

Castle Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109081
Local Authority	Bath and NE Somerset
Inspection number	337211
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Tony Shield

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 of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Rabbeth
Headteacher	Kristian Hancock
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent around half the time looking at pupils' learning, and visited 16 lessons or parts of lessons. All teachers were observed. They held meetings with governors, members of staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation, including the self-evaluation form, safeguarding and other policy documents, the school improvement plan and records of pupils' progress. They took into account the views of 110 parents and carers and those of pupils and staff expressed in questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the extent to which improvements in pupils' progress are significant and embedded
- how consistently challenging is the teaching, particularly for more able pupils
- the extent to which all staff contribute to self-evaluation and school improvement.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British origin and very few are from other ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average; they have a range of needs, including specific learning difficulties, behavioural difficulties, and speech and language problems. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in its Reception class. The headteacher has been in post since September 2008, following a period of unsettled leadership at the school.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Castle Primary is a good school, improving rapidly as the impact of recent management changes begins to bite. Led with calm decisiveness by the headteacher, the school is making significant strides forward. As one parent commented, 'Strong leadership is enabling the school to flourish.' This view is shared by most parents and carers, who are happy with their child's experience at school. Pupils themselves feel the same. As one pupil put it to inspectors, 'This is a lovely school. I like it here and I hope you do too!'

There are a number of strengths:

- A climate of care and good relationships ensures pupils feel safe. Both pupils themselves and their parents and carers comment positively on this aspect of the school.
- A thoughtfully planned inquiry curriculum excites and motivates pupils to work hard and be curious about the world.
- Pupils have a good awareness of the importance of both healthy eating and an active lifestyle.
- Behaviour is good and pupils are friendly and open in their relationships with staff. Many acts of kindness were observed around the school.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and provision for the youngest children is well planned.
- Pupils' progress is improving rapidly, because teaching increasingly makes tough demands on pupils to work hard. Not all lessons, however, use assessment data to set work at the right level for all pupils, and pupils are not always clear about what they are learning and how well they are doing.
- The school's inclusive approach ensures all pupils feel valued and are given the confidence to succeed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of well targeted support.

Improvements to teaching and the curriculum since the last inspection have resulted in improved progress for all pupils. However, some teaching lacks pace and is not always geared to the needs of individual pupils. The headteacher has inspired a strong commitment of the whole staff to sustain this improvement through the clarity of his vision. However, not all staff are confident to lead and monitor provision in their areas of responsibility. Self-evaluation is both realistic and accurate and the school has sensible plans for further development. As a result, and given the recent track record of improvement, the school's capacity to improve further is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Accelerate pupils' learning and progress even further by:
 - ensuring pupils know what they are going to learn, and not just what they are going to do
 - ensuring pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do next.
- Ensure more consistently good teaching by:
 - using assessments to adjust plans and set work tailored to individual needs
 - encouraging pupils to be more confident in working on their own
 - keeping a brisk pace throughout lessons.
- Build the capacity and confidence of all staff to take the initiative and contribute fully to monitoring, self-evaluation and school improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

In lessons, pupils enjoy the work they do and tackle it with energy and enthusiasm. They are keen to do well. Results in national tests have been broadly average in recent years, though they improved strongly in 2009, particularly in mathematics and science. Given their below average starting points, pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science. Both boys and girls do well and more able pupils are also making good progress, especially now that teaching is more often tailored to their needs. There is no significant difference between the achievement of different groups. In Year 6, all pupils were making good progress in writing a narrative conveying mood, working with care and ensuring neat presentation. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, good use of assessment by the teacher and good support from other adults helped ensure pupils made good progress in solving problems using number sentences. Both boys and girls answer questions enthusiastically. Their good attitudes and behaviour are important factors in the progress they make.

Happy and harmonious relationships support this hardworking atmosphere. Pupils relish opportunities to contribute, such as in the school council or as part of the eco-team warriors. The school is rightly encouraging pupils to have a greater say and make a more telling contribution to the school and wider community. Given pupils' average standards in basic skills and average attendance, they are satisfactorily prepared for their future working lives. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, although there are strengths in pupils' social and moral understanding, because of the clear framework and expectations the school provides.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	3

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum has been recently reviewed and is designed to promote excitement and curiosity, through pupils being given a series of questions, many of which begin with an event or visit which sets the scene and makes the learning relevant. This approach has already made a strong contribution to pupils' improved progress and their personal development. It has been carefully designed to meet the needs of all pupils and especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of popular clubs, visits and visitors. Pupils enthusiastically take part in the street dancing club, and others such as cookery, animation and choir do much to stimulate excitement.

