

Castle Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	102563
Local authority	Royal Borough of Kingston on Thames
Inspection number	376738
Inspection dates	13–14 March 2012
Lead inspector	Grace Marriott

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	504
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jennie Walters
Headteacher	Lou Anderson
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 November 2008
School address	Buckland Road Chessington Surrey KT9 1JE
Telephone number	020 8397 3951
Fax number	020 8397 3626
Email address	admin@castlehill.rbksch.org

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Grace Marriott	Additional inspector
Fatiha Maitland	Additional inspector
Michael Sutherland-Harper	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 25 lessons or part lessons taught by 16 teachers. In addition, inspectors heard pupils read and made short observations of the teaching of phonics (pupils learning letter patterns and the sounds they represent). They held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and governors. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including its self-evaluation and development plans, and pupils' work. Inspectors analysed 111 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 94 completed by pupils and 49 completed by staff.

Information about the school

Castle Hill is a larger than average primary school. Pupils come mainly from White British backgrounds with about a quarter of minority ethnic heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is higher than average with the main needs being related to speech and language. The school has a specialist speech and language unit for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The Early Years Foundation Stage has morning and afternoon Nursery classes and three Reception classes. The school meets the government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 2. The governing body manages the children's centre which was separately inspected at the same time as the school. There are also a privately-run playgroup and breakfast and after-school clubs on site which were not part of this inspection. The school has a number of awards, including the Artsmark and Sportsmark. The present headteacher was appointed to the post in January 2012.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory and improving school. Pupils enjoy learning. As one said, 'We learn something new every day and it's fun.' The Nursery and Reception classes give children a good start and they make good progress, as do disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory, which is why the school is not yet judged to be good.
- Teaching is satisfactory over time but an increasing proportion is good. As a result, in many lessons pupils are challenged well and progress well as a result. The impact of teaching is not yet consistent and sometimes expectations are not high enough. Information from assessment is not always used effectively to give pupils enough guidance on improving their work.
- Pupils' attainment is average by the end of Year 6, and better in reading and mathematics than writing because pupils do not have enough opportunities across the curriculum to write for a variety of purposes. Expectations for handwriting and presentation are inconsistent. In the past, progress in Key Stage 2 has been too slow and not enough pupils have achieved the higher levels but current pupils are making satisfactory progress and more are now achieving well.
- The school is a friendly place where pupils feel safe. They behave well in lessons and around school. Bullying is rare and pupils, parents and carers are confident that any issues are dealt with promptly. Parents and carers are positive about and supportive of the school.
- The recently appointed headteacher is ambitious for the school and pupils, parents, carers, staff and governors respond positively to her leadership. Senior leaders know where improvement is needed and action plans are starting to have an impact, particularly on the sharing of good practice. Leaders monitor progress and teaching but systems are relatively new and not fully embedded. The governing body is active but not focused enough on how well pupils are

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making progress.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good by December 2012 through:
 - improving the use of assessment to identify the next steps in learning
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve, through the systematic sharing of good practice.

- Raise attainment and increase the rate of progress in writing by:
 - teachers modelling writing techniques more systematically so that pupils know how to improve their writing
 - providing more opportunities across the whole curriculum for pupils to practise their skills by writing for different purposes
 - increasing the emphasis on good handwriting and presentation.

- Ensure that the monitoring and evaluation by the governing body is more sharply and systematically focused on pupils' progress.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Many children join the Nursery and Reception classes with knowledge, skills and understanding which are below the expectations for their age. They settle happily, making particularly good progress in personal and social skills; learning to work and play together well. Children make good progress in learning to read, write and count, though their progress is slower in writing. The children responded very well in one lesson to the story of 'The Giant Turnip' which was being used to develop literacy and numeracy skills. Some children weighing vegetables had a lively conversation about why the potato was heavier than the broccoli, even though it was smaller. They made good progress in their understanding and in their ability to explain their reasons. Others were making good progress in writing by learning how to write a letter to the old man in the story. These and similar activities, together with assessment records, show that by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, most children are working at levels close to expectations in all areas except writing which remains below expectations.

Pupils are enthusiastic in lessons and enjoy working together in pairs or small groups. In Key Stage 1, most pupils make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 2, they reach broadly average levels. In Key Stage 2, although pupils' attainment is average overall, progress last year was inadequate for more-able pupils because too

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few achieved the higher levels. Observation, discussions, school records and pupils' current work indicate that more-able pupils are now making better progress and working at above average levels. A discussion with the best mathematicians in Year 6 showed that they are working at levels typically expected in secondary school. In all year groups disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language often make better progress than their peers.

Progress in writing in all year groups is satisfactory. In some lessons, pupils were keen to improve their writing but not clear about how to do this. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading and say that they read at home for pleasure. Attainment in reading is average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in the younger classes make satisfactory progress overall and better progress when the teaching is good. For example in a phonics session, they were successfully finding new words with 'ow' which sound the same but are spelt differently. Older pupils make satisfactory progress but are not always confident in applying their knowledge of phonics when reading independently.

Quality of teaching

The teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The attractive and well-organised indoor and outdoor activities encourage children to want to explore and investigate as they play together. The good balance seen of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children helps to develop important social and learning skills, at the same time as helping children to learn the basics of reading, writing and mathematics.

