

Castle Hill Primary School

Halifax Road, Todmorden, West Yorkshire, OL14 5SQ

Inspection dates 27–28 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points and usually reach above average standards of attainment by the time they leave school. After a dip in standards in Year 6 in 2014, standards have returned to previous levels.
- Teaching is good with some that is outstanding. This is because teachers are particularly effective in devising activities that engage and captivate pupils' interests.
- Children in the early years make good progress. Teaching provides a strong focus on children's early number and language development.
- Reading is taught well across the school. Pupils quickly become fluent readers and develop a real love of books.
- The school's provision for cultural development is very strong. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures and religions.
- The curriculum is interesting and provides many opportunities for pupils to enjoy their learning. They take part in a wide range of clubs, sporting and musical events.
- Pupils behave sensibly and display good attitudes to learning.
- Parents are positive about the school and say their children learn well. They are given regular opportunities to find out about the work of the school.
- Leaders and governors have improved the quality of teaching through the robust use of appraisal systems and training. This has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
- Governors know the school well and make sure they understand what the data show about the performance of pupils and teachers. They ensure that the statutory requirements are met, particularly those to keep pupils safe.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress at lower Key Stage 2 is not consistently good because activities are not always well matched to pupils' varying needs and abilities.
- Work set for the most able pupils sometimes lacks challenge.
- Too few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment in writing at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills as part of work across the subjects they study are sometimes missed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, one of which was seen together with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils’ books and records of the learning of children in the Nursery and the Reception Year.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors. The lead inspector had a meeting with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 90 responses to Ofsted’s online parent questionnaire, Parent View, and the responses to parent surveys undertaken by the school. Inspectors also held informal discussions with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s own information on pupils’ current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors also took account of the 27 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Andrew Morley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Irene Lavelle	Additional Inspector
Sheryl Farnworth	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is above average in size.
- Almost all the pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding which supports pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The early years comprises of a Nursery class, which offers part-time places, and a Reception class, where children attend on a full-time basis.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure pupils' progress is accelerated at lower Key Stage 2 by making sure that:
 - information about pupils' performance is used in the planning of lessons so that activities are well matched to pupils' varying needs and abilities
 - leaders consistently check the quality of teaching to ensure all groups of pupils are making at least good progress.
- Further accelerate progress in writing, particularly for the most able pupils at Key Stage 2, so that a higher proportion of pupils reach the higher levels of attainment by the end of Year 6 by:
 - ensuring that grammar, spelling and punctuation skills are more systematically taught and assessed
 - making the best use of opportunities to develop writing skills in all subjects
 - having high expectations of the standards of presentation and writing in all classes.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership team works well together. It evaluates the school's performance and ensures its action plan carefully matches its choice of priorities to the school's identified needs. Effective leadership ensures that actions have a clear impact on progress and teaching and have led to an improving school.
- Leaders, including governors, are very committed to ensure that the school is inclusive. Staff are very well motivated and demonstrate a shared sense of responsibility for, and commitment to, the school's continued improvement. Ensuring positive relationships with parents, pupils and the local community are a priority for the school's leadership.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning, taking action where necessary, are generally good. Leaders recognise the need to ensure that they consistently check on the quality of teaching in classrooms to ensure that good progress is made by all groups of learners. This needs further strengthening at lower Key Stage 2. Leaders beyond the senior team, including subject leaders, are increasingly involved in the evaluation and monitoring of performance.
- Leaders have worked hard to ensure they have appropriate information on the attainment and progress of all pupil groups. However, this information is not always used effectively by teachers to ensure they provide the correct level of work for pupils' varying needs and abilities. They are currently reviewing their assessment procedures following the change to remove National Curriculum levels.
- The school makes good use of the primary school sports funding. It provides additional physical education lessons led by skilled sports coaches. The school has also used it to afford training for teachers so that they are more confident in their skills and knowledge. Pupils benefit from high-quality opportunities to take part in sports. This motivates pupils very well and is leading in turn to improved physical skills, health and well-being.
- The additional funding is targeted effectively in order to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. For example, it provides individual support for some pupils and resources for others. Gaps in attainment are narrowing quickly throughout the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively. The school's promotion of equality of opportunity in all of its work is good. Leaders are constantly alert to any variation in achievement and searching for new ways to overcome any weaknesses and prevent any discrimination.
- The school strongly promotes British values throughout all aspects of the school, including special event days. The school celebrates a range of festivals, including those of other cultures from around Britain. These enrich pupils' values, tolerance and understanding of Britain as a multicultural society and foster good relations.
- The curriculum is creative and enhanced by a wide range of visits. Pupils are very appreciative of the work with the artist in residence and the many extra-curricular activities. They enjoy learning through their topic work but opportunities to develop writing skills in other curriculum subjects are sometimes overlooked.
- The school works well in partnership with other local primary schools. As part of the local schools' network, the school checks the assessment of pupils' work, so that this is accurate and takes into account the standard of pupils' work more widely. Close links with Todmorden High School and the good arrangements for pupils to learn more about life and learning in a much bigger school mean that pupils face this change with confidence.
- Support from the local authority has been helpful to the school in checking its performance and in training for staff.
