

# Inspection of Castle Hill Junior School

Dryden Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 6QD

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Inspection dates: 12–13 February 2020

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

## What is it like to attend this school?

Castle Hill Junior School is a vibrant and fun place to be. One pupil spoke for many: 'Coming to school is like a rainbow over your head. It makes me happy.' Pupils particularly like learning mathematics and solving problems. Music is a strength. Pupils sing regularly, and all pupils learn to play a musical instrument. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in shows and music competitions. Pupils want to attend school because they enjoy their learning.

Pupils are taught the school's motto, to be 'ready, respectful and safe'. Pupils benefit from mental health guidance, sound therapy and many more programmes. Personal development provision is wide-ranging. For example, pupils learn about resilience and exploration through Castle Hill's 'learning knights.' They also participate in a range of clubs, such as gardening and construction. Pupils who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) participate well in the rest of the school.

Pupils told inspectors that behaviour has improved and that they feel safe in school. Incidents of bullying have reduced. Pupils trust adults to 'nip it in the bud' should it occur.

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

The school has been through a tricky patch with many changes. This includes several headteachers and a transfer of academy trust. Leaders have worked tirelessly to improve the school. The teaching of reading is a work in progress. This is also true of some subjects where the curriculum is in the early stages of implementation. Leaders know this and are acting to address weaknesses.

The delivery of the new curriculum is making a difference. Leaders have clarified for teachers what pupils need to learn and know. Pupils enjoy the school's chosen 'stunning starts' to topics and 'fabulous finishes'; for example, pupils recently enjoyed the visit of a 'bubble-ologist' to help them understand liquids and gases in science. Standards are rapidly rising in reading, writing and mathematics.

The trust is supportive. Staff appreciate the trust's new opportunities for training. Leaders work with teachers to help them think carefully about the activities they plan for pupils. However, teachers' planning is not strong enough in reading. Sometimes, teachers set activities that are too easy or too hard. Teachers do not consider carefully enough their choice of extracts and books. Struggling readers, including pupils with SEND, are sometimes given books with unfamiliar words they find hard to read. This makes learning to read more difficult and frustrating. There is a restricted choice of books for pupils to read for pleasure. This limits pupils' exploration and enjoyment of various children's authors.

The new curriculum for other subjects is in the early stages of implementation. Planning for these subjects is ambitious. Leaders want pupils to learn about experts

to broaden their knowledge; for example, when studying science, Year 6 pupils learned about Mary Anning's impact on fossil discovery. Pupils speak highly of such learning, but they have limited prior knowledge. This is because the previous curriculum did not enable pupils to remember more over time.

Inspectors agree with leaders that, sometimes, teachers do not readily move pupils on. This hinders pupils' learning; for example, when pupils have finished work, they sit quietly waiting for the next input from the teacher. At such times, pupils demonstrate patience and self-control. This is also evident outside lessons, where pupils are calm and orderly.

Parents and carers of pupils with SEND who attend the specially resourced provision are complimentary about the support and guidance they receive. This group of pupils participate fully in the life of the school and have access to the many clubs that are on offer.

Staff provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils respect each other and appreciate their differences. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the opportunities they have to contribute to society; for example, pupils contribute towards the school's work on reducing plastic waste. Pupils also can represent the school at the trust's pupil parliament.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Meticulous records show that leaders respond quickly to safeguarding concerns. Leaders involve outside agencies as appropriate, so that pupils are safe. Staff receive regular safeguarding updates. This includes the local risks that pupils face, such as gang violence and county lines criminal activity. Staff are vigilant and know exactly what to do if they have concerns about a pupil's welfare. Some parents have misgivings that senior leaders do not respond readily to safeguarding concerns. We found this not to be the case.

Trust representatives have undertaken unannounced checks to ensure that safeguarding procedures are robust. They understand their statutory duties to safeguard pupils and check to ensure that all adults are suitable to work with children.

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

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

- Teachers do not consistently deliver the reading curriculum well. Some teachers plan activities that may be too easy or too hard. On occasion, teachers choose texts that are too difficult for pupils to read and understand. Leaders need to make sure that teachers' subject knowledge and understanding of how to teach

reading develops further. Pupils who are learning to read should have books that contain only the sounds they know.

- There is a lack of stock for independent reading. This limits pupils' access to books they read for pleasure. Leaders need to develop pupils' love of reading by making sure that pupils have access to a rich range of books.
- The new curriculum is in the early stages of delivery. This means that pupils have limited prior knowledge in certain subjects. Leaders need to ensure that teachers' planning provides opportunities for pupils to revisit the key information they are learning. This is so they know more and remember more over time.
- Teachers' pedagogical knowledge is not consistent. Sometimes, teachers do not realise that a pupil has finished their work. When that occurs, pupils wait to be given more work to do. Leaders need to closely check that all pupils' needs are met so they make full use of lesson time.

## 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>	141373
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10121373
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	318
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	John West-Burnham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gemma Andrews
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.castlehillprimary.org.uk">www.castlehillprimary.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20–21 September 2017

## Information about this school

- The school was transferred to Asset Education Trust on 1 March 2019.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During this inspection, we held meetings with trustees, governors, the headteacher, senior leaders and parents whose children attend the specially resourced provision. We met with the subject leaders for English, mathematics, science and music. We also met with the office administrator who manages the single central record.
- The deep dives of reading, writing, mathematics, science and music were considered as part of this inspection. We spoke to subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work and met with teachers and pupils. We visited phonics lessons, heard pupils read and visited reading lessons.
- We also looked at the curriculum planning for history, art and geography. We looked at samples of work in these subjects to see how the curriculum was being delivered.

- We spoke to pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning to find out what it is like to be a pupil at Castle Hill Junior School. We also observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons.
- We considered the views of parents through informal discussions, meetings, previous school surveys and through taking into account the 54 responses to the Ofsted survey, Parent View, which included 34 free-text comments. We also considered the 36 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the eight responses to the pupil survey.
- We scrutinised a range of documents, including those related to curriculum planning and development, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, exclusions, the school's self-evaluation of its own performance and the school's development plans.

### **Inspection team**

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