In the other year groups the teaching is more variable, but never less than satisfactory, and much of it is good. In the Year 3 mathematics lessons, for example, the work was well matched to pupils' different needs and pupils were making good progress. The most-able mathematicians in the classes were being challenged to learn how to use a protractor to measure accurately acute, reflex and right angles. Other pupils were using their knowledge of shapes such as a square or a rectangle to identify right angles. In other lessons teachers were developing pupils' speaking and listening skills well through encouraging discussion and introducing the correct technical vocabulary. In some lessons, teachers were not consistently using probing questions to check pupils' knowledge and challenge them to work at a higher level. Teachers are not always making their expectations for the quality and quantity of writing clear enough and marking, though regular, does not always give pupils specific enough guidance on how to improve their work.

Teaching contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The range of work on display shows how pupils have been helped to explore similarities and differences and appreciate other faiths, cultures and experiences. Books and resources help pupils to develop their understanding of the area and country in which they live. Almost all parents and carers think that their children are well taught. The inspection evidence supports their judgement in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage but elsewhere teaching is more variable and the impact of

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teaching over time is satisfactory.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school strongly promotes pupils' safety and personal development. Relationships are good and staff and pupils treat each other with respect. Pupils are polite and move round the school safely, showing consideration for others. All this reflects the good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The inspection evidence indicates that behaviour over time has improved. Pupils listen well in lessons both to each other and to adults and concentrate well on their work.

Pupils could explain different types of bullying very clearly and knew what they should do if it happened. They trust adults to sort things out. Pupils understand the sort of risks they face in their everyday lives. They said that they know how to keep themselves safe online. They also knew a lot about fire safety and why it is important for everyone to leave the buildings quickly if there is an emergency. The school building and grounds are well kept, which indicates that pupils and staff take pride in their school.

Most parents and carers believe that behaviour is good and that the recently introduced policy is having a positive effect. The inspection team shares their positive view of behaviour. Attendance has improved and is continuing to rise. The number of persistent absentees is declining, but the school still has to work hard with a few families who are not yet convinced of the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and leadership team are strongly committed to improving the school and staff are very supportive of the direction it is taking. The school's strengths, for example, in its provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have been maintained and built upon. The impact of improvement plans is evident in better teaching and faster progress, particularly in Key Stage 2. Senior staff are able to analyse and use data to set challenging targets for attainment and progress. Other staff are not as confident and professional development is being targeted to ensure that the teaching staff understand and use the data to identify exactly what needs to be done to accelerate pupils' progress further. The improvements clearly show the school's continuing capacity for further improvement.

The governing body is well informed about the school and provides good support and a satisfactory level of challenge. Governors have taken effective action in some areas, for example on attendance, but have been less effective in monitoring and challenging on issues relating to pupils' progress. Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination underpin all the school's work. The monitoring and tracking of the progress of pupils with different needs are thorough and ensure that

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targeted intervention programmes are put into place quickly. The success of these programmes is monitored and provision amended as necessary. As a result, disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language often make better progress than their peer group. The school makes very effective use of a wide range of services to support pupils and their families, particularly those with speech and language difficulties, as well as those whose circumstances may make them potentially vulnerable. Arrangements for safeguarding fully meet statutory requirements.

The curriculum is being extensively remodelled to make sure that it meets the needs of all pupils. The changes are focusing strongly on providing a good range of experiences which help to raise pupils' aspirations for what they can achieve. The aim is also to make sure that work in different subjects supports progress in basic skills. This is starting to happen but the leadership team is aware that there is scope to take this much further, particularly in relation to developing pupils' writing. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and reflects the range of cultures in the school. Activities which enabled the school to achieve the Artsmark and Sportsmark enrich the curriculum, as do events such as the visit of the theatre group shortly before the inspection. The school has worked hard to establish good relationships with parents and carers. They are encouraged to take advantage of the good range of information and services which help them to support their children's learning. As a result, most feel well informed, and have confidence in the school.

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



15 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Castle Hill Primary School, Chessington KT9 1JE

Thank you very much for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited Castle Hill. We enjoyed meeting and talking to so many of you. We were delighted to find that you enjoy school; as one of you said, 'Learning is fun.' The youngest children get a good start to their education and as you get older you make satisfactory progress, though most of you make faster progress in reading and mathematics than you do in writing. We think you behave well and are pleased to see that you get on well with each other and do not think bullying is a problem. Your attendance has improved and you know that it is important to arrive at school on time. You told us that you enjoy reading and that many of you read regularly at home. This is a good way in which you, your parents and carers and the school can work together.

Your headteacher, the staff and the governors all want Castle Hill to improve from a satisfactory school where some things are good, to a school where everything is good.

- We have suggested some ways in which teachers can challenge you to do better and are asking them to give you more ideas about how to improve your work.
- We think you could be achieving higher standards in writing so we have asked the school to make sure that you have lots of opportunities to write in different subjects and for different purposes.
- The school governors work hard to support the school and make sure that you get a good education. They could do an even better job if they had more information about how well you are doing, so we have asked the school to tell the governors more about your progress.

I hope you continue to enjoy school, work hard and attend regularly.

Yours sincerely

Grace Marriott
Lead inspector

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