

# Inspection of Castle Hill Community Primary School

Sidney Street, Folkestone, Kent CT19 6HG

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Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Castle Hill Community Primary is a friendly and welcoming school. Pupils take pride in upholding the school's values of respect, honesty, tolerance, perseverance and teamwork, using them to guide their conduct. They play an active role in caring for their friends across the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are involved in all aspects of school life. Staff and pupils build strong relationships in the school's own specialist provision. Pupils with SEND feel safe and learn basic skills well.

Leaders make sure that pupils learn to read and develop a love of reading. They provide opportunities for pupils to learn beyond the classroom. This includes trips to local sites and visits from performers across the community. While pupils enjoy their lessons, leaders have not thought enough about what pupils need to learn. The steps in learning across many subjects are unclear. Because of this, not enough pupils build the knowledge and skills they need.

Pupils feel safe and are confident in the adults around them. Behaviour is good. When pupils do misbehave, adults show a caring approach to improve their behaviour. Bullying is rare, and pupils and parents are confident that staff deal with this well.

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

Leaders prioritise reading across the school. Teachers in the early years help children to recognise the sounds that letters represent and build a love of stories. Teachers read to pupils every day, which helps them to develop a love of reading. They give extra reading time to pupils who read less frequently at home. There are, however, some pupils in key stage 2 who, because they missed learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, have not secured the key skills to read unfamiliar words. Leaders are aware of this and have plans in place to help them to catch up.

Similarly, pupils have fallen behind in mathematics. Teachers use short sessions in class to help pupils to catch up. However, the curriculum in mathematics does not identify clearly enough the order that pupils need to be taught new knowledge. Consequently, pupils have not mastered important building blocks and become muddled in their thinking. Leaders are aware of this and are working hard to fine tune the mathematics curriculum.

In subjects beyond reading, leaders know that learning is not planned well enough. Consequently, pupils across the school struggle to build essential knowledge and skills. Leaders do not provide teachers with enough guidance about curriculum content. This is also the case in the early years, where plans are too broad and do not support children in achieving well enough in all areas of their learning.

The support for pupils with SEND is strong. This helps pupils to develop important knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics. The leader for SEND ensures that pupils with SEND actively engage in all parts of school life.

Governors make regular visits to the school, meeting with school leaders and pupils. They review how the school supports pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Governors ensure that finances are kept in check and that additional funding is used appropriately. For example, they have reviewed the impact of the funding for sport and made sure that the funding is helping pupils to develop a healthy lifestyle. Governors have not yet paid the same attention to the development of the curriculum in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics.

Leaders create a purposeful and positive feel in the school. Staff enjoy working here and appreciate that leaders help them to manage their workload. They receive helpful training and are sensitive to the needs of pupils. Pupils move around the school calmly and show respect for one another. They behave well in class. Pupils enjoy the company of one another both in the classroom and when at play. They gain an understanding of democracy through lessons and by taking extra responsibilities. For example, some pupils are elected to join the school council. This is a role they take on with pride. Leaders are working hard to make sure that all pupils attend school regularly, as some got out of the habit during the pandemic restrictions.

Leaders recognise that many pupils have limited experience beyond their local area. They build opportunities for pupils to visit the beach and local landmarks, and to engage in visits to towns linked to their class names. Pupils enjoy these visits, but often struggle to remember key knowledge and skills they have gained from them. This is because not enough thought has gone into the purpose of the visit and where this fits in the planned steps in learning.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors ensure that there are strong procedures in place to keep children safe. School leaders carry out careful checks on the suitability of all staff and adults in the school. Staff are clear about what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's safety. Leaders follow through any concerns raised. They offer helpful support for families who need help in keeping their children safe.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They learn about how to stay safe online. They are confident that if they have a worry, they can share this with a trusted adult in the school.

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

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

- In many subjects, the curriculum is not planned and sequenced well. Leaders have not set out clearly enough how pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding will build progressively over time. Teachers do not always know what to teach and when to teach new content. This means that pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding and do not achieve well enough. Leaders should make sure that they define more precisely the component parts within the curriculum and the order in which pupils will learn new content.
- Some aspects of the early years curriculum plans do not set out clearly the knowledge that leaders would like children to learn and remember. As a result, children are not building as secure a foundation for future learning as they should be. Leaders should strengthen the curriculum in the early years. They should identify and plan the important knowledge they would like children to learn and remember so that children in the early years can succeed in all areas of their learning.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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>	133177
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200883
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	418
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Lorraine Balcombe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Peter Talbot
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.castlehill.kent.sch.uk">www.castlehill.kent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school has two classes in each year group at the school. There is a nursery for three- to four-year-old children. This provision was considered as part of the school's inspection.
- There is a privately run nursery that caters for children from the age of three months which operates in the same space as the school nursery. This provision is registered separately and was not inspected as part of the school's inspection.
- The school hosts a satellite unit for pupils from The Beacon School, a specialist school for three- to 19-year-old pupils who have complex special educational needs, profound and severe learning difficulties, and physical and sensory impairments.
- The school uses alternative provision at The Beacon School to support pupils with SEND.

## Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the leader for pupils with SEND, senior leaders and subject leaders.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff through meetings with them and the 51 responses to Ofsted’s staff survey.
- Inspectors held meetings with the chair of governors and two other members of the governing body.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including the school’s own plan for improvement, the school’s own evaluation of impact, governance documents, monitoring records, curriculum plans, and attendance and behaviour records.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, and reviewed safeguarding records and other documents including records of staff training.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day and considered the views of parents through the 24 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors considered pupils’ views through meeting with them and discussions with pupils during lessons and at other times of the school day. Inspectors also met with a group of pupils from the school council.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history, art, computing, and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work. Inspectors also heard some pupils read.

## Inspection team

Graham Chisnell, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kirstine Boon	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Green	Ofsted Inspector

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