

Caister Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120795
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339779
Inspection dates	21–22 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Martin James

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Hird
Headteacher	Coral Brinklow
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 March 2007
School address	Kingston Avenue Caister-on-Sea Great Yarmouth Norfolk NR30 5ET
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 26 lessons or parts of lessons, studied many samples of pupils' work and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide variety of documentation including teachers' planning, the school development plan, monitoring and evaluation sheets, assessment records, safeguarding information and the reports from the school improvement partner. The responses from the pupils' and staff questionnaires were analysed, as were the 105 responses from the parents' and carers' questionnaires received during the inspection.

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

- the extent to which teachers made suitable allowance in their planning for the different needs of pupils, especially the more able
- the extent to which different subjects were used to enhance learning and progress in English and mathematics
- pupils' understanding of different cultures and religions, both in the United Kingdom and globally
- the school's policies and procedures for the care, guidance and support of its pupils, and safeguarding.

Information about the school

The school is much larger than most primary schools. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational need. There is an after school club, that can accommodate up to 16 pupils, on the same site. It is managed by the school governors. In recognition of its work, the school has received the Healthy Schools, Artsmark and Activemark awards.

At the time of the inspection an acting headteacher was in post, following the retirement of the previous headteacher.

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

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. It also has some significant strengths. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, and their attitudes and behaviour are good. They adopt healthy life-styles and they feel safe. Care, guidance and support are good, with the welfare and safety of its pupils being a priority of the school. Safeguarding procedures are carried out rigorously. Parents hold very positive views about the school. One said, typically, 'I am very pleased with the school. My child has progressed well and enjoys the happy atmosphere.' When pupils start Year 3 standards are usually broadly average. By the end of Year 6 standards remain broadly average overall, although standards in writing are just below average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive much well-directed help and support, and this enables them to make good progress.

In all lessons, teachers relate well to pupils and teaching assistants are well deployed in supporting pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers make good use of a variety of resources and teaching strategies to make lessons interesting. Lessons are generally well planned, but assessment information is not always used well enough to ensure that work is challenging, especially for more able pupils. Helpful advice is given to pupils in class, but, whilst useful comments are often added in books, the targets provided for pupils do not always give them a clear understanding of how to improve their work. Pupils enjoy the good range of visits, visitors and clubs that enrich the curriculum. The school routinely reviews its curriculum, with a current emphasis being placed, for example, on the increased use of numeracy and, especially, literacy, in other subjects, as these links have not been fully exploited in the past. Pupils learn about other religions and cultures, but their knowledge is limited because they do not yet have enough opportunities to communicate with people from these cultures, either within the United Kingdom or beyond.

The acting headteacher and other members of staff have successfully provided a pleasant environment, where the pupils enjoy their learning. Staff and governors show a clear commitment to improving the school further, particularly recognising the need to improve the progress being made by the pupils. The quality of the school's self-evaluation has improved and is now good, and, as a result, current planning shows a clear awareness of the ways to take the school forward. This planning, coupled with the improvements that have been made recently, shows that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their skills through other subjects of the curriculum
 - ensuring that targets provide pupils with very clear guidance on what they need to do to improve.
- Make better use of assessment information to:
 - ensure that the work provided for pupils is adequately challenging, especially for those who are more able.
- Improve pupils' awareness of other communities and cultures by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to find out about, and communicate with, people from cultures and backgrounds other than their own, both within the United Kingdom and globally.

About 40% of 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 enjoy their learning, and they readily settle down to the tasks they are given. The school's data on their progress, and the work seen in classrooms, show that their achievement is satisfactory. Attainment in Year 6 is broadly average, although pupils' performance in writing is not as strong as in the other key subjects. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well as the result of the wide variety of strategies, such as being involved in the 'Success Zone', and support they are provided with. The pupils' achievement, together, for example, with their confidence in working collaboratively with others, means that the school is preparing them adequately for their future economic well-being.

Pupils clearly like school very much, and this is reflected in their good behaviour. They have sensible attitudes to their work. Pupils are polite and courteous, and they move around the school in an orderly manner. Pupils feel safe in school, and they express confidence in the school's ability to sort out any issues that do arise. One pupil was happy to report that, 'My school is a safe place.' Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay healthy. In most cases they eat fruit and healthy meals, and they readily take part in physical exercise opportunities. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, although their understanding of the multicultural society in which we live is less strong.

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Pupils readily and conscientiously take on the many responsibilities that the school offers them. The school councillors are proud of their role, and they recognise that they are working on behalf of other pupils. Pupils are also very involved in the wider town community, through such things as fund raising and taking part in musical activities in the local church. Pupils particularly value their involvement with the Caister lifeboat.

