

# Cassop Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114075
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	338292
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 January 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clive Petts

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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	115
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr George Marsden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Jim McManners
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Cassop Durham DH6 4RA
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 3770293
<b>Fax number</b>	0
<b>Email address</b>	p2362.admin@durhamlearning.net

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. A large amount of time was spent in classrooms, inspectors visited nine lessons and observed nearly all class teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, talked to parents and analysed 57 questionnaire responses from parents and looked at questionnaires from staff and pupils. The team also looked at the pupils' progress data, documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils, the school improvement plan, school policies and procedures, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to the School Improvement Partner to discuss her reports.

- the overall effectiveness of Early Years Foundation Stage
- the impact of the school's action to improve assessment, especially in Reception and Key Stage 1, and raise the attainment for all groups of pupils
- the effectiveness of senior leaders evaluating their actions to tackle any relative weaknesses and improve rates of progress and achievement.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school serving two former mining villages and surrounding areas. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is higher than average. All pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is close to three times the national average and the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a group of Reception age children who are taught in a mixed-age class with Year 1. In addition to Artsmark Gold, Basic Skills and International awards, the school has received national recognition for its work on sustainability. All substantive staff have returned to work after a period of unsettled staffing.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is an outstanding school. A significant strength is the exceptional way in which pupils respond to what the school does for them. Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher ensures that all pupils receive a rich range of learning experiences in a caring, supportive environment. The vision is shared by a talented team of staff. The responses to the parents and carers' questionnaires reflect the overwhelming positive support for the school and staff. The comment, 'You only need to enter the school and experience the inspirational ethos to know that we made the right choice' sums up their views. Pupils take great pride in their school's achievements in the happy, friendly and inclusive atmosphere.

Children start in Reception with skills below those expected for their age and make good progress to reach above average standards in all subjects by the end of Year 6. Progress has been uneven, however. Typically, pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and very good progress in Key Stage 2. More settled staffing combined with improved approaches to assessment, especially in Reception and Key Stage 1, has resulted in overall improvements in the quality of learning. Consequently, although pupils' overall progress is quickening in Key Stage 1, it is not yet good. The quality of teaching is good. There is exemplary practice in Key Stage 2 lessons where inspiring and exciting teaching fully exploits the many first-hand learning experiences. In these lessons, assessment practice is incisive, target-setting effective and teachers are quick to act to correct any slips in the pupils' progress. This ensures that pupils make rapid progress. In lessons in Key Stage 1 where the rate of progress slows, assessment information is not always used as effectively. Pupils' investigative skills and logical thinking, when analysing problems and working out solutions, are particular strengths.

The school places promoting equal opportunity at the very heart of all of its work. It provides all pupils with memorable learning experiences and ample opportunities for high-quality learning and personal development. This is why those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those potentially vulnerable or disadvantaged all make good progress. Pupils are taught to respect and value each other's differences and views from the moment they enter Reception. Pupils' exemplary behaviour and attitudes, added to their good attendance, mean that they are all able to get the most out of what the school offers. This is whether in the classroom, working in the allotment or explaining to the Prime Minister the community benefits of the school wind turbine.

Senior leaders have an accurate and realistic view of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Although judgements are occasionally generous the school demonstrates a good capacity to add to their strengths. The headteacher is ably

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supported by an effective deputy headteacher and skilled team of subject leaders. Governors provide good support and challenge. They are very aware of the benefits that a sharper focus on quality assurance management will bring. The school enjoys excellent partnerships with local schools, its international partners and a wide range of support agencies. This greatly enhances provision and makes a very positive contribution to the pupils' good achievement and outstanding personal development and well-being. It enables the school to provide excellent value for money.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Further improve the rate of progress in Key Stage 1 by:
- - sharpening the evaluation of pupils' performance to pinpoint what will boost their rate of progress
- - providing a relentless focus on reading and writing
- - applying existing best school assessment practice to ensure work is always closely matched to pupils' learning needs and that all pupils have effective individual learning targets.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****1**

As a result of enjoyable, 'hands-on' learning pupils become confident, creative and imaginative thinkers. This helps boys to do as well as girls. Support and intervention for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is usually well targeted. Evidence from lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work demonstrates that the assessment information for older pupils is skilfully used to match tasks to individual needs and set targets for improvement.

The school's above average standards in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 are improving year-on-year. School assessment information reveals that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds continue to make good progress with attainment rising in all subjects. In Key Stage 1, while attainment levels are rising, the rate of progress is slower and the pattern of achievement fluctuates across subjects, for example, in reading and writing. Older pupils, in particular, benefit from some stimulating teaching which relentlessly probes and consolidates their thinking. For example, solving how to fire a card mouse from a bottle or using computer software to design a pattern in a traditional African style.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of the benefits of staying fit and healthy. Exemplary behaviour is characterised by considerate, responsible and safe attitudes, for example, when using the internet. Playtimes, both indoors and outdoors are active and purposeful. Pupils think about their actions and their consequences exceptionally well, which is a reflection of the very helpful guidance they receive from the caring adults around them. They respect different views and happily listen to each other's views and ideas which adds to the calm, purposeful atmosphere. Pupils are very confident that bullying is rare and disagreements are quickly resolved. Pupils are given many opportunities to take responsibility and promote their own learning, for example,

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presenting their ideas on sustainability in the form of a drama production to inner-London schools at the Royal Society. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and provides an extremely secure platform for the consideration of local, national and global issues and their impact on others.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning is good with examples of outstanding teaching from a gifted team of staff. The most effective practice is characterised by imaginative approaches finely tuned to meet individual need and which exploit the high expectations and excellent relationships staff have. In all lessons explanations are clear and effective use is made of up-to-date technology. Pupils' progress is checked regularly, although the incisive and sharply focussed practice in Key Stage 2 boosts the rate of progress and achievement more effectively than in Key Stage 1.

