forward positively despite a period of disruption to its leadership. The school has a friendly feel and a family ethos much appreciated by parents and children. Relationships between children and adults are very good. Pupils are cared for very well and the vast majority of parents agree that their children are safe and well cared for. The pupils say that they are free from intimidation and are confident that they have somebody to confide in should they be troubled. Behaviour is good. Adults deal with a very small number of disaffected pupils in a calm, sensitive manner and it is a testament to the mature and sensible attitude of all the pupils that there is no disruption to learning. The school is well supported by external agencies to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils willingly accept responsibilities and contribute to the life of the school through the school council or as 'buddies' in the school playground. Personal development is good because this is well promoted in the curriculum. A good range of visits, visitors and activities enrich the curriculum. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school particularly enjoy the after-school clubs. Attendance has improved and is now above the national average.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They make satisfactory progress from starting points which are broadly typical and by the time they leave school reach broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. Results for Year 6 in the 2006 national tests and provisional results for 2007 indicate a dip from the above average standards seen in previous years. This is explained by the higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in relatively small cohorts. The school does well with its reading results achieving above average standards because reading strategies are well taught at an early stage. Writing standards are below average. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to practise and apply their writing skills in other areas of the curriculum. Inspection evidence indicates that currently standards in mathematics have risen because of improved marking and a common approach to calculations. Standards in writing are still below average and the school is unlikely to achieve challenging targets set for English

Teaching overall is satisfactory. Learning objectives and success criteria are used well so that pupils know what they will be learning and when they have succeeded. New skills and knowledge are well taught but, on occasions, pupils have too little time to use and practise new skills. Teachers know their pupils well, but don't use assessment information as well as they could to address the needs and aptitudes of pupils and challenge them all, particularly the more able, to do the best they can.

Leadership and management are satisfactory with a number of emerging strengths. The good leadership of the headteacher provides clear educational direction and the school's self evaluation is accurate. The school's improvement plan has identified key priorities and school action is correctly focused on improving the quality of teaching and raising standards in writing. School action has raised standards in mathematics and the school is likely to achieve the challenging targets set for that subject. A new tracking system is in place so that pupils' progress can be checked and their needs addressed. The chair of governors is knowledgeable and supportive though the role of the governors as critical friends is still developing. Given the early evidence of improvement the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children enter Reception with abilities typical for their age. Overall they make good progress and very good progress in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development achieving standards beyond expectations by the time they enter Year 1. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. Lively and energetic teaching generates lots of enthusiasm for learning. Children are excited and interested in what they do and see. Staff plan and organise a good range of activities so that children are able to make appropriate choices and have opportunities to work independently or with others. Planning is in place for extending outdoor provision, but furniture and resources need to be further developed to improve learning opportunities. Good induction helps children to settle very quickly and they soon develop very good relationships with staff and other children. Parents are confident that their children are happy and are well supported by staff. The Foundation Stage leader sets a good example in teaching and is well supported by a skilled and well prepared teaching assistant. Very good checking of pupils' progress makes sure that their needs are well met.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning by applying assessment procedures consistently so that all pupils, particularly the more able, are challenged to achieve as well as they can.
- Develop a curriculum which challenges and engages all pupils and maximises opportunities for writing.
- Extend and improve outdoor provision in the Foundation Stage so that children's development in all areas of learning is supported more effectively.

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. From broadly typical starting point pupils make satisfactory progress to reach standards that are average by the end of Year 6.

The good progress made in the Foundation Stage is sustained in Year 1 because of good teaching. Results in the 2006 national assessments for Year 2 pupils and provisional results for 2007 were broadly average in mathematics and writing. In the 2007 assessments a greater proportion of pupils achieved the higher levels in writing. Reading standards dropped slightly compared to the previous year but remained above average. Overall progress in reading is good because reading strategies are well taught.

By the end of Year 6, standards in reading are still above average and good progress is sustained. Given their starting point, progress in writing, mathematics and science is satisfactory reaching average standards in the 2006 national tests. This represents a dip on the previous year when standards were above average.

The provisional 2007 results in English indicate a dip when compared with 2006. A similar proportion of pupils achieved the higher level but fewer reached the expected level. In mathematics, there was an improvement in the number of pupils achieving the higher level but

the proportion achieving the expected levels was below the 2006 national average. Consequently, the school did not meet the challenging targets set in English or mathematics. This may be explained by a higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in this cohort. Results in science were broadly in line with the 2006 national average.

