

Inspection of Castletown Primary School

Grange Road, Castletown, Castletown Primary School, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear
SR5 3EQ

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 March 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils embody the school values. They are welcoming, respectful, hardworking, caring and kind. Pupils are proud of their school and its grounds. They say behaviour is good. Teachers deal with any issues, including bullying, immediately. Pupils cannot remember bullying happening in the recent past. Pupils work hard in class. They respond to teachers' ambitious expectations of them. They also behave well in lessons and want to succeed for themselves. Days are full of fun. Most pupils play happily together with a range of equipment at break and lunchtime. The 'crafty cabin' is a particular favourite.

Music is everywhere. Pupils play a variety of wind and stringed instruments. After school clubs have good attendance. These include a variety of sports, the choir and the citizenship club. The citizenship club recently planted sunflowers, the national flower of Ukraine, when discussing world-wide issues.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know how to raise a concern and feel comfortable sharing it with an adult. Some ask to speak with the school counsellor. Pupils learn what is right and what is wrong. They show tolerance and respect. They learn about different cultures, faiths and family structures.

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

Leaders have worked hard to address gaps in learning as a result of disruption caused by COVID-19. Reading has been a priority and is now a strength of the school. Phonics is integrated into daily teaching for younger pupils. Teachers are methodical in recapping known sounds. Staff are well trained. They help pupils learn new words and sounds. Leaders make sure expert teachers work with lower-attaining pupils. Teachers select books to match the sounds and words pupils already know. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are becoming fluent, confident readers. Year 6 school librarians keep the new library in order. They suggest themes for book displays. Librarians collect book recommendations from pupils. There are author spotlights with letters from known authors to the school. The 'Reading Hall of Fame' display celebrates pupils' reading achievements.

Leaders have designed a curriculum to link key ideas together. In most subjects, like mathematics and art and design, leaders have clearly planned this out. Teachers in mathematics lessons repeat important facts. This helps pupils remember them. Lessons start with a recap session so that pupils practice and embed key ideas. In art and design, teachers plan lessons that build learning progressively. Concepts such as painting, drawing and sculpture are taught sequentially across year groups. Curriculum thinking in some subjects is not as well developed. The key knowledge pupils must remember lacks coherence and structure.

In most subjects, teachers assess what pupils know and can do effectively. They make daily checks on what pupils have grasped. This helps teachers to plan work

accordingly or devise immediate extra support. More detailed termly assessment is used in mathematics and English. This helps teachers understand pupils' broader attainment. In some subjects, assessment is over-complicated. Systems do not enable staff to check if learning has moved from working memory to long-term memory. Checks on what pupils must know and remember in some foundation subjects are vague. They do not help teachers identify gaps or misconceptions.

Behaviour in lessons and attitudes to learning are consistently positive. These attitudes start in the early years. Children in Nursery are independent and curious. Similarly in Reception, groups work together well. The environment supports their learning across the curriculum. Children respond to questions and are polite and courteous. This continues through school. Pupils work with endeavour and purpose.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not miss out on what they need. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is skilled in identifying pupils who may need extra help. All receive the same curriculum offer. Pupils with SEND receive extra support before a unit of work and have subject-specific vocabulary reminders available.

Each week starts with a 'character statement' from the headteacher. This is shared in class or in reflection areas. Pupils learn about citizenship and respect. They raise money for charitable causes close to home. Older pupils assume positions of responsibility. These include head girl and boy, star prefects, house captains or the 'Wellbeing Rainbow Team'. Good use of local areas of interest expands pupils' appreciation of the world they live in. Staff take pupils on visits to the beach, the local dene and a residential trip to an outdoor adventure centre.

Morale among staff is high. Staff know leaders will support them. Leaders take positive action to make sure everyone's workload is manageable. Staff describe their colleagues as an extended family. They appreciate the approachability of senior leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Systems to keep pupils safe are meticulous. All staff know how to spot signs that a pupil may need extra help or attention. Staff know the local safeguarding risks. Training equips staff to address these issues should they arise. Staff know the procedure to report a concern about a colleague, including leaders. Leaders work closely with safeguarding partners such as the community police, when appropriate. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe such as around water, on roads or online. They know who to speak to about a concern and are confident to do so.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum thinking in some foundation subjects is muddled and the curriculum lacks structure in these subjects. Essential knowledge is not clearly identified and key ideas that link learning are unclear. Pupils are unable to make connections to what they already know. They cannot apply their knowledge into larger concepts. Leaders should implement their plans to ensure that the school's curriculum is sufficiently well planned and sequenced in all subjects.
- Assessment systems in some subjects are not sharp enough. Checks are not made to discover if the knowledge pupils should have acquired is transferred to their long-term memory. It is not clear whether pupils have the essential knowledge needed for future learning in these subjects. Gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills are not being consistently identified. Leaders must continue to develop and implement a consistent approach to assessment in every curricular subject so that pupils' skills and knowledge are checked accurately.

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

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| Unique reference number | 108792 |
| Local authority | Sunderland |
| Inspection number | 10210962 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 375 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Keith Bartley |
| Headteacher | Lee Duncan |
| Website | castletownprimary.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 4 and 5 October 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up his post in September 2021.

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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, SENCo, teachers, teaching assistants and the school administration clerk. An inspector also met three members of the local governing body and the school development partner from the local authority.
- Deep dives were carried out in reading, geography, physical education and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors met with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons where available, spoke to teachers

and teaching assistants, spoke to some pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- An inspector listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.
- An inspector also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other curriculum subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits and at break and lunch time. They spoke to pupils about their views of behaviour and a group of pupils gave an inspector a tour of the school.
- An inspector looked at the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks and spoke to leaders, teachers and pupils about safeguarding.
- The views of 28 parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, were considered. This included the 17 written comments.
- Inspectors met with staff to discuss their well-being and workload.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Birch

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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