The innovative and ambitious curriculum links subjects together to provide wonderful experiences which capture interest and provoke thinking, for example, the school and community production of 'Cassop and Coal' with the journey starting in a 1950's bus in

<sup>1</sup> 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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the village. One child summed it up for all who participated when describing the learning experience as, 'Absolutely brilliant!' Partnerships are fully exploited to enhance the quality of learning. This includes a wide range of international links and visitors. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in art, music, dance and foreign languages. Activities outside the classroom enrich learning whether studying in the wildlife area, visiting London, Newcastle or the nearby Sikh temple.

Outstanding pastoral care ensures that those pupils who face challenging circumstances or those who are vulnerable achieve success. The school accesses a very wide range of agencies to support individual needs. Parents speak appreciatively of the high quality of care and guidance especially during induction to Reception and transition to secondary school. The highly inclusive day-to-day practice boosts the pupils' strong sense of belonging to the school's happy community.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The key strengths in the school's outstanding leadership and management are rooted in imaginative approaches and a strong whole-school commitment to making all learning appealing. The curriculum provides many rich, active learning opportunities, which allow pupils to make their own choices. Coupled with the impact of more settled staffing this is resulting in rising achievement. Improving evaluation of pupils' performance and sharper assessment practice is enabling earlier identification of any progress slips, and improving lesson planning to plug any gaps in learning. However, the full impact of these initiatives and the settled staffing has yet to be seen over time in Reception and Key Stage 1.

Governors share the commitment to improvement, holding the school to account in positive ways. The school has good procedures to safeguard its pupils. These fully meet current government requirements particularly in relation to the day-to-day protection of children. Safety awareness is very successfully integrated into the curriculum so that pupils are taught how to manage risk, for example, whether swimming in the pool or nearby sea. The school enjoys excellent relationships with parents and works hard to keep parents informed of progress. The school demonstrates an excellent commitment to promoting community cohesion. First-hand experiences to make sure all have a grasp of local, national and global cultures, beliefs and issues are a normal part of their learning. The positive impact can be seen in the way all pupils enjoy their learning

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equally well regardless of their background, their considerate attitudes towards each other and their knowledge about current issues in the world around them. This also demonstrates the school's outstanding commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

On entry to Reception children's skills for their age are below expected levels with a number having weak communication skills. Staff have established a happy, friendly atmosphere which allows children to work confidently alongside older pupils.

Well-thought out and imaginative activities provide good opportunities for children to think for themselves, be creative and resolve problems and dilemmas. The high expectations for personal development ensure that children gain social skills rapidly as they settle down into classroom routines. They are encouraged to instigate their own learning through the use of imaginative prompts; for example, sitting in a foil-lined cardboard box imagining being a bear flying into space. Outside there are ample opportunities for children to extend their curiosity, explore and investigate. Recent staff changes are leading to improvements in the consistency and quality of learning and assessment; for example, sustaining a focus on open-ended questions to help children express their ideas and thoughts. However, not all opportunities are taken to maintain a relentless focus on early reading and writing. Behaviour is excellent and children are encouraged to be independent and look after themselves; for example, dressing for the winter conditions outside. Other cultures and festivals are celebrated to promote understanding and respect for difference. Children demonstrate a good grasp of the benefits of good hygiene habits. More effective assessment is improving the quality of



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learning and the impact of staff input as they follow the learning initiated by the children. Children make good progress with most confidently working towards the levels expected for their age and a small proportion reaching the level expected of them by the end of Reception. The provision is well led and managed.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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**

In response to the questionnaire, an overwhelming majority of parents and carers were extremely positive about the school. All parents and carers expressed high praise for the enjoyment provided by the school and that it keeps their children safe. Parents and carers express confidence that any concerns are listened to carefully and acted upon appropriately by the headteacher. Parents and carers might find it helpful to know that in relation to the very small number of concerns received, inspectors found that these issues were being effectively addressed and managed by the school.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cassop 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 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 115 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	68	16	28	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	67	18	32	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	61	20	35	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	74	15	26	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	43	75	12	21	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	70	16	28	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	65	16	28	3	5	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)	33	58	17	30	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	65	16	28	3	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	56	22	39	2	4	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	56	21	37	2	4	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	40	70	13	23	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	75	12	21	1	2	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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



18 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cassop Primary School, Durham, DH6 4RA

Thank you for being so really helpful, friendly and considerate when we visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time at Cassop, particularly the opportunities we had to talk to you. I would like to tell you about some of the many positive things about your school.

- The staff look after you and care for you exceptionally well to enable you all to make good progress in your learning.
- Your behaviour is exemplary and your enjoyment of school life is really impressive, especially when taking advantage of the many first-hand learning experiences the school provides for you.
- You know how to stay safe and take responsibility to stay healthy and keep fit.
- You enjoy the benefits of excellent partnerships with other schools, including your partner schools overseas, the local community and your parents.
- You have an inventive headteacher, a hardworking deputy headteacher and team of staff who know exactly what to do to make your school even better.

Your school provides you with an outstanding quality of education that has considerable strengths. By the time you leave school, the standards you reach are above the average expected for your age. To help your school continue to improve and make sure younger pupils make faster progress, we have asked for some improvements to be made. These will make sure that:

- your work is checked closely to spot where improvements can be made and place even more emphasis on your early reading and writing
- your teachers and support staff check more frequently when your progress slips, make sure you understand what you have learnt and give you extra help if you are unclear what to do.

You can play your part by continuing to work as hard as you can. Thank you for helping with this inspection. We hope the school will keep on building on its many strengths.

Best of luck to you all.

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts

Lead inspector

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