



# Castlecroft Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 104311  
**LEA** Wolverhampton  
**Inspection number** 277128  
**Inspection dates** 21 March 2006 to 21 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Linda Rockey HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Windmill Crescent
<b>School category</b>	Community		Wolverhampton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		West Midlands WV3 8HS
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 556606
<b>Number on roll</b>	276	<b>Fax number</b>	01902 765639
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Margaret Simpkins
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 March 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Patricia Keech

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools. The inspector met with the headteacher, children, parents, staff, the chair of governors and two local authority inspectors. 159 parents responded to the questionnaire seeking their views about the school.

## Description of the school

Castlecroft is a larger than average primary school with a nursery. It is located in Castlecroft near Wolverhampton. While the majority of children are White British, an increasing proportion have a minority ethnic heritage. Very few are at an early stage of learning English. Children start the school with skills that are typical for their age. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and disabilities is below that found nationally. However, the proportion of children with a statement of special educational needs is above average. This is because Castlecroft has a visual impairment resources base attended by five children who have a statement for their visual impairment.

The school recently gained the Silver Artsmark award and Healthy Schools accreditation. It offers an 'Out of Hours Club'.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

'If I could turn back the clock I would have liked my childhood years to have been spent at Castlecroft Primary School...well done to all concerned'.

This is a good school. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of education provided; several comments like the one quoted above were written on the questionnaires.

The headteacher's strong vision that all children will succeed whatever their background or ability is realised in a stimulating and exciting learning atmosphere. 'We are all different and we are all special' is the message prominently displayed in the hall. All children are considered special and staff go the extra mile to nurture their gifts and talents. The quality of the relationships and the secure and caring environment helps even the most timid child to grow in confidence. The school knows it is good; the inspector agrees on the whole but thinks behaviour and children's personal development are outstanding.

'Enjoy and achieve' is at the heart of the school's aims for the children and they do. They receive a good start in the nursery and reception classes and continue to achieve well as they move through the school because teaching and the curriculum are good. By the end of Year 6, children reach high standards, especially in science. The school keeps detailed records about individual children's progress but is not using these to keep a close enough eye on how well children are doing as they move from the Foundation Stage to Year 2. Teachers use a wide variety of approaches to learning. As a result, all children are engaged, motivated and learn to work together effectively. This prepares them well for adult life. However, children would benefit from a clearer understanding of what they need to do to improve and have more opportunities to evaluate their own work.

The school is well run. Along with an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, the leaders have a steely determination to tackle those matters raised in the school's self-evaluation, for example, the plan to develop curriculum links between the Foundation Stage and Year 1. The issues raised in the last inspection have been successfully addressed and the younger children are benefiting from well resourced outside classrooms. The governors are supportive and ensure that resources are available to fund planned developments. Regular reports are made to governors, although they could do more to evaluate the impact of new initiatives.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

All children whatever their background or ability do well at Castlecroft. By the end of Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are above the national average and exceptionally high in science. Evidence of their good progress emerged from conversations with children and was seen in the quality of work in their books and on

display. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities make very good progress because of the very high quality support they receive.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Children's personal development is exemplary. They are keen to learn, arrive punctually and attend regularly. They relish responsibility. The school council proudly explained how they have helped to improve the toilets and lunchtime seating arrangements. There are plenty of opportunities for them to take responsibility. Children explained how they organise equipment for the lunchtime 'Huff and Puff' activities. Two school office monitors said 'We enjoy answering the 'phone. We pretend we're at work in an office.' A Year 6 girl explained how much she had learned from taking part in interviews for the manager of the after-school club. The school's special rule, 'Always treat others as you would like them to treat you' underpins the very positive, inclusive atmosphere. Children have a good awareness of diversity and listen respectfully to each other as they talk about their different backgrounds.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Parents acknowledge that 'Castlecroft is a very caring school in every way.' There are robust arrangements for health and safety checks, risk assessments and child protection. Relationships between adults and children are extremely positive. Children say they feel able to approach the staff with things that concern them. One parent commented 'Every effort is made to promote the well-being of the children and the Every Child Matters Agenda is evident throughout the school.' From the nursery onwards, children are encouraged to explore their feelings and consider the needs of others. Assemblies provide regular opportunities for quiet reflection and prayer as well as times of celebration and praise for achievements; for example, one boy proudly showed the medal he had received from a local football hero.

Children are taught well. This was clear in the lessons seen and in the discussions with children about what they had learned. The support for those children with visual impairment and those with learning difficulties is of the highest quality and significantly contributes to their success. The school has given a lot of thought to the design of the curriculum and there is a strong focus on the creative arts and music. Consequently, children receive a broad range of rich and varied experiences. One parent wrote 'The breadth of the curriculum through theme weeks, educational visits, residential visits and Christmas performances is excellent.' The children also enjoy a wide range of sporting and creative enrichment activities at lunchtime and beyond the school day.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

This grade is explained above.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

This grade is explained above.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a well led school. There is a real sense of teamwork and commitment to realise the shared vision of ensuring all children reach their potential. Parents speak very highly of the headteacher's leadership. Staff describe her as inspirational. School self-evaluation involves staff, governors, children and parents and accurately details the school's strengths and weaknesses. There is a strong desire to address any area of weakness and these are clearly identified in the school improvement plan. Governors support the school well. They provide appropriate challenge regarding the school's finances. They are involved in a regular programme for checking teaching and how well children are progressing. Since the last inspection, the curriculum has become more creative and there have been significant improvements in the Foundation Stage outside classroom. The school has plans to improve, knows itself well and is in a good position to go from strength to strength.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.



**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

What a great school! Thank you for welcoming me to Castlecroft. I enjoyed talking to you and finding out about all the things you do. I wish I could go with children in Years 5 and 6 on their visit to Hauteville sur Mer in Normandy. Amusez-vous bien!

These are some of the things I liked about your school:

- Castlecroft is a very special place where everyone is valued and included.
- You enjoy coming to school and your behaviour is outstanding.
- Teachers and support staff work very hard to make learning fun. Some of you told me how much you enjoyed dressing up as pirates during 'Writing week'.
- You have some good equipment to help you learn in the outside areas and I liked your vegetable patches.
- I enjoyed talking to the school council and hearing about how they improved the toilets and reorganised the seating at lunchtime.
- You have a lot of interesting clubs and activities to take part in at lunchtime and after school. The Spanish café was muy buen!
- The photographs I saw of your production of Joseph made it look very exciting.
- I liked the displays of your work - especially the puppets in the entrance!

Mrs Keech, the governors and the staff do a good job and have plans to improve the school even more. They are going to help you to assess your own work and make sure you know how to make it even better.