- School leaders and the governors make sure that all adults understand their role in keeping pupils safe; that statutory requirements are met and that the policies and procedures for this are up to date.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body carries out its statutory duties well and provides excellent support and challenge for the school's leaders. Governors manage their work very efficiently and understand how to hold the school to account. They have a good understanding of the school's performance data and are aware of the school's priorities to continue to improve. Governors check the school's work through a range of visits, such as to observe and monitor pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Members of the governing body check how well school leaders improve the quality of teaching. Decisions about teachers' pay are appropriately linked to their performance and responsibilities. The methods used when appointing new staff are very rigorous and effective. Governors track finances well and lead the school in deciding how to spend additional money, such as that to support disadvantaged pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school is a very happy, friendly and calm place in which to learn and work.
- Pupils are polite and kind to one another. Their horizons are widened through the good opportunities they are given to take responsibility, such as on the school council and as playground leaders. They take their responsibilities very seriously and are developing very mature attitudes towards others.
- Older pupils, in particular, like helping younger pupils and provide good role models of behaviour in the playground and in other settings, such as the assembly and in the dining room. The younger pupils are very appreciative of the care of their older friends.
- Pupils' behaviour is typically good, both in the classroom where they listen carefully, cooperate well and contribute eagerly, and around the school. This good behaviour has a positive impact on the good progress made in lessons. Pupils are clear about what the school expects of them because whole-school strategies for ensuring good behaviour are consistent in all classes.
- Attendance is average and has been rising because of the school's work to encourage parents and pupils about the importance of being at school regularly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils benefit from a range of training about situations they might encounter and learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn how to be careful when cycling and how to take care when using the internet. Leaders think carefully about what pupils need to know about and check that adults are trained to help them.
- Pupils say that any kind of bullying is very rare. They acknowledge that there are a very few occasions when they might fall out with each other, but these are quickly sorted out. Often they resolve this between themselves because they get along so well and each person is valued. However, if they feel they need an adult to help them sort things out, they say there is always someone they can talk to.
- The environment is very well maintained and the arrangements for play time help pupils to feel secure.
- Parents who responded to the online survey, and who spoke to inspectors, indicate that their children feel safe at school and thoroughly enjoy school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils' work, the school's assessment data and evaluations of teaching, together with inspectors' direct observations of pupils' learning, all provide evidence that teaching over time is good and occasionally outstanding.
- Good classroom management, coupled with teachers' high expectations of work and behaviour, ensures that teaching takes place in a purposeful and calm learning atmosphere. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' good progress.
- Teachers plan work around themes that pupils find interesting and provide them with a wide range of experiences. For example, the older pupils thoroughly enjoyed an extract from *The Piano* as their inspiration to develop the use of similes and metaphors in their writing.
- In most cases, teachers make very good use of the school's assessment data in order to set and review targets for pupils' learning and to plan well for their varying needs and abilities. However, this is not consistent across the school, particularly at lower Key Stage 2. On occasions, the work set for the most able is too similar and is not sufficiently demanding for those pupils capable of working at higher levels.
- There are many good examples of effective marking of pupils' work. Pupils appreciate and respond to the guidance provided by their teachers.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well to ensure that the work given to those who have special educational needs, as well as to others who need extra help, is carefully sequenced so that all make good progress towards their learning targets.
- Pupils throughout the school talk positively about how they enjoy lessons, especially reading, mathematics and topic work. They are given many opportunities in which to develop their reading skills. However, they are not consistently and systematically taught grammar, spelling and punctuation, which sometimes detract from their writing.
- They describe the progress they have made and talk with pride about their work. Books are generally tidy but not all pupils take enough pride in the presentation of their work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- From their different starting points, pupils leave school achieving standards at the end of Key Stage 2 that are usually above the national average in all subjects.
- Children make a good start in the early years, settling in quickly and showing enjoyment in all they do. They work and play well together, taking turns and sharing fairly. Children grow in confidence and are willing to make choices for themselves. In 2014, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was above the average for their age.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is given a high priority and this has ensured that the proportion of pupils going on to meet the expected standards in the Year 1 phonics check is above the national average.
- At Key Stage 1, pupils are increasingly confident and continue to progress in their learning. At the end of Year 2 in 2014, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was average. Current performance, however, in Year 2 is higher, with more pupils on track to achieve above average levels of attainment in their reading, writing and mathematics.
- The progress of pupils at lower Key Stage 2 shows some variance, particularly in the expectations of writing. Pupils do not always work to their potential and work produced is not consistently at the standard they are capable of.
- By the time they leave school at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are achieving above the national average. In 2014, the group of Year 6 pupils did not reach the same standards as previous groups. However, school data and inspection evidence show that current pupils are making good progress and that standards have returned to those reached previously.
- Reading is a strength and pupils spoke with great enthusiasm about reading a range of books, including fact and fiction. Pupils demonstrate good phonetic skills and are achieving well at all phases of the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants, who understand each individual pupil's needs well. The plans for this support are carefully put together and regularly checked to ensure that they are overcoming the issues each pupil faces. Consequently, these pupils make good progress and become confident in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In Year 6 in 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in reading was about three terms behind other pupils in the school and four terms behind other pupils nationally. In writing and mathematics, they were about one term behind others in the school and three terms behind others nationally. Despite these gaps, school data and inspection evidence show that gaps are narrowing quickly throughout the school and that disadvantaged pupils are making the same good progress as other pupils.
- The most able pupils are not yet making consistently good progress across Key Stage 2 to ensure they achieve the standards they are capable of, particularly in writing. Too few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment in writing at the end of Key Stage 2.