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	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	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	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers organise their classrooms well, and they create a welcoming learning environment. They are well supported by their teaching assistant colleagues, especially in relation to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They use a good range of strategies to inform and enthuse the pupils, including using the interactive whiteboards, and they relate well to the pupils. Teachers do not always use assessment information well enough to ensure that individuals are all suitably challenged in the tasks given to them. For example, a small number of more able pupils commented that their work was sometimes too easy. Pupils receive much help and support during lessons when they need advice. However, although pupils are given targets for improving their work, discussions suggest that some do not know them well enough to support their learning.

Pupils speak enthusiastically about the good range of outings and after school clubs

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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that enhance the curriculum. Pupils were particularly enthused by their visit to Whitwell Hall. Pupils also enjoy the learning opportunities provided in the school's own very pleasant grounds, and they readily participate in lessons in both French and German. Planning ensures that suitable provision is made for all subjects. The school has begun to develop links between these subjects, but there is a recognition that these have not yet been fully developed in relation to employing numeracy and, especially, literacy in other subjects.

Staff are very committed to the care and safety of their pupils, and parents are very appreciative of the way in which the school looks after their children. Pupils say that they settle quickly into their new surroundings when they join the school. Child protection procedures are good, and staff are alert to signs that any pupil might be distressed or anxious. Outside agencies are used effectively to support pupils when a need is identified. They are deployed especially well when supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The Nurture Group and the after school club provide further evidence of the way in which the school prioritises the welfare of its pupils. Safety checks and risk assessments are routinely carried out. Pupils are taught about the importance of healthy living, and they are reminded of the need to take care and stay safe, for instance when using computers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher, supported well by other members of staff, has been successful in creating a caring and happy environment for the pupils, and good care is also taken to ensure that no form of discrimination is evident in the school. Safeguarding procedures are consistently and effectively applied. The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement is satisfactory, focusing the school on well-judged priorities. The school's self-review has been accurate in identifying strengths and areas for development. For example, the current focus on improving standards in writing is a most suitable priority for the school. Community cohesion and pupils' understanding of cultural diversity are satisfactory. There are strong community links both in school and locally, but, in its own evaluation, the school accepts that it has not yet enhanced this provision by significantly embracing different communities and cultures, either in the United Kingdom or around the world. However, a start has been made through initial approaches being made to schools in Birmingham and China.

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Subject leaders demonstrate a sound understanding of their various subjects, and they have actively supported strategies for making improvements. At present they have limited opportunities to observe lessons in other classes, although plans are firmly in hand for this to happen more frequently, especially when different subjects become priorities for review. Governors are fully involved, for example, in producing the school development plan and monitoring its implementation. However, they recognise that they have not always monitored closely enough the progress that pupils make as they move through the school. The school works well with parents to enhance their children's learning, especially at the point where they enter the school. There are also good working relationships with the infant school, which occupies a site in the same grounds. This not only allows for the ready transfer of information and sharing of resources, but also greatly eases transition from one establishment to the other.

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	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	3

Views of parents and carers

In responding to the questionnaire, a very large majority of parents and carers were positive about the school's provision, both in terms of the care the school takes of their children and the progress it helps them make. They were particularly positive about the staff. Comments such as, 'The staff are very friendly, and they let you know what is going on in daily school life. I am very pleased with my daughter's education at this school,' and, 'The headteacher is very welcoming,' confirm their

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view.

A few responses indicated that the school did not always deal effectively with incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found no evidence to support this view, either in the school's records, in observations or in discussions with pupils during lessons and break times.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Caister Junior 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 105 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 350 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	39	63	60	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	44	59	56	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	25	24	76	72	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	22	74	70	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	32	64	61	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	25	24	74	70	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	22	72	69	8	8	1	1
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)	34	32	63	60	2	2	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	27	26	72	69	3	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	25	66	63	5	5	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	20	74	70	6	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	32	63	60	4	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	38	46	38	46	4	4	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 all 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 pupils' 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.



23 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Caister Junior School, Caister-on-Sea, NR30 5ET

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed our visit and it was a pleasure talking to you. My one colleague especially liked talking to the school council, and we all enjoyed joining you in assembly and in lessons. I am writing to tell you what we found out about the school, what we think is good, and what we think could be made better. Overall, you are in a satisfactory school, where you are making steady progress with your work. The acting headteacher and other staff know what they need to do to make the school better.

These things are some of the strengths of the school:

- Teachers provide you with lessons which you enjoy.
- Your behaviour and your attitudes to your work are good.
- Those of you who need special help with your work are making good progress.
- You know how important it is to eat healthy food and take exercise.
- The staff know you well and take good care of you.
- Your parents are very pleased with the school.

These are things the school has been asked to improve.

- Make sure you reach higher standards in your writing.
- Make sure that you all get work in lessons that suits you and is hard enough for you.
- Give you greater opportunities to become more aware of people from communities and cultures different from your own.

You can help too, for example by telling your teacher if you think the work is too easy for you.

We wish you all good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully,

Martin James
Lead Inspector

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