Inspection evidence and school data indicates that, currently, standards and progress in reading are still good. Standards in English are broadly average with a small improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level. The school is still unlikely to reach the challenging targets set because of the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Standards in mathematics have improved on 2007 because of school action. The proportion of pupils working at the higher level has significantly improved and the school is in line to achieve the challenging targets set in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Very good relationships contribute to a calm and supportive learning environment. Learning objectives and success criteria are used well at the beginning of the lesson to make sure that pupils know the purpose of the lesson and are able to assess when they have achieved it. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and clear demonstrations mean that pupils are well prepared for independent work. Behaviour is well managed but some pupils become disinterested and restless when the pace of teaching is too slow and there is not enough variety in teaching methods. On occasions, more able pupils spend too much time listening rather than being engaged in activities that will extend their learning. Teachers know their pupils well, but do not always use what they know from assessments to match work accurately to pupils' aptitudes and interests. This slows progress, particularly for the more able. Marking is often used well to recognise pupils' successes and to indicate what they need to do to improve. Well briefed teaching assistants give sensitive support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they are fully included in the lesson.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced and meets the range of pupils' needs. Curriculum planning ensures that pupils in mixed age classes access the full range of subjects. Staff use national guidelines to plan lessons but do not always modify them to meet the needs and interests of all the pupils. Pupils have good opportunities to acquire the basic skills of reading and mathematics and to apply these skills in other subjects. The curriculum does not maximise the opportunities for demanding writing tasks in other subjects. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are taught and pupils have opportunities to use these skills in lessons. There is particularly good use of ICT to improve the writing and reading skills of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils' personal and emotional development is well promoted and a good range of visits, visitors and activities enriches the curriculum and adds enjoyment to learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good. This is underpinned by very good relationships so that pupils feel confident that their concerns are listened to and addressed. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are safe and well cared for. The school carries out appropriate risk assessments and all health and safety issues are addressed. Good standards of personal development reflect the effective personal guidance that pupils receive. Effective links are in place with parents and other agencies to support vulnerable pupils. More effective tracking systems are now in place so that individual progress can be more carefully monitored and appropriate intervention made when needed. When marking work, teachers give good, clear guidance to support academic progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The effective leadership of the headteacher provides clear educational direction for the school and she has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. Following a period of uncertainty the new headteacher has been successful in creating a happy school where parents and children value the friendly family ethos. Recently completed school improvement plans show that appropriate key priorities for development have been established and action planning is robust.

School action is beginning to raise standards. Improved marking and a common approach to calculations means that the school is likely to achieve the challenging targets set for mathematics. Management's evaluation of test results correctly identified that pupils' writing is not effectively developed. Though strategies to address this issue are in the early stages of implementation and have yet to impact on standards, pupils are now receiving clearer guidance on how to improve their writing. A new tracking and assessment system has been established which gives teachers an accurate view of pupils' progress and achievement. Teachers have yet to use this information effectively to meet the needs of all pupils and a programme of development is in place to improve the quality of teaching

Governors are very supportive of the headteacher. The chair of governors has an accurate picture of the school though the role of the governors as critical friends is still developing. Appropriate committees are in place and prudent financial management has enabled the school to sustain a favourable teacher/pupil ratio. The school provides satisfactory value for money. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

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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	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?	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	2

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

12 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Caton Community Primary School, Broadacre, Caton,
Lancaster, LA2 9NH

As you know I visited your school recently and I want to thank you for welcoming me and being so helpful. I enjoyed joining your lessons and was very interested in all the things you told me. A special thanks to the school council who gave up part of their dinner time to help me. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education and is improving.

There are some good things that I found in your school. Firstly it is a happy school. You and your parents like the friendly and family feel of the school and I agree with what you say. Your behaviour is good around school and you get on very well with each other and with adults. All the adults take good care of you so that you feel safe and happy. Your attendance is good so well done to you and you families. You enjoy coming to school and especially enjoy the after-school clubs. I think that by the time you leave school you are sensible and mature children who willingly accept responsibility and contribute to the school community.

There are some things which I think the school can do better. It is going to make sure that everyone uses the assessment system well. This will mean that each of you will get the right kind of work so that you work to the best of your ability and make even greater improvement. The school is also going to make sure that you have every opportunity to use your writing skills in other subjects so that your writing becomes as good as your reading. Children in reception get a good start to their education but more needs to be done to improve the outside area.

I am sure that each one of you, your parents and staff will continue to work together to make your school as good as it can possibly be. Good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Denis Goodchild

Lead inspector