Learning is typically well managed and well planned, with tasks set which inspire the pupils' inquisitiveness. Teachers confidently use resources to enliven the learning and there is a good sense of purpose in lessons. Questions are used well to probe for understanding. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, there was a good emphasis on pupils themselves assessing how confidently they understood, and the task to measure angles and solve problems was challenging, making the pupils think for themselves. However, teaching is not consistently of this quality and a significant number of pupils lack confidence in working independently and report that they do not know how well they are doing or what they need to do next to improve. Marking is often cursory. Sometimes, in lessons, the pace of learning drops as teachers talk for too long. In addition, while in most lessons teachers use assessment information to set tasks geared to the individual needs of pupils, including the more able pupils, this is not consistent. The school's inclusive and welcoming ethos is underpinned by detailed policies and

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procedures which provide good care and support for all children. The school is careful to ensure that the welfare of all pupils is paramount. Well-targeted support for potentially vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, alongside effective partnerships with outside agencies, ensures that the needs of these pupils are well met.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

At the heart of the school's improvement are the headteacher's clear vision and high expectations, and in this he is well supported by his deputy and staff, who share his determination to provide the best for every child. This inclusive approach is reflected in the school's commitment to equal opportunities and the removal of discrimination and any barriers to achievement. Challenging targets have been set encouraging everybody to raise their game. A key factor contributing to recent improvements has been the good management of teaching. Rigorous monitoring within a developmental framework has been successful in raising quality. Teamwork through the new school improvement teams is enabling ideas and work to be shared effectively, although there is more to be done before all staff confidently lead developments and monitor their impact. Comprehensive systems to track pupils' attainment and progress enable potential underachievement to be identified early, as well as providing a secure basis for self-evaluation.

The governing body fulfils all legal requirements, although some relatively new governors lack confidence in their ability to challenge and hold the school to account. The school is meticulous in its approach to safeguarding, and all arrangements were in place at the time of the inspection. While the school has a good understanding of its context, and is seeking to extend its work internationally, the impact of initiatives to promote community cohesion is not fully realised.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
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	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills which are below age-related expectations. They make good progress, and by the time most children enter Year 1, they have reached expected levels, although standards in communication, reading and writing are not as high as in other areas of learning.

Relationships are good and classroom activities are characterised by lively and stimulating teaching and well managed learning. The outdoor areas in particular provide exciting and imaginative challenges to children. These factors ensure that all children enjoy their learning. Adults have high expectations and good classroom management techniques which lead to good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. While some activities are sensitively led by adults, others encourage children to choose for themselves, and a good balance is set between the two. Progress is recorded carefully and detailed records are kept on each child in their learning journal. By the end of the Reception Year, children are well prepared for entry into Year 1. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led. The leader has a clear understanding of the provision's strengths and a clear vision of how to develop it even further.

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

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Responses were received from 110 parents and carers, which represents a good proportion of the families with children in the school. Those responding were very positive about the school. Almost all believe that their children enjoy school and very few indicated concerns in any area. Most comments were in support of the school and commended the sense of fun and enjoyment which their children experience. Several parents and carers commented on the improvements since the new leadership team arrived. Inspectors agree with these positive views. There were relatively few negative comments, and no pattern to the views expressed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Castle 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 110 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 185 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	55	42	38	6	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	66	60	40	36	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	32	68	62	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	35	63	57	6	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	43	39	59	54	4	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	35	62	56	6	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	59	54	47	43	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)	31	28	67	61	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	41	5	51	7	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	37	52	47	8	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	35	56	51	3	3	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	70	64	35	32	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	61	55	44	40	3	3	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.



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11 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Castle Primary School, Keynsham, Bristol, BS31 2TS

I am writing to thank you for your friendly welcome when we visited your school recently. Thank you for all the help you gave us in looking at the work of your school. Yours is a good school, and here are some of the main findings from our report:

- You told us how much you enjoy coming to school; your good attitudes and behaviour make a great contribution to the good progress most of you make.
- The school is improving because the teachers are finding more and more ways of making your learning interesting and fun.
- You have a good understanding of what it means to keep healthy.
- The school takes good care of you, and makes sure you feel safe and well looked after.
- Everyone gets on well together, and there is a real sense of community in the school.
- The headteacher and all the teachers are working successfully to make your school even better.

We have asked the school to do the following things to help move the school forward:

- Ensure you do even better by making sure you know what you are going to learn, how well you are doing, and what you need to do to improve. You can help, by asking if you don't know!
- Use the information about how well you are doing to plan work which suits your ability; give you opportunities to work things out on your own; and keep the learning in lessons moving along quickly.
- Help the teachers to check how things are going in the areas for which they are responsible.

Thank you once again for your help during our visit. Please continue to work hard and good luck for the future!

Yours sincerely

Tony Shield
Lead Inspector

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