

Inspection of Castle Hill Primary School

Castle Hill Street, Tonge Moor, Bolton, Lancashire BL2 2JT

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 February 2023

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 Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are happy at this school. They develop friendships with many others. Pupils said that they feel safe. Many told inspectors that, if they experience problems, they can tell any member of staff. Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive, respectful and trusting. Pupils, parents and carers, and staff see these behaviours modelled very well by senior leaders. This sets a positive tone for pupils and the whole school community to follow.

Children in the combined early years class quickly become keen, confident learners. Pupils' very positive behaviour continues in key stages 1 and 2. The whole school is calm, including in the larger, shared learning areas. Pupils have a well-informed knowledge of what behaviours would indicate bullying. Such issues are managed and resolved well by leaders on the rare occasions that they arise.

Pupils enjoy their lessons. Most of the time, they learn successfully. This is because of leaders' high expectations and staff's skilful work. Pupils, including those with SEND, mostly achieve well in different curriculum subjects. They develop a thirst for learning even more.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra learning opportunities. They gain extra skills from activities that leaders provide, such as chess, choir, drama and sports.

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

Leaders have designed and developed an ambitious curriculum that inspires pupils. Pupils, including those with SEND, mostly gain the knowledge that they need to succeed. For instance, in different subjects, pupils learn important new words that staff teach carefully.

Leaders' subject curriculums are well thought out. Staff know what to teach and when in each year group. Leaders and staff carefully consider how the curriculum in each subject builds from a secure start for children in early years.

Teachers skilfully adapt their delivery of learning activities to help all pupils, such as pupils with SEND, to learn as well as their peers. Teachers use assessment strategies carefully to understand each pupil's grasp of curriculum content. Mostly, pupils know and remember their learning. However, in some of the curriculum, teachers do not ensure that pupils remember what they have been taught. In a few subjects, pupils struggle to recall some of their prior learning when trying to understand new knowledge that staff teach.

Leaders successfully focus on the teaching of reading. Teachers and teaching assistants receive regular training, coaching and support, which helps them to understand the phonics curriculum. Leaders ensure that staff teach phonics consistently and accurately and have the resources that they need. Staff very

effectively support pupils who find reading more difficult. This means that pupils catch up quickly.

Leaders make sure that teachers select books carefully to read to children often. Through the key stage 2 reading curriculum, older pupils encounter a wide range of authors and can talk confidently about these authors' works. In most classes, teachers thoughtfully set out books in library areas for pupils to access for themselves. However, the provision of books for children to choose in early years is not so well resourced. This narrows children's access to high-quality fiction, non-fiction and poetry books.

Leaders and staff identify the academic and wider needs of pupils with SEND effectively. This enables staff to provide the support that pupils need promptly. Pupils with SEND feel connected with, and accepted by, other pupils at the school. This is because leaders make sure that all pupils are respected and included.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. This means that staff can focus on teaching. Pupils who need extra support with managing their feelings or behaviour are well supported by leaders and staff. Nevertheless, some pupils do not attend school as often as they should. Leaders are addressing this issue with determination and clarity. Pupils' attendance is improving well.

Leaders make sure that all pupils can access extra learning, such as through educational trips, to build on the curriculum. Pupils are well prepared for their lives as British citizens; for instance, they learn about the diversity of people in society. They learn about the importance of fundamental British values, such as respect and tolerance.

Leaders provide staff with the training and guidance that they need. Staff are very positive about leaders' support for their well-being and workload. Leaders use experts prudently from outside the school to review and refine their work. Leaders have a clear understanding of what the school does well and where even more can be achieved. However, governors do not review and challenge the work of leaders in sufficient depth, including their provision for pupils with SEND. This means that governors do not play a critical enough role in ensuring the school's improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff attend regular training. They use their knowledge well and are vigilant. Leaders and staff keep a close check on all pupils' attendance, well-being and behaviours. They listen to what pupils say about their lives. Staff communicate any small concerns that they have about pupils' safeguarding to leaders. Leaders act promptly on information where needed, liaising fully with parents, the police, social care services or other professionals as necessary.

Staff support pupils' emotional needs effectively. They enable pupils to feel safe at school. They teach pupils how to manage risks, such as when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, some pupils do not remember their previous learning as much as they should. This holds them back from fully developing new knowledge. Leaders should ensure that teachers revisit pupils' prior learning in ways that secure knowledge in pupils' long-term memory.
- The governing body does not review leaders' work well enough, including that for pupils with SEND. This means that governors do not challenge leaders sufficiently. Members of the governing body should ensure that they review all key aspects of the school's work in sufficient depth and challenge leaders about improvement.
- The provision of books for children in early years is underdeveloped. This means that some of the children's opportunities to access high-quality fiction and non-fiction books are limited. Leaders should ensure that staff present children with a wide range of books to read in the early years classroom.

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	105150
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10262348
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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Tony Shepherd
Headteacher	Andrew Renwick
Website	www.castle-hill.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 and 12 September 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders provide places for Nursery and Reception children in a combined early years class.
- Leaders use one registered alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in early reading, mathematics and music. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons (including in early years), reviewed pupils' work and spoke with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed information about some further foundation subjects, including through discussions with leaders and holding meetings with pupils.

- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss behaviour and attendance, and provision for pupils' personal development, SEND and early years.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils in meetings, in lessons and as they moved around the school premises. There were no responses to the Ofsted survey for pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also spoke with some parents to hear their views of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with several members of staff, including about their training and leaders' support for their well-being. Inspectors considered responses from staff to the Ofsted survey, as well as their responses to a recent survey conducted by leaders.
- Inspectors considered a range of information about safeguarding, including through discussions with pupils, staff and leaders. Inspectors sampled leaders' safeguarding records.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority and reviewed information from the local authority's work to support improvement at the school.
- The lead inspector met with four members of the governing body (including the chair of governors, who attended the meeting remotely). Inspectors considered information from a recent external review of governance.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Edmondson

Ofsted Inspector

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