

Castleton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105765
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	336556
Inspection dates	19–20 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Julie Price Grimshaw

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Alison Jackson
Headteacher	Miss Lindsay Torrance
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, and held meetings with, staff, groups of pupils, parents and carers, a member of the governing body and personnel from the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work, improvement planning, a range of policy documents, national published assessment data and the school's own data. Inspectors also analysed 70 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as a number of questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

- pupils' attainment and the progress they make, particularly in mathematics
- how effectively the school has identified the main priorities for development and is now working to address these
- how well teaching and the support for individual pupils meet the needs of all, including those who speak a home language other than English.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly average, and a significant proportion of these pupils enter school at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. There is provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in the school's Nursery and Reception classes. Over the past two years the school has faced considerable disruption and challenge owing to a number of factors, including long-term staff sickness and bereavements.

There are childcare facilities on the school site, although these are not managed by the school's governing body. This provision was inspected separately and the report is available on the Ofsted website.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Castleton Primary is a happy and welcoming school where staff care for the pupils exceptionally well. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure and show kindness and consideration towards each other. They know that their views are important to staff, as shown in the comment, 'All the teachers encourage us to say what we think and then listen to us.'

The difficulties of the past few years have adversely affected pupils' academic achievement. In 2009 attainment was broadly average in English and science but fell to well below average in mathematics. School managers are well aware of this and are now making a concerted effort to tackle weaknesses that previously existed, particularly such as those in the teaching of mathematics that have led to past underachievement. Inspectors agree with the views of the school in judging the quality of teaching to be now good overall. Consequently, pupils now make good progress during lessons, although data show that progress overall, taking into account the most recent provisional results from national tests, is no better than satisfactory. Attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6. Standards of work produced by pupils in all subjects indicate an improvement on last year's attainment and the school has set challenging targets for this year, particularly in mathematics. However, at this stage it is too early to judge the extent to which these recent improvements are impacting upon attainment and the end of year national test results over time. It is clear, nonetheless, that the much stronger teaching seen in lessons is helping to accelerate pupils' progress and tackle previous underachievement. This is confirmed by the work seen in pupils' books. The school recognises the need to maintain this momentum of improvement to raise attainment further, especially in mathematics, and to ensure that pupils' longer-term achievement reflects their current good performance in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers, largely due to the good quality support provided by teaching assistants and other staff. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are provided with tailored support that effectively helps them to build confidence and improve their skills in speaking and writing. Overall, there is little difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils across the school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress because of very well planned learning activities and good support from adults. Pupils' behaviour is excellent; they are polite, cooperative and thoughtful. Their social, moral and spiritual development is also outstanding, as shown in their positive relationships with each other and with staff, and their cultural development is good. They value each other's opinions and celebrate diversity.

The school is strongly committed to working with families and staff freely give of their

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own time to offer help and support wherever possible. The quality of pastoral care, particularly for the school's most vulnerable pupils, is outstanding. Staff work with a range of health professionals and other external specialists to ensure that all pupils receive the support that they need.

The school is now emerging from a challenging period with fresh determination to improve pupils' achievement. Senior leaders are fully aware of the school's main strengths and weaknesses, as reflected in their realistic and accurate self-evaluation. Improvement plans highlight the key priorities for development, but are not sufficiently sharp in identifying the intended outcomes. Nevertheless, the commitment of all staff, coupled with senior leaders' awareness of what needs to be done, mean that the school has satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment for all pupils, particularly in mathematics, by at least maintaining the current good quality of teaching in order to meet the challenging targets that it has set for itself by June 2010.
- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring that the current good progress seen in lessons becomes evident over time in performance data.
- Improve the quality of development planning by defining more sharply intended outcomes.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils genuinely appreciate the efforts of the staff, saying, 'They work so hard to make learning fun for us!' This typifies pupils' very good attitudes towards school. In the classroom they are enthusiastic, attentive and keen to do well. This was clear in one lesson observed where pupils were so motivated by the teacher's introduction that they could hardly wait to move into groups and start work on their allocated tasks, enthralled by the carefully prepared resources that were ready for them. Pupils work well in teams and are very keen to support each other, as seen in an excellent assembly written and presented by the pupils themselves. Pupils took great delight in celebrating each other's achievements, and spontaneously pointed out those whom they considered to be deserving of congratulation. Pupils' achievement, particularly in mathematics, has been limited in recent years. However, the pupils themselves now appear keen to reverse this trend and continue to make the good progress that is now evident in lessons.

Pupils have a good awareness of the importance of diet and exercise. They take pride in contributing to the school and local community and are involved in a wide range of charity work. Their knowledge of world faiths is impressive, as shown in one discussion where a group of older pupils pointed out the differences between 'monotheistic religions and those that have more than one God'. Pupils have a good knowledge of

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cultural diversity and discuss this with respect and sensitivity.

