

Castle Hill Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116005
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	357863
Inspection dates	30 November 2010–1 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Diane Wilkinson

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	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Dixon
Headteacher	John Martin
Date of previous school inspection	9 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and observed seven teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils, and spoke to a small number of parents and carers collecting their children from school. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at analyses of pupils' progress, development planning and monitoring, local authority reports, a range of policies and procedures including those associated with safeguarding, curriculum planning documents and a sample of pupils' work. They also scrutinised questionnaires returned by 71 parents and carers, 96 pupils and 27 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which improvements in provision for English are helping to raise attainment.
- The achievement of girls and pupils with significant special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- How well pupils gain an awareness of diversity in the United Kingdom and the global community.

Information about the school

Castle Hill Junior School has two classes in each year group. It is consistently oversubscribed. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage with a very small minority speaking English as an additional language. Among others, the school holds the Activemark and Healthy School awards.

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

1

Main findings

Castle Hill Junior is an outstanding school. The inspirational headteacher's determination that the school will offer the best to its pupils so that they can fully capitalise on their strengths and talents is shared by the whole school community. The motto, 'Aim for Excellence' is embedded exceptionally well in all the school's work. Extremely thorough and accurate self-evaluation continually drives forward improvement very successfully. Leaders and managers at all levels are excellent. For example, the deputy headteacher's outstanding skill in monitoring and tracking pupils' progress has ensured subject and year leaders have an excellent awareness of where improvement is needed. This helps them to make an especially strong contribution to the drive for improvement. The governing body supports the school's work equally well, especially in important aspects such as partnerships and engagement with parents and carers, helping to achieve excellence in these areas. Strengths such as these ensure the school is exceptionally well placed to improve further.

Due to high quality support and guidance, and the excellent programme for pupils' personal development, their outcomes in this area are outstanding. In particular, the excellent safeguarding arrangements ensure pupils are safe at all times, giving their parents and carers total confidence in this aspect. Pupils' awareness of how to live a safe and healthy lifestyle is excellent. Behaviour is consistently outstanding because staff and pupils themselves expect it to be so. Pupils are exceptionally mature, friendly and very responsible young people; a strength which is regularly praised by visitors to the school. The school is a very cohesive community. Pupils have a good awareness of different groups in the wider community and there are plans in place to enhance this further.

Pupils' attainment has risen since the last inspection and continues to do so. Already high in mathematics and science, the school continues to work strenuously to address those aspects that are limiting pupils' attainment in English from reaching the same level. The school has successfully addressed weaknesses in reading and there is now a strong focus on improving handwriting, punctuation, spelling and vocabulary, especially in the younger classes. Achievement is good, with the school working very hard to make this even better. In writing, staff have been especially successful in boosting boys' achievement, including of those with significant educational needs. There is a determination to achieve the same success for girls working at average levels, and boost their already good rate of progress. Strategies put in place to address this are bringing about improvements although the effect on attainment is not yet apparent.

Pupils' great enjoyment of school is the result of the excellent curriculum and the especially good relationship pupils have with staff. Activities are interesting and relevant and motivate pupils especially well. Pupils can always see a point to their learning, clearly recognising how it can help them in the future. This ensures all pupils make equally good

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progress in lessons. Although there have been a number of unavoidable staff changes and absences in the older classes over the past year, teaching is uniformly good. The quality is improving and an increasing number of lessons are outstanding. Activities take very good account of priority areas, especially in writing.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on and extend the strategies in place to raise attainment in English to the same level as mathematics and science through:
 - strengthening pupils' vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and handwriting in the younger classes
 - providing activities that support and inspire girls who are working within the average levels in writing to make even faster rates of progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils are extremely mature, thoughtfully considering their responses and exhibiting a real skill at reflecting on the important things in life. The respect pupils show one another, holding open doors or making sure that everyone in the group they are working with is involved and happy with the arrangements, is excellent. Pupils really enjoy school, eagerly adopting the school's vision of capitalising on their opportunities. Consequently, they work very hard in lessons, continually considering what their teachers have told them they need to do to improve and increasingly identifying these areas themselves.

Pupils develop a great enthusiasm for healthy eating and regular exercise, demonstrating a very good awareness of safety in all their activities including the many sports activities on offer. Pupils take great pride in the responsibilities they take on, for example, as house captains or school senators, recognising that adults take very good account of their views. Pupils know that they are valued and respected and make an outstanding contribution to the local community; for example through the allotment club. Pupils' resulting self-esteem and recognition that they can succeed if they work very hard at something, is a considerable strength to use in the future.

