

**Castlefield Primary School  
East Kilbride  
South Lanarkshire Council  
21 February 2006**

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## 1. Background

Castlefield Primary School was inspected in November 2005 as part of a national sample of primary education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and its capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the School Board, representatives of the parent-teacher association (PTA), and a group of parents<sup>1</sup>.

The school serves the Greenhills area of East Kilbride. At the time of the inspection the roll was 223, including 42 in the nursery class. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was above the national average. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average.

The nursery class was inspected at the same time and is the subject of a separate report.

## 2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Very good partnerships between the school, parents and the local community which enriched pupils' learning experiences.
- Staff commitment to the care and welfare of pupils.
- Inclusion of pupils with additional support needs and the wide range of effective support offered to pupils experiencing difficulties in their learning.
- The headteacher's impressive start to improving the school.

## 3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?

HM Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires issued to all parents, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends

Parents were very satisfied with the work of the school. They felt welcome in the school, and particularly liked the concern shown by staff for their child's care and welfare. They felt that the school kept them very well informed about their child's progress and the standards of work expected. All pupils enjoyed being at the school. They liked the wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities the school offered. They liked their teachers and felt that they explained things well. Staff enjoyed working in the school and felt that there was strong teamwork in all areas of the school. They particularly appreciated the recent improvements in the school's relationships with parents and the community. Staff, parents and pupils spoke very positively about the approachability of the headteacher.

#### **4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?**

##### **Pupils' learning experiences and achievements**

The school provided pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum. Staff placed good emphasis on developing appropriate personal and social skills, particularly through work in health and enterprise education. They used flexibility time to provide good opportunities for younger pupils to learn through play, and to support pupils' learning in English language and mathematics at P4 to P7. The school had yet to evaluate fully the effectiveness of this use of time. Staff developed pupils' thinking skills effectively using a structured approach across all stages. Teachers were steadily developing pupils' skills in information and communications technology (ICT), but were not yet fully integrating these skills across the curriculum. The overall quality of teaching was good. Teachers were well organised and planned their lessons carefully. The quality of discussion between pupils and teachers was often of a high standard. In the best lessons, teachers shared the purposes of lessons with pupils and provided well-planned opportunities for pupils to work together and learn from each other. Many teachers held helpful plenary sessions at the end of lessons. However, this good practice was not consistently used across the school, particularly in English language and mathematics.

Throughout the school, almost all pupils were well motivated and keen to learn. In their German lessons, pupils at P6 and P7 worked very well together in groups and used ICT effectively to support their learning. As a result, they were developing very good skills in listening, speaking and reading in German. Across the school, pupils sang tunefully and enthusiastically. Many were able to use percussion instruments well to accompany the singing at assemblies. During some lessons, for example when working in science, pupils were learning to become actively involved in their own learning. However, this active approach was not consistent enough across pupils' learning. Overall, pupils had too few opportunities to engage in independent working, investigations and practical activity. Some tasks relied too heavily on published resources. The overall pace of pupils' learning was not fast enough. Teachers throughout the school made good use of a variety of homework tasks to extend pupils' learning.

At all stages, pupils were friendly, courteous and co-operative. Senior pupils had extensive opportunities to exercise responsibility, including as house captains, monitors, 'play pals' and buddies for younger pupils. Pupils from P1 to P7 had improved aspects of playground experience and the school environment through the active pupil council. Pupils learned important citizenship skills through, for example, welcoming members of the community into the school and entertaining them with dramatic and musical performances. Many pupils developed their sporting skills

through a range of outofschool activities including netball. Involvement in lunchtime games and library clubs helped pupils develop into confident individuals, in a supportive social setting. Pupils in P7 had won an authority award for enterprise. The school celebrated pupils' academic, sporting, artistic and social achievements at weekly 'star award' assemblies.

### **English language**

The overall quality of attainment in English language was good. In recent years, pupils' attainment in reading had fluctuated but was now improving. Attainment in writing was steadily improving. The school could not produce reliable figures for attainment in listening and talking. Across the school, most pupils were achieving appropriate national levels in reading and writing. However, coursework was not always well matched to pupils' learning needs, and a few pupils at each stage were capable of higher achievement. Pupils at all stages talked confidently about their personal experiences but were less skilled in talking about texts. Across the school, pupils did not have access to a sufficient variety of high-quality reading materials and a number did not read widely for pleasure. Pupils made good use of reference books to find information. They produced some lively, interesting pieces of writing in other curricular areas. These included, for example, reports on road safety and letters of apology from Goldilocks to the three bears. However, they did not have frequent enough, challenging opportunities for extended writing. Standards of handwriting and punctuation were good overall, but standards of spelling were not high enough.

