

Inspection of a good school: Castleton CofE Primary School

Back Street, Castleton, Hope Valley, Derbyshire S33 8WE

Inspection dates:

31 January 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Castleton is a small village school with a 'family feel.' Everyone is welcome. Many things make this school unique, which is why most families travel miles to attend. They like the nurturing and caring ethos. As one parent, typical of many, said: 'It's a school of smiles.'

Strong relationships form the foundations of this school. Pupils thrive here because they have positive and successful experiences of schooling. The school's timetable enables some pupils and their families to combine learning at home and at school. For many pupils, this provides a lifeline in developing successful attitudes to formal education.

Pupils are proud of their school. They prosper because adults take time to understand their wider needs. They know their school is a safe place. Pupils know that their worries, including any rare instances of bullying, will be dealt with swiftly. They appreciate how they know each other 'by their names.' They learn to accept each other no matter their difference. In the words of one pupil: 'It's who you are, not what you like.'

Pupils enjoy their learning. However, the school's curriculum does not clearly identify the key knowledge that pupils must remember. Sometimes, errors in pupils' vocabulary are not addressed quickly.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to do well. They want every child to be successful in their education. Leaders have begun to sequence the school's curriculum in most subjects, but not all. They have yet to clearly identify the key knowledge they want pupils

to know. This does not help those pupils who attend school on 'core days' or those who attend full time to know more of the school's curriculum in a coherent way.

Teachers identify gaps pupils have in their knowledge. They revisit key concepts and ideas to help pupils recall what they already know. Adaptations are made for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to access the curriculum and the school's wider offer. Leaders understand that some aspects of the curriculum need further refinement.

Subject leadership is at an early stage of development. Leaders are not yet checking how well the school's curriculum is being taught. Occasionally, errors are not addressed, or inaccuracies are taught. Current curriculum thinking does not start in the early years. It does not consider how subsequent learning will build on these foundations.

Pupils achieve well in their reading. Daily, systematic teaching of sounds helps pupils to use what they know to sound out words. Teachers regularly make checks to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. Pupils who are new to the school or need extra help receive regular support to help with their reading. Leaders make pupils' enjoyment of reading a priority. Pupils receive copies of books they have shared at school. Children in the early years share books with each other. For example, when looking at a book about the solar system, children chatted excitedly about how the sun's energy will eventually run out. When leaders previously noticed a dip in reading at home, they developed 'reading adventure days'. Parents are welcomed at these events. On one such occasion, a cyclist from the 'Winnats Pass' cycling race presented prize money so new books could be purchased for the school.

Pupils with SEND are identified quickly, and they learn alongside their peers in class. Leaders ensure that there is additional support for pupils who may be anxious or require help to regulate their emotions.

Leaders ensure that the school's wider curriculum offer is supplemented during the school day because most pupils are unable to stay beyond school hours. Pupils receive regular visits to forest school. They work with other local schools to ensure pupils have opportunities to participate in sporting competitions. All pupils have opportunities to undertake visits, including a residential trip for older pupils. They learn about different types of safety through visits from different emergency services. Pupils talk confidently about different communities that are represented in modern British society.

Staff feel valued at this school. In the words of one member of staff: 'I love my job because we always look for solutions.' Governors recognise that staff hold multiple areas of responsibility. They are considering ways to manage this to support teacher workload and well-being.

Governors are developing their understanding of school improvement. They recognise their statutory duties. However, they have not ensured that the school's safeguarding procedures are evaluated rigorously enough.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know the signs to look for that may indicate a child may be at risk of harm. They receive regular training to help them understand different types of safeguarding concerns.

Leaders ensure they understand the systems and procedures for the multiple local safeguarding authorities they may need to work with. They ensure that all pupils are safe. However, some safeguarding practices and procedures are not as precise as they could be. Some systems, procedures and practices for safeguarding are not reviewed regularly to ensure it is as effective as it could be.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders ensure that pupils are safe, but some policies, records and procedures linked to safeguarding are not as precise as they could be. This does not help leaders to build up a holistic, chronological picture of pupils' needs. All leaders, including governors, must ensure that safeguarding practices, procedures and systems are regularly reviewed and, where needed, strengthened.
- Leaders have not yet identified the key knowledge that pupils must know in all subjects from early years to Year 6. This does not help pupils to know and remember more in an organised, logical manner. Leaders must ensure that the whole-school curriculum is well sequenced in all subjects from early years to Year 6 so that pupils know more over time.
- Subject leaders are at the early stages of understanding and developing in their roles to support school improvement. This limits their ability to make sure that the school's curriculum is well implemented and in ensuring pupil gain more knowledge. Leaders recognise that these checks should be made. Leaders must ensure that subject leaders have the necessary expertise and knowledge to make checks on how well the school's curriculum is being implemented.

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	112807
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10227805
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	22
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Helen Webster
Headteacher	Nancy Lees
Website	www.castletonschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The last section 48 inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools took place in October 2019. This is an inspection of the school's religious character.
- A significant number of pupils use the flexible school attendance offer. This means that pupils are registered at school but attend part time. For the rest of the time, these pupils are educated at home.
- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in the governing body, including a new chair of governors.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 8 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, subject leaders and members of the local governing body. The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, inspectors 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. Documents relating to other curriculum areas were also sampled.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans, local authority reports and governing body minutes.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. Documentation relating to attendance, behaviour, the school's safeguarding records and procedures were also considered. The school's single central record was reviewed.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted online surveys. They also gathered the views of pupils and parents while on site.

Inspection team

Shaheen Hussain, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Heidi Malliff

Ofsted Inspector

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