

Inspection of a good school: Castlewood Primary School

Castlewood Road, Southwater, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 9US

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 January 2023

Outcome

Castlewood Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are determined that by the time pupils leave Castlewood, they will be 'world ready'. This ambition is realised through a school-wide culture of high expectations in terms of pupils' learning, behaviour and character development. As a result, pupils achieve well and show resilience with their learning. Parents and carers appreciate this culture, with one saying, 'The exceptional teaching inspires my child, not only to reach their potential but also to foster an understanding of the world around them, enhancing their overall well-being.'

Pupils behave extremely well. They work hard in their lessons and are polite and respectful. Pupils are well looked after and safe at school. They are not concerned about bullying because they know that it is rare and that, when it does occur, it is swiftly and effectively dealt with.

The 'heart, brain and soul' learning powers are valued by pupils and motivate them. They take great pride in being awarded points that lead to certificates in celebration assemblies. Pupils also enjoy being members of their castle houses and the resulting relationships they build across year groups. The Year 6 house captains take their responsibilities seriously. These include leading interesting and informative house assemblies and launching exciting competitions.

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

Pupils achieve well, yet there is no feeling of complacency from leaders. Pupils benefit from an engaging and ambitious curriculum. Leaders are highly reflective and keen to strengthen and further improve pupils' achievement. This commitment to improvement is particularly evident in the teaching of writing. Pupils do not achieve quite as highly in this area as they do in reading and mathematics. As a result, leaders have recently designed a clear progression of grammar and vocabulary skills to further strengthen pupils' writing.

Leaders ensure that high-quality teaching of reading is a key thread running through all subject areas. From the very start of their first year at school, children learn how to read using a phonics-based approach. Staff are well trained and make sure that reading books appropriately match the sounds that children are learning. As a result, pupils read with increasing fluency as they progress through the school. Older pupils are supported well if they need additional help with their reading. Leaders instil a love of reading by using additional activities, such as a reading raffle, mystery book club and regular visits from the reading dogs.

Across the curriculum, teachers have strong subject knowledge. In most subjects, teachers carefully check pupils' learning and build on it by teaching them new knowledge and skills. This is a particular strength in mathematics, where pupils fully understand what they have learned previously and apply it well in their current lessons. Pupils are confident and skilled mathematicians. However, in a few foundation subjects, the exact sequence of learning is at an earlier stage of development. In these subjects, the precise progression of vocabulary and concepts has only recently been considered. As a result, in these few subjects, pupils cannot always see how their learning connects and builds over time.

The special educational needs coordinator ensures that staff know how to identify accurately pupils who need additional support. Teachers have a range of strategies they can draw on to adapt their teaching for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This includes pre-teaching activities and same-day interventions to provide appropriate and effective support.

Pupils' wider development is carefully considered by leaders. The curriculum and assemblies provide pupils with an awareness of the world around them and beyond. They are well informed about current affairs beyond their locality. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about visitors to the school and how they deepen pupils' knowledge about diversity, particularly in terms of disability. They understand and respect difference and are willing to challenge stereotypes and inequality. Pupils enjoy using the school's sensory room for their mindfulness sessions. They describe how this relaxation and reflection time refreshes their minds and helps them to be ready for new learning.

Governors know the school extremely well. They work alongside school leaders to identify accurately strengths and areas to further improve. Staff know that their workload and well-being are carefully considered and appreciated by governors and school leaders. They appreciate the many opportunities for professional development they receive. There is a shared sense of pride about being part of the Castlewood team. This team is unwavering in its determination to provide pupils with an enjoyable and successful school experience.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that there is a strong safeguarding culture throughout the school. Regular training and information-sharing mean that staff are skilled at identifying and reporting any concerns. Leaders are diligent in following up these concerns and securing

appropriate support for families. This includes frequent communication with external agencies and robust challenge if leaders feel that families need additional help. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and can identify trusted adults, whom they talk to if they have any worries. Governors are knowledgeable about their safeguarding responsibilities and routinely check on the effectiveness of leaders' actions and procedures.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the English curriculum, a clear progression of grammar and vocabulary has only recently been implemented. As a result, pupils' writing is not yet as strong as it could be. Leaders should continue to support teachers in embedding this work to strengthen pupils' writing further.
- In a few foundation subjects, leaders have only recently determined the progression of essential concepts and vocabulary that pupils need to learn. This means that some pupils are not able to explicitly make links between previous and current learning. Subject leaders should continue with this work to ensure that pupils accumulate the necessary knowledge and skills.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2013.

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.

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

Unique reference number	131130
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10242055
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Storer
Headteacher	Rachel Nunns
Website	www.castlewood.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with the school's designated safeguarding lead and a governor who has responsibility for safeguarding. Safeguarding records and procedures were checked and tested through document review and in discussions with pupils and staff.
- The inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. She also had a discussion with a representative from West Sussex local authority.

- The inspector considered the responses to the confidential staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views on the school.
- She also took account of the responses and additional free-text comments submitted to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and direct communications from parents. The inspector talked with some parents on the morning of the second day of the inspection.
- The inspector met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally during social times and in lessons.
- A range of documentation was examined by the inspector, including the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and the pupil premium funding plan.

Inspection team

Kate Fripp, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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