### **Mathematics**

The overall quality of pupils' attainment in mathematics was good. Across the school, most pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment. Standards had remained steady over the past three years. By P3, pupils were achieving appropriate levels earlier than might normally be expected. This positive early start was not always maintained as pupils progressed through the school. At P4 to P7, pupils were able to collate, interpret and display information using an increasingly complex range of graphs. Pupils in P7 had yet to use ICT to support their learning about databases and spreadsheets. Throughout the school pupils had a good understanding of shape, position and movement and were able to identify the properties of two and threedimensional shapes. Pupils were not quick or accurate enough in oral mental calculations. A few pupils at P5 to P7 had difficulty in working with decimals and percentages. Most pupils were able to perform written calculations accurately. They could identify and apply a range of strategies to solve mathematical problems. However, they were not always able to apply these strategies in other areas.

## **5. How well are pupils supported?**

The school provided a very good level of pastoral care for pupils. All staff knew pupils well and were sensitive to their individual physical, social and emotional needs. Staff were well aware of the school's child protection procedures and dealt sensitively with any concerns about pupils. Pupils felt safe and were confident that staff would deal promptly and effectively with any incidents of bullying. Pupils demonstrated a clear understanding of important issues including substance abuse and personal relationships. The school placed a high priority on health promotion, for which it had won a bronze

award. Pupils could discuss the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise, but did not regularly select healthy options when these were offered in the dining room.

The school's approaches to meeting pupils' learning needs were good overall. Most tasks and activities matched the learning needs of most pupils. However, these did not always meet the needs of higher achieving pupils well enough. Class teachers and visiting support teachers offered a very good level of support to pupils experiencing difficulties in their learning. The school's individualised educational programmes for a few pupils with additional support needs required further development to ensure that learning targets were more appropriate. Pupils with Records of Needs received well managed support and their needs were reviewed appropriately. The school's close links with parents and a wide range of agencies helped ensure effective learning experiences for pupils with additional support needs. Support staff made effective contributions to pupils' learning. As a result of the school's approaches, pupils experiencing difficulties were progressing well. The school had very good arrangements in place to support pupils transferring from pre-school into P1 and from P7 into secondary school.

## 6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Quality of accommodation and facilities	The school was due for extensive rebuilding and refurbishment, scheduled to begin very soon. Internally, the environment for learning was good. The school gymnasium was large and well equipped. Staff had made good use of available space to create three libraries and a play area for younger pupils. Classrooms and open areas were bright, spacious and well furnished. Pupils had good access to ICT. The building had appropriate arrangements for security. The regular traffic congestion at the school entrance was well managed by the school. There was adequate access for people with disabilities. However, there were significant weaknesses in the external fabric of the building, including water penetration and uneven play surfaces. There was a lack of changing facilities for physical education.

Aspect	Comment
<p>Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality</p>	<p>The headteacher and staff had created a very warm and welcoming environment for pupils, staff, parents and visitors. Relationships were very positive. Staff set high expectations for pupils' behaviour but their expectations for pupils' achievement were not high enough. They used praise effectively to motivate pupils and celebrate their successes. Pupils were polite, co-operative and very well behaved. Staff and pupils displayed sensitivity towards pupils with additional support needs and made sure that they were included in all class and school activities. The school promoted tolerance and respect for others through its programmes for personal and social development and religious and moral education. It had a clear policy on combating racism. However, pupils did not have sufficient understanding of cultures and faiths other than Christianity. Weekly assemblies provided very good opportunities for celebration of pupils' achievements and for religious observance.</p>
<p>Partnership with parents and the community</p>	<p>The school had very strong partnerships with parents and the local community. The School Board took a keen, supportive interest in the school. The PTA organised successful fund-raising and social events. The school's effective relations with a range of organisations, for example the 'Sure Start' initiative, broadened the experiences of the parents, staff and pupils. These included enhanced learning and play resources, the use of a play therapy room and a range of interesting classes for parents. The school kept parents very well informed through parents' meetings, regular newsletters, 'behaviour books', and annual written reports on pupils' progress. Parents were consulted appropriately about sensitive health issues, and had opportunities to view materials which the school planned to use. Local police and health staff provided useful assistance with aspects of the school's health education programme. The local minister regularly participated in school assemblies.</p>

## **7. Improving the school**

Appendix 1 provides HM Inspectors' overall evaluation of the work of the school.