The early years provision is good

- Children make at least good progress from their different starting points and develop a range of skills and knowledge that prepares them well for learning in Year 1. Nursery children settle in well and have quickly become used to the school's routines. They start the day happily and productively, and enjoy sharing their learning with adults. Adults ask good questions to get children to think more deeply about what they are doing. For example, the children were actively engaged in investigating 'icebergs melting' with their friends and encouraged to predict what might happen by their teacher.
- Children in the Reception class benefit from inspiring and well-planned activities, with a strong emphasis on developing children's number and language skills and extending their vocabulary. For example, they combined a series of coins to make eight pence when buying items from a shop. Children's progress was carefully checked and teachers skilfully clarified correct computation to maximise the progress made.
- The accommodation is used well by staff and enables children to learn well in all areas of learning. The outdoor area is used effectively to extend children's learning through a range of adult-led activities and those that the children choose for themselves.
- Assessment is detailed and used very effectively to plan the next steps which children need to take to move their learning on. All adults are involved in observing and recording children's progress and keep a close check on how well they are learning. They quickly identify any children who may need extra support, and make sure this is rapidly in place.
- The early years is led well. Records about children's learning are used well to identify what children need

to learn next, and that there are opportunities for them to take these next steps. Parents are regularly informed about children's progress and kept aware of what they are learning so they can support them at home.

- Leaders make sure that there are appropriate arrangements to keep children safe, and that the classroom is an inviting place in which to learn. Children's behaviour is good. They are cooperative and kind to one another and enjoy helping keep their classroom tidy.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	107520
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	449733

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	287
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Wilson
Headteacher	Janet Leggett
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2009
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