Pupils achieve well through the good progress made in developing their academic skills and knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other vulnerable groups also achieve well due to the excellent guidance and support they receive. Attainment on entry is mainly above average although some literacy skills are not so well developed. By the time pupils leave, weaker aspects of writing, especially with regard to spelling, vocabulary and handwriting, have largely been addressed although both staff and pupils are determined to raise attainment in writing even higher. Pupils skilfully use language to write effectively for a range of purposes, for example, persuasively encouraging the reader to adopt a point of view. Especially well-developed investigational skills help pupils attain high standards in science. The school has adopted a similar approach in mathematics, first ensuring that pupils' skills in calculation, measuring and data handling are very secure and then helping pupils to become very adept at using these skills in solving a range of problems.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

All pupils and their families fully recognise that pupils' well-being is at the forefront of the school's work. A wide range of agencies helps provide excellent support for vulnerable pupils, and procedures for encouraging good behaviour are outstanding. All staff are extremely vigilant as to the emerging needs of individuals, so intervention is swift and very effective when necessary.

Staff consistently plan activities that greatly enthuse pupils who easily identify the purpose of learning and clearly recognise that new skills are relevant to their present and future needs and interests. The enquiry-based learning in mathematics and science supports pupils' high attainment in these subjects especially well. A very focused programme for learning the sounds in words has raised attainment in reading well and that for writing is starting to catch up through the enhanced focus on skills such as spelling and creativity. A real success has been the way that drama has inspired boys' imagination and helped them to write much more effectively. The current focus on boosting the attainment of girls is already improving their progress. Senior leaders have worked hard to ensure that teaching is consistently good, despite a number of changes and absences. Significant strengths are the way in which staff encourage pupils' excellent engagement, behaviour and attitudes to learning. Challenging targets inspire pupils to achieve well because they are a regular feature of lessons. On a small minority of occasions, the pace of learning is rather slow

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and pupils' learning is not extended through using open-ended questions. Work is well marked although it is not always clear that pupils have responded well to the advice.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

High-quality provision and outstanding outcomes are the result of the concerted effort made by staff and governors to provide the very best for pupils. They have been exceptionally good at encouraging pupils and their parents and carers to support them in their work. The result is a highly effective school, which has an outstanding ethos for learning. Pupils' pride and commitment to their school and fellow pupils are exemplary.

The whole community is very effectively involved in monitoring and development planning. All stakeholders are continually consulted as to how to improve things and their advice is acted on. This has produced a highly cohesive community, firmly focused on driving forward improvement, giving the school an exceptional capacity for this. Governors are very supportive and challenging. They provide expertise in important aspects of the school's work, for example in the safe recruitment and vetting of staff. Leaders and managers are well aware that they regularly need to account for the impact they are having on school improvement.

Without exception, staff enjoy working in the school and respect their colleagues, accepting advice in the spirit it is given ♦ helping to make the school even better.

Excellent support is provided to help staff achieve their performance targets, most notably in the quality of support on offer to develop teaching skills. Staff point to this as a considerable strength, with teachers at the beginning of their careers rapidly developing into effective practitioners.

Provision for community cohesion is good. This, together with the constant adaptation of provision to meet individual needs, helps ensure pupils' equality of opportunity is especially good. The school is highly committed to ensuring there is no discrimination, including racial, within its community. Parents and carers feel very much part of the school community, being kept very well informed and exceptionally well engaged in supporting their children's learning. An outstanding range of partnerships supports pupils' education and welfare. For example, the Aim Higher project run by a local university provides excellent support in encouraging pupils to develop a desire to do their best. The school reciprocates especially well with regard to supporting students.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

The inspection team fully endorses parents' and carers' view of the school. Parents are highly appreciative of the school. Their views can be summed up in comments typically made such as, 'a fantastic school' and 'I would recommend this school to anyone'. Parents' and carers' total confidence in the leadership and management, safeguarding and other important areas is exceptionally well supported by inspection evidence. The results of these significant strengths are clearly seen in pupils' confidence in their safety and great enjoyment of school, the outstanding behaviour and politeness they exhibit and their excellent capacity to take on responsibility. Inspectors agree that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the future.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Castle Hill 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 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 256 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	66	23	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	72	20	28	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	42	59	28	39	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	62	24	34	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	49	69	21	30	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	63	25	35	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	61	28	39	0	0	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)	35	49	34	48	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	68	22	31	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	66	23	32	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	44	37	52	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	54	76	17	24	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	80	13	18	1	1	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.

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.



2 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Castle Hill Junior School, Basingstoke RG23 8BN

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We very much enjoyed the time we spent with you. I particularly want to thank the pupils who gave up their time to show us around the school and to speak with us. We think your school is outstanding and are delighted that you and your parents and carers think so too.

Here are some of the things we found out that were especially good.

- You are very mature, polite and thoughtful young people. Your behaviour is outstanding and you make an excellent contribution to your school and local community.
- The level of care and support you receive is excellent.
- Staff provide an outstanding range of activities that help prepare you really well for the future.
- You are well taught and make good progress so attainment is above average and especially good in mathematics and science.
- Staff and governors work really well with your parents and carers and other schools and organisations to help you get an outstanding education.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors have been very successful in helping the school to improve.

Here is what we have asked your school to improve.

- To help you to do as well in English as you do in mathematics and science, by encouraging you to carry on improving your writing skills. You can help by always trying to write neatly and spell accurately and by learning new words and phrases to help make your work really interesting.

Yours sincerely

Diane Wilkinson

Lead inspector

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