Castlefield Primary School provided a very caring and positive environment in which pupils felt secure, happy and enthusiastic about learning. The school had established a clear and important place in the local community. The quality of learning and teaching was good and morale was high. Pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics was good and improving. Teachers now needed to increase the pace of learning and level of challenge in lessons. The headteacher showed strong commitment to the school and provided effective leadership. Since her appointment in January 2005 she had made a very good start to improving the school by successfully developing strong partnerships with parents and the community and fostering teamwork with staff. She had introduced a number of initiatives which were beginning to improve pupils' attainment and achievement. In doing this, she had earned the respect of pupils, parents and staff. She had a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas of improvement, and a clear plan for its continued improvement. The depute head teachers carried out their remits well and gave valuable support to the headteacher. Both modelled very good teaching. Together, the headteacher and depute headteachers formed a strong management team.

The headteacher had introduced a range of approaches to evaluate the quality of the school's work. Promoted staff monitored teachers' plans, sampled pupils' work, visited classes and held focussed discussions with staff on improving pupils' learning. These approaches were beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement. However, the tracking of pupils' progress from stage to stage had not been rigorous enough and a few pupils at each stage were not making appropriate progress. Staff were highly committed to improving pupils' learning experiences. The management team and the staff recognised the need to monitor pupils' learning more effectively to ensure continuing improvement in pupils' attainment. Given the school's good track record in improving aspects of its work, its current sound improvement plan and its strong leadership, the school demonstrated a clear capacity for improvement.

### **Main points for action**

The school and education authority should take action to improve aspects of learning, teaching and achievement. In doing so they should take account of the need to:

- improve approaches to school self-evaluation, including the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress, to ensure consistent high quality learning experiences for all pupils;
- increase the pace of learning and level of challenge for all pupils and continue to raise attainment in English language and mathematics; and
- continue to develop approaches to learning and teaching, including collaborative working, to enable pupils to become more actively involved in their learning.

### **What happens next?**

The school and the education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. Within two years of the publication of this report parents will be informed about the progress made by the school.

Anne M McGachey  
HM Inspector

21 February 2006

## Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

The sections in the table below follow the order in this report. You can find the main comments made about each of the quality indicators in those sections. However, aspects of some quality indicators are relevant to other sections of the report and may also be mentioned in those other sections.

<b>How good are learning, teaching and achievement?</b>	
Structure of the curriculum	Good
The teaching process	Good
Pupils' learning experiences	Good
Pupils' attainment in English language	Good
Pupils' attainment in mathematics	Good

<b>How well are pupils supported?</b>	
Pastoral care	Very good
Meeting pupils' needs	Good

<b>How good is the environment for learning?</b>	
Accommodation and facilities	Good
Climate and relationships	Very good
Expectations and promoting achievement	Good
Equality and fairness	Adequate
Partnership with parents, the School Board, and the community	Very good

<b>Improving the school</b>	
Leadership	Good
Effectiveness and deployment of staff with additional responsibilities	Good
Self-evaluation	Adequate

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors:

excellent	excellent
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
adequate	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

## Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

Important features of responses from the various groups which received questionnaires are listed below.

<p><b>What parents thought the school did well</b></p>	<p><b>What parents think the school could do better</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They felt welcome in the school.</li> <li>• The school kept them well informed about their child's progress.</li> <li>• Staff showed concern for pupils' care and welfare.</li> <li>• The school had a good reputation in the local community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no significant issues.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What pupils thought the school did well</b></p>	<p><b>What pupils think the school could do better</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They enjoyed being at school.</li> <li>• Teachers knew them well, explained things clearly and expected them to work hard.</li> <li>• Pupils had a say in how to make things better.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no significant issues.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What staff thought the school did well</b></p>	<p><b>What staff think the school could do better</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils were enthusiastic about learning.</li> <li>• There was mutual respect between staff and pupils.</li> <li>• Pupils' successes were celebrated regularly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no significant issues.</li> </ul>

## **How can you contact us?**

### **If you would like an additional copy of this report**

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Executive Director (Education Resources), local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Europa Building, 450 Argyle Street, Glasgow G2 8LG or by telephoning 0141 242 0100. Copies are also available on our website [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

### **If you wish to comment about primary inspections**

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### **Our complaints procedure**

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to Hazel Dewart, Business Management Unit, HM Inspectorate of Education, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office or by telephoning 01506 600258 or from our website at [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, 4-6 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7NS. You can also telephone 0870 011 5378 or e-mail [enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk). More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: [www.scottishombudsman.org.uk](http://www.scottishombudsman.org.uk).

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