

# Inspection of a good school: Castlefort Junior Mixed and Infant School

Castlefort Road, Walsall Wood, Walsall, West Midlands WS9 9JP

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Inspection dates:

21–22 January 2020

## Outcome

Castlefort Junior Mixed and Infant School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Castlefort is a happy, welcoming school. Parents and carers value the care and attention all adults give to children's learning and well-being. One parent summed up similar comments by others, saying, 'All staff go above and beyond for each child.'

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils and want the best for them. Pupils know that teachers expect them to try hard. Pupils are proud to wear the 'little learner', 'learning champion' and 'learning ambassador' badges they gain for working hard and being helpful.

Pupils work and play together happily. They show caring attitudes towards each other. Older pupils enjoy helping younger ones. They act as 'playground leaders' and 'peace patrollers' at lunchtime. Pupils say that they feel safe in school because staff care for them. They know how to stay safe, for example when they use the internet, because they learn about it in school.

Pupils behave well. They say that bullying rarely happens. They are confident that adults deal with it quickly and fairly.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that links subjects together. As a result, pupils remember their learning over time in most subjects. However, in history pupils do not develop skills such as checking different views of historical events.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders plan the curriculum to link subjects together. This helps teachers sequence pupils' learning. As a result, pupils build up their knowledge and remember more. This works well in most subjects. In history, pupils learn facts well. However, they do not develop their understanding of the skills historians use, such as comparing different sources of information. For example, Year 5 pupils were not sure whether rulers, knights and peasants would all value the feudal system in medieval England.

Creative and enjoyable activities help pupils remember their learning. For example, Year 1 pupils remembered setting fire to model houses they had made to 're-create' the Great Fire of London.

Pupils' mental health, happiness and well-being are very important to all staff. The 'forest' nurture room and 'magic' sensory room provide calm and tranquil places for pupils to talk about their concerns.

Leaders and teachers make sure that pupils have experiences that help them to develop their talents and interests. Pupils enjoy making outdoor dens and using the forest school area. They enjoy using the outdoor gym and running the daily mile. Pupils enjoy visits to museums and theatres, and further afield to London. They raise money for charity and care for the environment.

Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. They know the difference between right and wrong. They show positive attitudes to their learning. Staff manage well the behaviour of the small number of pupils who find learning difficult so that it does not disrupt learning.

Teachers help children to learn phonics as soon as they start school. As a result, children quickly learn the sounds and the words they need to read fluently. Pupils across the school have reading lessons every day. This promotes a love of reading. Adults notice when any pupil falls behind, and they help them to catch up quickly. Pupils enjoy hearing their teachers read aloud to them. Teachers make sure that pupils read books that match their interests and reading skills. This extends pupils' vocabulary and helps them to achieve well.

In 2019, pupils did not make enough progress in writing by the end of key stage 2. Leaders quickly made changes to the sequence of the writing curriculum. Current pupils write confidently and accurately. Teachers give pupils resources to help them choose more challenging vocabulary. For example, Year 2 pupils use 'word wheels' to find alternatives to words such as 'big' and 'said'.

Children in the Reception class, those in 'sandcastles' nursery class and the two-year-olds in 'castle tots' enjoy school. This is because adults plan interesting and exciting learning activities. Adults know the children well and help them feel safe and secure. Adults understand how children learn. They prioritise children's language skills. They know when to direct what children do and when to let children follow their own interests. Children enjoy learning out of doors. For example, children enjoyed performing their dragon dance, waving banners they had made to make patterns in the air.

Teachers understand how to adapt their plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The extra help from teachers and teaching assistants ensures that these pupils gain confidence and achieve well.

Staff are proud to belong to Castlefort. They value leaders' work to ensure that their workload is manageable.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that there are effective systems in place to safeguard pupils. Staff are vigilant and understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They have regular training about protecting pupils from harm. Leaders follow up any safeguarding concerns promptly. Leaders make appropriate checks on all adults who work with pupils in the school. Leaders carry out thorough risk assessments to identify potential hazards. Leaders and teachers ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. All parents who responded to the online survey Parent View said that their children feel safe at school.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have devised clear curriculum topic plans which identify the information pupils need to know and remember. For example, leaders have planned the history curriculum so that pupils gain a good grasp of historical knowledge. Pupils remember what they have learned because history topics are appropriately sequenced. However, leaders have not ensured that history enquiry skills are as precisely sequenced and taught. As a result, teachers do not have sufficient clarification of the history skills pupils need. Leaders should implement their plans to refine the history curriculum in order to clarify the skills they want pupils to develop by the end of each topic.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged Castlefort Junior Mixed and Infant School to be good on 24–25 January 2012.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104204
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	10126214
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	264
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Peter Farmer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joanne Wilson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.castlefortjmischool.co.uk">www.castlefortjmischool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24–25 January 2012

## Information about this school

- The school has a Nursery class for children aged three to four years old. It also has nursery provision, 'castle tots', for two-year-olds.
- The school is a member of the Shire Oak Partnership, which provides learning opportunities linked to mathematics and science.

## Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, the two deputy headteachers and the leader for pupils with SEND. I met three members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. I spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- I looked at a range of information about the school, including content on the school's website and curriculum plans. I also analysed published information about the progress and attainment of pupils in national tests and assessments.
- I considered reading, writing and history in depth. I visited lessons and spoke to subject leaders, teachers and pupils about pupils' learning. I also looked at pupils' work and heard pupils read.
- I checked the school's work to keep pupils safe. I looked at policies, procedures and the school's central record of employment checks on adults working in the school to

ensure that they are suitable to work with children. I talked to pupils and parents about safeguarding and behaviour. I spoke to staff to check the school's safeguarding arrangements.

- I spoke to parents informally at the beginning of the day. I also took account of 21 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 17 to the Parent View free-text service.
- I considered 68 responses to the pupil survey and 12 responses to the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Helen Morrison, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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