As a result of the school's relentless work, attendance has improved and is now average. Pupils are adequately prepared for the next steps in their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

During the inspection, recent improvements in the quality of teaching were evident across the school. All of the teaching observed was at least good, with a minority being of outstanding quality. Teachers have very effective relationships with their pupils, offering praise and encouragement throughout lessons. They have good questioning skills and actively promote excellent behaviour for learning among pupils. Where teaching was good or outstanding, there was an exciting variety of activities that engaged pupils and ensured that the pace of learning was rapid. Teachers very successfully built pupils' confidence in holding conversations and, consequently, they made excellent gains in extending their learning. Overall, teachers use strategies for assessment well, particularly during lessons when they give good quality feedback to pupils. This is a positive feature in improving pupils' progress. In a few cases, written

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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feedback in books does not always indicate pupils' next steps clearly enough. Teachers are now sharply focused on the quality of pupils' learning in lessons but this has yet to become apparent in sustained good progress over longer periods of time.

The curriculum adequately meets the needs of all pupils. Curriculum content is currently being reviewed and extended to ensure that pupils have good opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills. The school has made a good start in implementing these changes but it is too early to see the impact of this work. The range of extra-curricular activities is limited and pupils say that they would like more, particularly in sports; the school is now starting to address this.

The personal approach to care, guidance and support adopted by all staff ensures that pupils feel secure and happy in school. Staff set an excellent example in showing kindness, consideration and sensitivity towards pupils – qualities that are reflected in the behaviour of the pupils themselves.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders are fully aware of the school's current strengths and areas for development and are determined in their actions to improve pupils' achievement. This determination is communicated effectively to staff, all of whom are committed to the school's future. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior leaders have made a good start in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, as reflected in the good quality practice now evident across the school. Nevertheless, all staff are aware that it is too early to judge the effects of some of the most recent strategies but it is evident that pupils' progress is improving quickly. Governance is satisfactory. Governors wholeheartedly support the school and provide some challenge to school leaders, but they are not sufficiently involved in evaluating the school's work. Procedures for safeguarding are effective, with staff and governors taking care to ensure that all requirements are met and that aspects of best practice are adopted.

The school promotes equality of opportunity well and ensures that any incidents of discrimination are tackled effectively. As a result, pupils from different backgrounds work well together and make similar progress. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory, with some success at local level, but is less well developed in relation to the wider community.

The school's engagement with parents and carers is exemplary. Great care is taken to

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maintain regular communication and highly effective home–school links. An initiative involving sending regular text messages to parents' and carers' mobile telephones has been extremely successful; a typical parental view was expressed in the comment, 'Communication is excellent, I am always aware of any outings or celebrations.'

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery with skill levels that vary considerably but overall are just below typical age-related expectations. They make good progress to reach broadly average standards by the end of the Reception Year, although for a few children progress in creative development is satisfactory rather than good. Effective work on letters and sounds helps children to make good progress in their language development. Children learn to share and take turns. They enjoy all the activities provided for them in the bright and stimulating indoor and outdoor areas, which are well resourced.

Staff work well as a team under the effective management of the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, who sets a clear direction for future developments with a strong focus on improving children's achievement. Activities are very well planned to meet the diverse needs of all children. Adults support children's learning effectively; they model language very well in order to extend children's speaking skills. Children are encouraged to explore and experiment with different resources and media. Staff support their learning well, for example by asking challenging questions that encourage children to think about what they are learning and express themselves clearly.

Children's progress is tracked carefully. There are very good links with parents and

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carers, who are kept informed of their children's development and encouraged to enter into a dialogue with the school through entries in the children's learning journals.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Just over a quarter of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The great majority of responses were entirely positive and praised the school for its welcoming and caring approach. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concern that their children had made limited progress over the past few years and acknowledged the reasons for this; however, almost all of these parents and carers felt that there had been recent improvements to the quality of teaching and that their children's rate of progress had recently improved. Inspectors agreed with the views of the large majority of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Castleton Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 249 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	70	19	27	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	76	17	24	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	53	31	44	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	53	29	41	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	42	60	26	37	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	50	31	44	3	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	47	36	51	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	40	57	25	36	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	49	32	46	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	69	19	27	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	49	33	47	1	1	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	45	64	20	29	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	52	74	16	23	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



23 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Castleton Primary School, Rochdale, OL11 2QD

As you know, inspectors visited your school recently so that we could find out how well you are doing. I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your views with us. I would also like to share our main findings with you.

Castleton Primary is satisfactory overall, although there are some really good things about your school. You told us that the staff in the school care for you very well, and we agree with you. The quality of the care and support provided by the staff is outstanding. We were also impressed by your attitude to school; you were so polite and considerate, not just to us and the school staff but to each other. You have a really good knowledge of different faiths – I particularly enjoyed my discussion with you on religions. We could see that you do lots of charity work and we will not forget our second day with you when you and your teachers were dressed in pyjamas to raise funds for charity!

Over the past few years the standards in your school, particularly in mathematics, have not been as high as they could be. The staff are now determined to help you make really good progress and reach higher standards. We saw some good and outstanding teaching in your school, and it was great to see your excellent behaviour for learning; you should be very proud of this, so keep up the good work!

We have suggested three things that your school can do to improve. These are to:

- help you to reach higher standards, especially in mathematics
- help the staff to make sure that you carry on making good progress, so that you achieve well over time
- make sure that there are really clear plans for improving your school.

We know that your headteacher and all the staff want you to achieve as well as you possibly can. You can help by always trying as hard as you can, especially in mathematics.

Yours sincerely

Ms Julie Price Grimshaw

Lead Inspector

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